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**18th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count: February 13-16, 2015**

**By Della Wells, RAS Board Member**

Looking for something easy, free, fun, and important to do from the comfort of your own home this February? How about participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)?

By spending as little as 15 minutes (or as long as you wish) counting birds on Friday, Feb. 13 through Monday, Feb. 16, 2015, and then entering your sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org), your GBBC checklist will help **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** and **National Audubon Society** researchers learn more about how birds are doing around the world. Last year, more than 144,000 online checklists were submitted, creating the world's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

Beginning birders to experts of all ages are invited to participate. Visit the official GBBC website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) for more information. And, use this site to explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during and after the count. All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great products.

Have fun!



Northern Cardinal at feeder in winter © Alan W. Wells

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## Stanford Biologist Warns of Early Stages of Earth's 6th Mass Extinction Event

**Stanford Biology Professor Rodolfo Dirzo and his colleagues warn that this "defaunation" could have harmful downstream effects on human health.**

**By Bjorn Carey**

The planet's current biodiversity, the product of 3.5 billion years of evolutionary trial and error, is the highest in the history of life. But it may be reaching a tipping point.

In a new **review** of scientific literature and analysis of data published in *Science*, an international team of scientists cautions that the loss and decline of animals is contributing to what appears to be the early days of the planet's sixth mass biological extinction event.

Since 1500, more than 320 terrestrial vertebrates have become extinct. Populations of the remaining species show a 25 percent average decline in abundance. The situation is similarly dire for invertebrate animal life.

And while previous extinctions have been driven by natural planetary transformations or catastrophic asteroid strikes, the current die-off can be associated to human activity, a situation that the lead author **Rodolfo Dirzo**, a professor of biology at Stanford, designates an era of "Anthropocene defaunation."

Across vertebrates, 16 to 33 percent of all species are estimated to be globally threatened or endangered. Large animals – described as megafauna and including elephants, rhinoceroses, polar bears and countless other species worldwide – face the highest rate of decline, a trend that matches previous extinction events.

Larger animals tend to have lower population growth rates and produce fewer offspring. They need larger habitat areas to maintain viable populations. Their size and meat mass make them easier and more attractive hunting targets for humans.



Elephants © Claudia Paulussen/Shutterstock

Although these species represent a relatively low percentage of the animals at risk, their loss would have trickle-down effects that could shake the stability of other species and, in some cases, even human health.

For instance, previous experiments conducted in Kenya have isolated patches of land from megafauna such as zebras, giraffes and elephants, and observed how an ecosystem reacts to the removal of its largest species. Rather quickly, these areas become overwhelmed with rodents. Grass and shrubs increase and the rate of soil compaction decreases. Seeds and shelter become more easily available, and the risk of predation drops.

Consequently, the number of rodents doubles – and so does the abundance of the disease-carrying ectoparasites that they harbor. "Where human density is high, you get high rates of defaunation, high incidence of rodents, and thus high levels of pathogens, which increases the risks of disease transmission," said Dirzo, who is also a senior fellow at the **Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment**. "Who would have thought that just defaunation would have all these dramatic consequences? But it can be a vicious circle."

The scientists also detailed a troubling trend in invertebrate defaunation. Human population has doubled in the past 35 years; in the same period, the number of invertebrate animals – such as beetles, butterflies, spiders and worms – has decreased by 45 percent.

As with larger animals, the loss is driven primarily by loss of habitat and global climate disruption, and could have trickle-up effects in our everyday lives. For instance, insects pollinate roughly 75 percent of the world's food crops, an estimated 10 percent of the economic value of the world's food supply. Insects also play a critical role in nutrient cycling and decomposing organic materials, which helps ensure ecosystem productivity. In the United States alone, the value of pest control by native predators is estimated at \$4.5 billion annually.

Dirzo said that the solutions are complicated. Immediately reducing rates of habitat change and over-exploitation would help, but these approaches need to be tailored to individual regions and situations. He said he hopes that raising awareness of the ongoing mass extinction – and not just of large, charismatic species – and its associated consequences will help spur change.

"We tend to think about extinction as loss of a species from the face of Earth, and that's very important, but there's a loss of critical ecosystem functioning in which animals play a central role that we need to pay attention to as well," Dirzo said. "Ironically, we have long considered that defaunation is a cryptic phenomenon, but I think we will end up with a situation that is non-cryptic because of the increasingly obvious consequences to the planet and to human wellbeing."

The coauthors on the report include Hillary S. Young, University of California, Santa Barbara; Mauro Galetti, Universidade Estadual Paulista in Brazil; Gerardo Ceballos, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico; Nick J.B. Isaac, of the Natural Environment Research Council Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in England; and Ben Collen, of University College London.

