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In this issue of *The Observer*:

- [There's a New Bird in Town: Common Raven](#)
- [Preserving Cranes and Their Ecosystems](#)
- [Audio Apps](#)
- [Greatest Hits; or Memories of 2011](#)
- [Summer Hummers: Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Backyard](#)
- [President's Message](#)
- [Welcome New and Returning Members!](#)
- [Notes and Sightings: September through November 2011](#)
- [Upcoming Nature Programs](#)
- [Upcoming Field Trips](#)

There's a New Bird in Town: Common Raven

By Jim Previdi, RAS Board Member

Those of us who have observed birds in Rockland County and elsewhere for more than a few years are aware that avian populations are not a static thing. Rather, they are as dynamic as the birds themselves. Populations fluctuate for reasons that are sometimes clear to us but often are not.

New species arrive and multiply, others disappear. Some that were historically present, such as the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, have made stunning comebacks with our help. Birds may come back to an area because of changing conditions such as maturation of second growth forests or an increase in potential food items. Wildlife is, in many instances, far more adaptable than we thought possible. Deer, Coyote, Wild Turkey, even Fisher are present in all but the most urban areas. Add the Common Raven to that list.

Long considered to be a wilderness bird of tundra, mountains, and boreal forests, ravens are appearing in increasing numbers all around Rockland County. For most of the 20th Century, ravens were scarce in this area. Robert Deed, eminent birder and record keeper mentions only five sightings between 1930 and 1976 in *Birds of Rockland County and the Hudson Highlands*. Then, in the 1990's, we began seeing and hearing the occasional raven, usually in the more remote areas of Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks.

In the ensuing years, these birds appeared along the Hudson with nesting recorded on the cliffs above the river. In the last couple of years ravens have turned up throughout the county. I've seen them over Route 59 in Nanuet and Route 202 in Mount Ivy. I'm regularly seeing and hearing ravens around my home in the Village of Haverstraw. There also was a successful attempt at nesting on the campus of Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in Pearl River.



Common Raven © Alan W. Wells

Ravens have quietly reentered our Rockland County ecosystem, unnoticed by the casual observer. How are they distinguished from the familiar crow? Ravens are larger than crows, but not always dramatically so. In any event, apparent size is contingent on distance. What usually draws my attention is a large black bird soaring on flat wings. Crows are flappers, ravens soar on a minimum of wing beats, much like Red-tailed Hawks. The raven has a large projecting head with a heavy bill. The clincher is a long wedge-shaped tail. Crow tails are squared off. The hoarse croak of the raven is distinctly different than the caw of the crow as well.

What do we make of all of this? As usual, we can only speculate. Perhaps the abundance of deer and the associated road kills have something to do with it. Maybe it is more than the vultures and crows can manage and another scavenger was needed to fill the vacuum. The loss of large numbers of crows to West Nile Virus could be a factor as well.

The raven is the largest of the Passerines (order Passeriformes), that is, perching or songbirds. The Common Raven, *Corvus corax*, is a member of the family Corvidae which includes crows, jays and magpies. They are omnivorous but rely heavily on carrion. They may work cooperatively to prey on small animals. They are not as gregarious as crows and are usually seen singly, in pairs or in small groups.

I had always associated the raven with the far north; waiting impatiently for a share of the wolves' kill. Now we have a little of that northern romance right here in Rockland County.

Preserving Cranes and Their Ecosystems

By Stephanie Garber, RAS Board Member

Last September, I had the opportunity to visit the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in Baraboo, WI. It was exciting to discover the ancient and endangered family of cranes amidst the prairie grasses and wildflowers. In fact, it is the only place in the world where you can see all 15 species of cranes.

The site, once a horse farm, has been transformed into natural habitat for cranes and interpretive nature trails that wind through more than 100 acres of restored prairie, wetlands and oak savanna. Exhibits, such as the *Spirit of Africa*, showcase the magnificent African cranes—Wattled, Crowned and Blue. The Johnson Exhibit Pod highlights the grace and beauty of cranes from around the world. At the Whooping Crane Wetland Exhibit, the planet's rarest cranes can be spotted as they wade through a tranquil wetland. Interactive exhibits, videos and art at the Donnelley Family Education Center show the relationships between cranes, humans and the landscape they occupy.

ICF co-founders, George Archibald and Ron Sauey, met while investigating crane behavior and ecology as graduate students at Cornell University. Realizing the peril of cranes under pressure from the world's rapidly expanding population and development, they established the International Crane Foundation in 1973, an organization dedicated to the study and preservation of cranes.

Today, the ICF world headquarters is a center for research, education, ecosystem restoration and captive breeding. It continues working worldwide to conserve cranes and the wetland, grassland and other ecosystems upon which they depend.

There are conservation programs across five continents that include seven globally-significant river basins where cranes are found. One program is helping migratory Whooping Cranes recover in central Wisconsin and across the eastern US. Another program is working with communities in Vietnam to develop alternative livelihoods that improve economic conditions and protect wetlands that sustain both people and the threatened Saurus Cranes.

Find out more about these magnificent birds. Join RAS on February 3 for its Monthly Nature Program, "**Back from the Brink of Extinction and Beyond**," presented by Darcy Love, Visitor Program Manager, International Crane Foundation. Learn about George and Tex—the story of a man dedicated to save a species and a Whooping Crane who thought she was a human. Darcy Love will also speak to ICF's work with the Sandhill Cranes in New York and about their work worldwide inspiring a global community.

References: International Crane Foundation



Saurus Cranes displaying unison-call. Photo by K.S. Gopi Sundar

Audio Apps

By Alan Wells, RAS Webmaster

Maybe you recently listened to Lorrie Pallant’s inspiring talk on “Birding By Ear” and now you find yourself in the woods listening to a vaguely familiar song? I know that song! It is a Veery! No, sounds more like a Wood Thrush! Or maybe even a Hermit Thrush! Swainson’s Thrush?? I’m just not really sure, they all sound so much alike. I wish I could hear a recording of each but I’m in the middle of the woods. If only I had a portable collection of bird songs. Ahhh, but wait, there is an App for that!! In this age of smartphones and similar devices, an incredibly complete collection of North American bird vocalizations is right at your fingertips anywhere you go!

For iPhone users, there are at least six different collections.

- A. National Geographic’s Handheld Birds (\$9.99 to \$14.99)
- B. Peterson Birds of North America (\$14.99)
- C. The Sibley eGuide to the Birds of North America (\$29.99)
- D. Audubon Birds – A Field Guide to North American Birds (\$14.99)
- E. iBird Explorer PRO (\$14.99 to \$19.99)
- F. BirdsEye (\$19.99) – Designed to guide you to rare birds, but also has vocalizations

Here is a quick comparison of some of their features:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Size (MB)	85	579	400	606	564	253
Number of Species Covered	867	810	811	776	924	857
Multiple vocalizations per species?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Text descriptions of vocalizations?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Search for song type or pattern?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Animated spectrogram/waveform?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Loop for continuous play?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Link to similar sounds?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

Recommendations? They are all very good and very similar. I think iBird Explorer Pro has the edge, but that is likely just a personal preference. Any one of these programs can boost your game!

Don’t have an iPhone? There are versions of some of these for other platforms and others are on the way. Keep an eye out. Also note that the Thayer’s birding software program “Birds of North America, Version 5.0 Gold Edition” can download songs to almost any mp3 device. This approach is a more expensive, at \$99.95 for 959 species, but it has lots of additional capabilities.

One final and important note. Please use this sound capability responsibly and ethically. Birds will often respond quite strongly to the vocalization of another bird, especially during nesting season. Use the device sparingly and keep the speaker volume very low. Better yet, use your headset while playing any calls. Also note that playing songs to attract birds can be illegal in some places and for some species (threatened and endangered)!