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Rodolfo Dirzo, Biology: (650) 736-7643, [rdirzo@stanford.edu](mailto:rdirzo@stanford.edu)

*Reprinted from **Stanford Report, July 24, 2014** with permission of Stanford University Communications*

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## **RAS's Bluebird Trail: Numbers Down in 2014**

**By Elyse Fuller, RAS Board Member**

The Rockland Audubon Society Bluebird Trail faced some challenges in the 2014 breeding season. According to reports, only 17 Eastern Bluebirds and six Tree Swallows fledged. These numbers represent a dramatic decline from previous breeding seasons. In contrast, the 2013 breeding season saw 66 bluebirds, 89 swallows, and two Tufted Titmice fledged from the 77 RAS nest boxes located throughout Rockland County and southeast Orange County.

During the 2014 breeding season, losses occurred at a number of locations throughout the bluebird trail. All of the 2014 species (Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and House Wrens) suffered casualties at either the egg or chick stage or both.

No official claims can be made for sure in blaming snakes for the demise of the nests, since none of the box monitors witnessed any such predatory acts. However, two of the monitors found a Black Rat Snake curled up inside a nest box that had previously contained Tree Swallow chicks. Furthermore, when eggs and chicks “disappear” from nest boxes with no signs of struggle, accounts show that snakes are likely the predatory culprits as opposed to mice, raccoons, or other potential predators, which tend to leave signs of their activities, such as disheveled nests or nest material protruding from box openings.

While disappointing, remember that predators play important roles in ecosystems and they also must feed to survive. RAS is dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment, which includes strong predator populations, but it is hard to forget that the reason RAS started the bluebird trail was to enhance the availability of nest cavities for the Eastern Bluebird. The species—New York’s state bird—until more recently had been dwindling in numbers due to habitat destruction. To that end, RAS has applied for a grant to create baffles that will hopefully cut down on snake and predatory activity, allowing the area’s Eastern Bluebird population to continue its recovery.



Bluebird nestbox with predator baffle © Alan W. Wells

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## **Scholarship Available: Educator's Week, July 19-24, 2015, Hog Island Audubon Camp**

**By Caroline McDonald, RAS Board Member**

Attention teachers! Would you like to have fun learning about our environment while earning continuing education credits? Join educators from around the country for a dynamic and fun-filled residential program on Audubon's famed Hog Island, in the scenic mid-coast area of Maine.

Designed for both science and non-science educators, this session will generate exciting ideas for creating and incorporating environmental education activities into your curriculum and teaching. Inspiring and experienced instructors will share their favorite approaches, methods, and activities for engaging you, and your students, with nature.

Workshops using techniques in field biology, art, music, photography, theater, journaling, and other disciplines will be presented, as well as a host of classic Audubon Camp field trips. Attendees will visit the nearby restored Atlantic Puffin and seabird colony, as well as explore Hog Island’s magnificent spruce forest, its rich intertidal zones and a nearby bog.

Great networking opportunities, delicious gourmet-style home cooking and the experience of living on a 330 acre wildlife sanctuary island will make this a memorable and cherished experience.

Instructors include veteran field biologist Ted Gilman (CT), artist/journal maker Sherrie York (CO), award-winning educator/musician Trudy Phillips (PA), elementary science educator/musician Craig Newberger (PA), middle school science teacher and conservation activist Ron Smith (NJ), "Puffin Pete" Salmansohn (ME), a photography skills instructor, and guest Dr. Steve Kress, director of Audubon's Puffin Project. Continuing Education Credits (4.5) are available.

Check out the [hogisland.audubon.org](http://hogisland.audubon.org) website for more details about the camp. Scholarships are available. If interested, contact Karen D'Alessandri, RAS president, at [kdalessandri@optonline.net](mailto:kdalessandri@optonline.net).

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## President's Message

Hi fellow birding enthusiasts!

The weather for the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which took place Sunday, Dec. 14, was in the low 40s, so we had plenty of waterfowl on open water to count! In fact, this year, the RAS team set more than 12 CBC records for the county. Thanks to all who participated, both in the field and with feeder counts.

With the aid of our Collaborative Funding grant from Audubon New York, the Rockland Audubon Society (RAS) board of directors has purchased three pairs of binoculars with harness straps. So if you don't own any, don't let that prevent you from joining us on one of our many walks, as we are happy to lend you a pair and show you how to use them. Because RAS depends on member donations to fund our programs, brochures and website, the board looks forward to your responses to our appeal letter and thanks you for your generous support.

Every year, we have a few open board positions to replace the members leaving our board. We look for volunteers who are interested in expanding their RAS experiences and making new acquaintances. Most of these positions require an average of five hours per month of your time, in addition to a monthly board meeting. If you would like to consider joining the board we'd be happy to have you. Please contact me at [kdalessandri@optonline.net](mailto:kdalessandri@optonline.net).

Happy Birding and Happy Holidays!

Karen D'Alessandri

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## Welcome New and Returning Members!

Kathryn A. Barry, Rita Brennan, Barbara Carey, Maria C. Collins, John Cooney, Jr., Paul Eric, Francine Fried, Mary Gallage, Marion Greenwald, Carmen Irizarry, Pamela Irizarry, Lucinda Kershaw, Herb Klein, Shawn Lawrence, Gary D. Lutz, Doris Masear, Jessica Munich, Andrew Noble, Joanne Norell, Russell Oyer, Josephine Perrozzi, Jan Pol, Ruth Mirriam Reichenberg, Irene Ryan, Judith A. Schwartz, Richard Schwartz, Dennis Smith, The Walbridge Fund, Irene Weiss

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## Remembering Ed Treacy (1927-2014)

By Gene Brown

I first met Edward D. Treacy at Carr Cottage, Bear Mountain, at one of Trailside Museums' earliest winter bird counts (1949) hosted by Park Naturalist John C. Orth.