Greatest Hits; or Memories of 2011

By Joanna Galdone, RAS Board Member

Environmentally speaking, 2011 for me was “The Year of the Invasive Worm.” With a rainfall total nearly 30 inches above the “normal” 45 inches, conditions were perfect for worms to thrive. In fact, with the frequent and often heavy rains the ground never dried out.

Though out-of-sight most of the time, a quick brushing aside of debris on the surface of the soil was enough to reveal the intense work of The Worms! Crumbly castings emerged everywhere as I pushed aside last years leaves! Aroused by the disturbance I created The Worms themselves would appear. Big ones, and bigger ones! No little delicate creatures, these! Rather, they are what we as kids referred to as “night crawlers,” some up to 8 inches long. And strong—mini rototillers hastening the decomposition of the leaf litter and altering the structure of the soil itself.

As the season progressed I was staggered by the density of the worm population. One day I wondered just how many worms might be gobbling away the protective layer of leaves on the forest floor of my property, and beyond! In some places I counted at least 10 worms per square foot!

One acre contains 43,560 square feet. Doing the math was revealing. By the end of the season I found myself walking in places where the ground felt spongy from the castings, which, with some imagination, was like walking on marshmallows. In contrast, the ground was washed bare in areas receiving storm run-off, the nutrient-rich castings joining the wild flow of already over-burdened streams.

More subtly, though quite poignantly for me, 2011 was “The Year the Wood Thrush” Left. There are few sounds that I enjoy more than the melodious Wood Thrush. I look forward to the day in the early part of May when I hear its first notes. This year I was rewarded—but earlier than usual and for some time thereafter. But a bit later in the season there was no sign or sound of the thrush. When I mentioned this to my son, who has moved to Vermont, he remarked somewhat pragmatically, “If I was a thrush, I wouldn’t want to live in New City...”

Later in the summer I found myself missing the scolding, somewhat agitated sound that replaces the peaceful melody. I hoped that somewhere, more peaceful and environmentally intact, the thrush which had visited my yard was darting about, readying for its trip south.

Also, 2011 was “The Year the Deer Died.” Earlier in the summer I’d noticed several dead deer in my neighborhood. I called the State Department of Environmental Conservation and was told that, well, deer die. But by the end of the summer Hemorrhagic Disease in White-Tailed Deer had been confirmed locally. The disease decimated the local over-abundant herd. I was finding, and smelling, carcasses all over my neighborhood. I’m left with a small comfort that this winter, at least, the wooded areas will be getting a reprieve from the over-browsing of the deer.

Not to leave anything out, 2011 was “The Year of the October Snowstorm.” I sat on the couch with my two dogs on either side that night, awed as I listened to the “snap, crack, and plop!” of tree branches. A strong gust of wind still brings down an occasional “widow maker.”

A huge clean-up job for us humans resulted. I’m hoping, though, that in wooded areas where the fallen, still leafy limbs remain, some new habitat has been created. In their midst some creatures may find cover, where before the storm there had been bare soil in an over-browsed landscape.

And finally, 2011 was “The Year I Discovered Mile-a-Minute Vine” invading the landscape closer to where I live. During the Christmas Bird Count I had hoped to add, as in previous years, some sparrows and cardinals to my tally by walking along the edge of the power line right-of-way south of the Davenport Preserve in New City. This year, however, the area was birdless. Stiltgrass, oriental bittersweet and yes, now Mile-a-Minute are growing where native plants had been. It’s small comfort, perhaps, but I do know that on my own property, at least, I can keep these invaders at bay.



Mile-a-minute Plant © Alan W. Wells

Summer Hummers: Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Backyard

By Elyse Fuller, RAS President

Due to our prolific neighborhood bear population here in Tuxedo, we can only feed birds in winter. Yes, we miss seeing parents feeding their chicks in spring and the interesting migrants of fall. However, in warmer months, the entertaining hummingbirds almost make up for what we miss!

Attracting regular hummingbird visitors to our yard took a couple of summers. We were often fooled by hummingbird impersonators, the bumblebees and sphinx moths buzzing around the plantings near our hummingbird feeders. So, don't be discouraged if it takes a while to attract hummingbirds to your yard.

Appropriate plantings and hummingbird feeders might help. A number of flowering plants are said to attract hummingbirds. Species that have successfully attracted hummingbirds to our yard include *Monarda* (Bee Balm), Lupine, and Butterfly Bush. However, the most popular plant seems to be the native Trumpet Honeysuckle. Its long delicate red flowers provide nectar for hummingbirds from early May through fall.

When it comes to choosing a hummingbird feeder, there is no need for a fancy one. Any basic feeder will do. The magic formula is four parts water to one part sugar. Many suggest heating the water and adding the sugar. However, if you do not mind stirring for a few more moments, heating the water is not necessary. You can prepare a batch of hummingbird food and store it in the refrigerator. Change the food in your feeders once a week in cooler weather, twice a week in warmer weather, or more often if you have particularly hungry hummingbirds. Also, skip the red-dyed food mixes because the red color of your feeder is enough to catch a hummingbird's eye.

To avoid build up of mold and bacteria, cleaning your feeders before putting fresh food in them is recommended. A solution of four-parts water to one-part vinegar works well to disinfect feeders. The tiny brush that comes with many standard hummingbird feeders is handy for cleaning the holes, too.

When it comes to hummingbirds, it may seem like we're getting the raw end of the deal here in the

Northeast. After all, more than 10 species of hummingbirds breed in the Western US. However, the gregarious nature of our Ruby-throated Hummingbird and its antics make up for it being our only breeding hummingbird.

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird breeds throughout much of the US, east of the Mississippi River and throughout southern areas of Canada. Their tiny, beautiful, often lichen-covered nests are difficult to find. Generally, they lay two white eggs, each only a half an inch in length. They feed on nectar but will also feed on insects, spiders, pollen, and tree sap. By the time fall arrives, these hummingbirds are long gone, having migrated to their wintering grounds, which range from Mexico to Costa Rica.

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird's aerial acrobatics provide entertainment throughout the summer days. They seem to be present more in the evenings, which is convenient since we can enjoy a nice leisurely dinner in the yard listening to the males scold each other and watching their elaborate arcing and quick side-to-side mating displays, their ever-alert poses next to the feeders, and the females ignoring the males trying so hard to impress them.

Male territorial behavior can be quite dangerous and even deadly, however. A couple of summers ago, Tom and I were enjoying the pleasures of a warm evening when the sounds of two squabbling male hummingbirds filled the yard. Before I knew what had happened, one of the hummingbirds was on the grass struggling to fly. We decided to intervene as it seemed the hummingbird was injured from its battle. After a call to a friend who spent some time researching hummingbirds in Peru, we were saddened to hear that the hummingbird would likely die. Unfortunately it did die soon after. A testament to its fierce nature, this instance simply enhanced my awe of this tiny bird.



Anna's Hummingbird © Alan W. Wells

There is so much more to learn about hummingbirds, and here are a few resources for you to check out: National Audubon Society's webpage
http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/hum_feeders.html.

Audubon also provides information on creating hummingbird-healthy habitat at
http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/hum_habitats.html

Finally, you are invited to Rockland Audubon's April program entitled "**Hummingbirds: Feathered Gems**" at a special location, the Historical Society of Rockland. Please see the program section for more details!

President's Message

It's back! The 15th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will take place. Feb. 17-20, 2012. Perhaps you are familiar with the GBBC and have participated in the past. If not, here is the scoop.

The GBBC is an annual bird count event run by National Audubon Society, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Bird Studies of Canada. Anyone from a novice to an expert can participate at any location throughout the United States and Canada. Simply choose a location, such as your backyard or a local park, and set aside at least 15 minutes for your count. Record the highest number of individuals of each species that you see. The number of observers, weather conditions, time, habitat type, and other types of information are also collected.

Your counts can help answer the following questions (taken from <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>):

- How will this winter's snow and cold temperatures influence bird populations?
- Where are winter finches and other "irruptive" species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years?
- What differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?
- Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?

For complete details about the GBBC, visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>. Checklist submission begins Feb. 17 at 7:00am at this website.

Count forms are also available if you do not have Internet access. Call the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Citizen Science Office at 800-843-2473 for more information.

The Great Backyard Bird Count: just another excuse to bird!

Yours Truly,
Elyse Fuller

Welcome New and Returning Members!

Glenn Angell, Kenneth Altschul, Irma L Bach, Rhea Banker, Marcelo Bardusco, Subscriber Bazal, Lauren Boer, Marie-Ange Bovee, Eve Bromberg, Somchat Chiamprasert, Robert F Comte, Irma Crespo, Elaine Drummond, Serge Gasparini, S & B Green, The Gordons, Larry L Guy, Sondra Holt, Essa Jallad, Pooja Khurana, Nancy Leeming, John Lippincott, Edna Marshall, B Menelaos, Sheryl Mitzner, Theresa F Moriarity, Mary A Mueller, Michael Nash, Annamarie Parisi, Lori Rogers, Suzanne Schwalbe, Barbara Schwartzberg, Ivan Seidenberg, Catherine Straub, Noel M Streeter, Henry Tate, Harry Waitzman, Ruth C Weber, George Whitman, Arlen Yalkut, Camille Zema

Notes and Sightings: September through November 2011

Compiled by Carol Weiss

Sep 2—An immature royal tern was seen roosting on the northern side of Piermont Pier. Evan Mark

Sep 8—A flock of 12-15 Common Nighthawks were feeding very high in Stony Point. Doris Metraux

Sep 9—At the hawk watch on Hook Mtn., I saw 200 Chimney Swifts, a Swainson's Thrush and a Prairie Warbler among a long list of migrating birds. Tom Fiore



Swainson's Thrush © Alan W. Wells

Sep 13—I saw a Baird's Sandpiper and a Red Knot on Piermont Pier. Rosemarie Widmer

Sep 17—The big day at Hook Mountain: 14,670 Broad-winged Hawks were counted. Danielle Gustafson was the official counter, but Frank Bonanno was first on the summit in the morning. He had also been there on Friday when 1,072 broad-wings went by. When the RAS field trip arrived at 10am, more than 3,000 hawks had already been counted. A great many hawk-watchers (possibly 80) arrived and counted for hours. Some kettles contained almost 300 hawks. Carol Weiss

Sep 22—This morning I saw a dapper little navy blue and white bird in the dogwood tree—a Black-throated Blue Warbler... Sep 25 I watched some "mystery" migrating warblers in the birch tree today. They were up too high to get a good look. Two did come down lower...One was very striped, olive yellow, with slight gray blotches on chest. The other was mostly olive, with an eye-line and very pointed wings, which it held out while it ate. Another confusing fall warbler was in the bush and as I thumbed through my book, the Black-throated Blue Warbler hopped next to it. I realized it was a female Black-throated Blue Warbler. But the others remain a mystery! Sep 28 I finally got a good look at the warblers. One was a Magnolia Warbler, and one was a Tennessee Warbler. Beverly Simone, West Nyack

Sep 23—Hook Mountain Warblers, early morning, 6:15-9:15am: Northern Parula (six-plus), Chestnut-sided (one), Magnolia (one), Cape May (one, male with chestnut ear patches, quite bright overall), Black-

throated Blue (one), Myrtle/Yellow-Rumped (four-plus), Black-throated Green (7-plus), Palm (one "yellow-eastern type, 3-plus western types), "Baypoll" (8-plus - these are either Blackpoll, probably most were, or possible Bay-breasted) & Blackpoll (12-plus, ID certain), Black-and-white (three), American Redstart (two), Ovenbird (one). This flock that included at least sixty individuals of warbler species, and a minimum of a dozen warbler species was on the summit edges for at least 30 minutes. Some were still lingering as I was leaving! This was perhaps the largest flock of Passerines I have recently come across at Hook in fall migration! The fog was very likely a factor along with the easterly wind, and perhaps the approaching storm, cold front or no front. Tom Fiore

Sep 29—I joined Joe Scordato at Bear Mountain for two hours midday. Flying by were about 30 raptors, including 13 ospreys and three peregrines, all heading south through the wind and clouds and fog. Carol Weiss

Oct 1—Spent the morning at Lake Welch and Tiorati Brook Road (the new and old ball fields) and was delighted to find two Winter Wrens as well as a number of migrating passerines. Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos were sighted, and one of the blue-heads was singing. Warblers were Palm, Common Yellow-throat, Nashville, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll, Northern Parula, Magnolia, and Yellow-rumped. There were several singing Golden-crowned Kinglets, too. Carol Weiss

Oct 10—Saw a Black-throated Blue warbler and a Swainson's Thrush in our garden last week and a Sharp-shinned Hawk in the Magnolia tree. Stephanie Garber, Blauvelt

Oct 12—In the "should have been there" category is the Oct 9 sighting of two Sandhill Cranes in Tallman marsh, not far from the swimming pool. Drew Ciganek heard the cranes' barking and watched them jump out of the marsh and fly away to the north. Less exciting was my walk around Rockland Lake this morning. It was cloudy and cold, windy near the water but I did end up with over 40 species. Yellow-rumps were the commonest warbler, but I also noted Parula, Pine, and Blackpoll. Sparrows included Song, Swamp, Field, White-throated, and a gorgeous adult White-crowned, along the hedgerow where the Hackensack River leaves the Nature Center. That's an area where I find White-crowns almost every year. Above the old Rockland Lake village was a soaring raptor, a Golden Eagle. Among the water birds were 4 Pied-billed Grebes. Last week, at the fishing station dock, there was a Bonaparte's Gull, which I hadn't seen at Rockland Lake before. Other birders had reported them there very occasionally. Carol Weiss

These other comments came in after the Sandhill Cranes were sighted:

I saw a white crowned sparrow under the feeder. Also, a couple of weeks ago as I was driving to work on the Palisades, I saw what I thought was a Great Blue Heron. Pretty sure, after reading about Drew's sighting, that it was a crane. Beverly Simone

I could not get out to the pier this morning because of the tide, but I did see a Merlin in a tree in the block just before the pier road. Twice it flew after little birds but had no luck catching them. I walked out to where Drew saw the cranes but no luck there. Peter Johnson

I was at the pier mid-week and had a Northern Harrier in the ball field of all places! It flew toward the apartments; that's when my grandparents and I lost track of it. Chris Healy

Oct 26—A single Vesper Sparrow at Rockland Lake State Park. Carol Weiss

Oct 28—A mature Bald Eagle flew over our yard before 8:00 a.m., not super high, heading Northeast. Sarah Johnson, Nyack

Oct 28—A single Vesper Sparrow and a quartet of American Pipits on the ball field at the Pier. Carol Weiss

Oct 30—RAS field trip at Piermont Pier. Some unbelievable sightings—there was no snow on the ground in Piermont. More than 50 American Pipits, 15 Snow Buntings, two Bald Eagles, two Redheads in the Hudson with the Ruddies. Drew Ciganek, Ron Conzo, Peter Johnson and Carol Weiss



Snow Bunting © Alan W. Wells

Nov 24—During our “pre-turkey calorie burn walk” around Rockland Lake this morning, we spotted an Eastern Meadowlark in the overgrown field at the north end of the lake. It flew up from the grass and perched in a small, bare tree alongside the path leading from the parking lot to lake. At the time (about 11:00am) we did not have optics with us. When we were able to return with binoculars and camera about 20 minutes later, it was gone. Alan and Della Wells

Nov 30—Doodletown: Jim Previdi, Peter Johnson, Caroline McDonald and Ron Conzo spooked up a woodcock. Just a brief look as it took wing but great fun. They also saw a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers and several Fox Sparrows.

Please send your bird notes and sightings to Carol at cweiss1124@optonline.net or call her at 845-358-3659.

Upcoming Nature Programs

Unless otherwise noted, *Nature Programs* are held on the first Friday of each month, September through June, at the **Community Center, Congers Lake Memorial Park**, located at 6 Gilcrest Road, Congers, NY, 10920. Meet at 7:00pm for refreshments and conversation, with a one-hour nature program following, beginning at 7:30pm. There is plenty of parking near the building, and it is handicap accessible. All RAS programs are open to the public and donations are greatly appreciated to help cover costs. If you would like to provide refreshments for any of our meetings, please call Julia Warger in advance at 845-947-4453, to coordinate efforts. Leave a message with your name, return phone number, and the date you wish to provide a delicious treat (sweet or savory) for the refreshments table.

FEB 3, 2012

Back from the Brink of Extinction and Beyond



Whooping Crane displaying in the wetlands at ICF, Baraboo, WI ©Michael Garber

Speaker: Darcy Love, Visitor Program Manager, International Crane Foundation.

Almost 40 years ago, two Doctoral students from Cornell University decided to do what they could to save an endangered family of birds from extinction. Today, the International Crane Foundation (ICF), located in Baraboo, Wisconsin, is the world expert in issues involving these culturally significant birds wherever they live. Learn about the role ICF's co-founder, Dr. George Archibald, played in bringing the world's rarest crane species back from the brink of extinction. With just 22 Whooping Cranes remaining in the world in the 1940s, creative and unorthodox thinking was needed to help save them. Today, just under 600 Whooping Cranes face new challenges to their survival. Discover what ICF is doing and how we can help not just cranes, but the people and countless other species who share their environment.

MAR 2, 2012

Birding by Ear



Wood Thrush © Alan W. Wells

Speaker: Lorrie Pallant, RAS Member

ALTERNATE LOCATION: [Street Community Center, 31 Zukor Rd, New City, NY](#)

Have you ever wondered what bird is calling out your window? Learn about the wonders of birdsong and how to identify familiar Rockland birds by sound. This program is perfect for beginners and a great refresher for experienced birders. Join Lorrie Pallant as she explores Birding By Ear!

APR 6, 2012

Hummingbirds: Feathered Gems

Speaker: Gina Nichols, Naturalist, Sunrise Birding, LLC

ALTERNATE LOCATION: [Historical Society of Rockland, 20 Zukor Rd, New City, NY](#)

With 340 species known in the world, hummingbirds are the second largest family of birds after flycatchers. These tiny aeronautic marvels have the ability to hover, fly backward, and migrate long distances. The physiological capacity of hummingbirds to raise and lower their heart rate and body temperature to survive cold nights is unmatched in the animal world. This program illustrates the amazing adaptations of these glittering gems and describes their fascinating life histories. Vivid photographs of hummingbirds in the North, Central, and South America tell the story of how these birds survive in habitats that range from tropical forests to the forests of the Andes.



Fiery-throated Hummingbird © Gina Nichols



Violet-tailed Sylph © Gina Nichols

Upcoming Field Trips

Note: Please call the trip leader 24 hours ahead if you plan to join the group at the field trip site, rather than the designated meeting place!

Please check www.rocklandaudubon.org for updates!

Audubon in the Parks is an initiative with Audubon New York and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to advance bird conservation in State Parks. To highlight this partnership, RAS is proud to offer an **Audubon in the Parks** series of walks!

FEB 4 (Sat)—Winter Birding in Orange County

Meet Jim Previdi at 2pm at the Commuter Parking Lot, Rte. 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. See raptors and field birds. Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls are usually sighted just before sunset. 845-942-8448

FEB 5 (Sun)—First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier

Meet Veronika Krause at 8am at the ball field parking lot at the pier. Over by 10am. 845-359-9294

FEB 17 (Fri)—Owl Prowl at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Jim Previdi at 7:30pm at the main parking lot at the end of Battlefield Rd., accessed from Park Rd. off Rte. 9W in Stony Point. Search for the resident Great Horned and Eastern Screech-Owls. 845-942-8448 or Battlefield office 845-786-2521

FEB 18 (Sat)—Rockland Lake State Park (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Elyse and Tom Fuller at 8am at the North Pool parking lot. Look for late wintering ducks. Great for beginners. Over by 11:30am. 845-351-2893

FEB 19 (Sun)—Croton Point Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8am at the Commuter Parking Lot, Rte. 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. Look for wintering birds and possible rarities on the Westchester side of the Hudson. 845-358-3659

MAR 4 (Sun)—First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier

Meet Peter Johnson at 8am at the ball field parking lot at the pier. Over by 10am. 914-261-2895

MAR 10 (Sat)—Woodcocks at Kakiat Park

Meet Jim Previdi at 5:30pm at the Kakiat parking lot, Rte. 202 opposite Viola Elementary School, Suffern. Bring a flashlight. 845-942-8448

MAR 18 (Sun)—Morning Stroll at Kakiat Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8am at the Kakiat parking lot, Rte. 202 opposite Viola Elementary School, Suffern. 845-358-3659

APR 1 (Sun)—First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier

Meet Carol Weiss at 8am at the ball field parking lot at the pier. Check the pier and river for early migrants. Over by 10am. 845-358-3659

APR 8 (Sun)—The Celery Farm, Allendale, NJ

Meet Alan & Della Wells and Peter Johnson at 9am at the Celery Farm parking lot on Franklin Turnpike, Allendale, NJ. Great for beginners, may be wet underfoot. Look for waterfowl and very early spring migrants. Over by noon. 845-942-5751 or 914-261-2895

APR 15 (Sun)—A Spring Stroll at Mt. Ivy Swamp

Meet Veronika Krause at 9am at Pomona Middle School parking lot on Pomona Rd. Look for Marsh Marigolds and Chipping Sparrows along the railroad embankment. Over by noon. 845-359-9294

APR 20 (Fri)—A Weekday Walk at the Celery Farm

Meet Elyse Fuller at 9am at the Celery Farm parking lot on Franklin Turnpike, Allendale, NJ. Look for early spring migrants. Over by 11:30am. 845-351-2893

APR 27 (Fri)—A Weekday Walk at the Elk Pen (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Elyse Fuller at 9am at the parking area for the Elk Pen section of Harriman State Park off Arden Valley Rd. 0.3mi east of Rte. 17. Eastern Bluebirds, Prairie Warblers, and Field Sparrows are possibilities at this unique field habitat. Over by 11am. 845-351-2893

APR 29 (Sun)—Doodletown (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Carol Weiss at 7am at the pull-off on Rte. 9W just north of the Iona Island causeway, south of Bear Mountain. Expect warblers, vireos, and northbound passerines. Over around noon. 845-358-3659

Mission of Rockland Audubon Society

An all-volunteer chapter of the National Audubon Society, Rockland Audubon Society's mission is to promote environmental conservation and foster an appreciation of birds and nature through education programs and activities.

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Allow 4 to 8 weeks for delivery of *Audubon Magazine* and *The Observer*.

The Observer

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Graphics	Della Wells
Copyediting	Alan Wells
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