Always a scientist and always a teacher, Ed was a stickler for accurate observation. Once as we were watching a Eurasian Wigeon at Rockland Lake, he gave a mini-dissertation on the shape and extent of the white crown patch on the American Wigeon, compared and contrasted with the creamy-buff patch on the Eurasian form. His demand for accuracy is evident in the carefully drawn contours of plumage in his lovely bird portraits.

Ed is well remembered for his amazing imitations of owl calls. He could speak owl language and they would respond.

This leading authority wrote summaries of bird observation and occurrence in the southeast section of the state for "The Kingbird" quarterly bulletin of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (formerly Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc.) His own contributions included "photographs of NYS rarities: Ivory Gull (1981)" and "Ross' Goose added to the NYS list (1983)." Rare gulls were of special interest to him, such as the Ivory Gull, just mentioned, that he and other observers discovered in Newburgh in 1981.

Our friend was solidly loyal to his personal faith. On extended field trips, upon arrival at overnight stopovers, he would find the location and time of services of his house of worship. At the appropriate hour he would quietly vanish for a time, then rejoin the group without fanfare.

Ed was a kindly gentleman. We remember how, when master birder and RAS Board member, Bob Connor was no longer able to drive, Ed would take him to various prime birding places. Once he invited me to accompany him to the coast of Massachusetts to see a rare gull. I couldn't go, but have cherished the memory of the invitation ever since.



Ed Treacy, Bear Mountain Hawk Watch, Oct. 2009 © Carol Weiss

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## Notes and Sightings: June – November 2014

Compiled by Carol Weiss

Thanks to all who sent in reports this summer/fall. Please continue to send your sightings to [cweiss1124@optonline.net](mailto:cweiss1124@optonline.net) or call at 845-358-3659.

**June 20 and 29:** Purple Martins seen flying over Sparkill Creek and marsh, late evening and a single Monk Parakeet at Evonne's house on Paradise Ave. in Piermont. *Drew Ciganek*

**July 8:** West Nyack—This morning I saw a little hummingbird moth that looked like a bumble bee. I'd never seen one, only the larger clearwing moths. I also saw a male oriole feeding a fledgling. *Beverly Simone*

**July 15:** Highlights of low tide today at Piermont Pier included American Avocet (seen by Evan Mark, Gene Brown and myself), a Cattle Egret (only there for 10 minutes), Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Spotted Sandpipers and Osprey. A good list for mid-July! An avocet appeared two years ago on the same date. *Carol Weiss*

**July 15:** Stony Point Battlefield—I had an Osprey on the shipwreck spar this morning at Kings Ferry. I had a great look at him for more than an hour from my window. The often-mocked Purple Martin house in my garden is hosting a family of Eastern Bluebirds—four nestlings being fed all day long. *Julia Warger*



Osprey © Alan W. Wells

**July 17:** Garnerville—I have a hummingbird nest in my backyard with two eggs. *Tom Cunningham*

**July 25:** I saw Drew Ciganek on Piermont Pier and he pointed out a Royal Tern and two Greater Yellowlegs. *Veronika Krause*



Greater Yellowlegs at Piermont Pier © Alan W. Wells

**Aug. 3:** Highlights of the RAS field trip to Kakiat County Park were six or more very active Pine Warblers, including adults feeding young, and two cooperative Wood Thrush, which flew across the path and landed only a few feet into the underbrush. *Carol Weiss and others*

**Aug. 6:** I saw a single Black-bellied Plover at Piermont Pier today! Also present were Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plovers. One adult Forster's Tern sat on a wooden pole at the ruined wharf with a younger one, calling to it incessantly! *Kevin Quill*

**Aug. 6:** A potter wasp, *Eumenes fraternus*, built a pot on a goldenrod in my back meadow. It is stuffed with sedated caterpillars and a wasp egg. The egg will hatch and eat the caterpillar and chew through the lid when it's ready to fly. *John Lampkin*

**Aug. 11:** Yesterday morning I saw a bird, that without The Warbler Guide, I would never had known was an American Redstart! *Beverly Simone*

**Aug. 15:** A single Common Tern was seen on pilings on the south side of Piermont Pier, while several Forster's Terns flew around both sides. *Carol Weiss and others*

**Aug. 23:** West Nyack—I just saw a Tennessee Warbler foraging in an elm tree and just now a Blackburnian Warbler. *Beverly Simone*

**Aug. 23:** At Piermont Pier today there was a Ruddy Turnstone at the end of the exposed shoreline on the north side. Very interesting to watch it live up to its name as it constantly turned over stones and pebbles in search of food. This shorebird must have a very strong bill and head structure! *Kevin Quill*



Ruddy Turnstone at Piermont Pier © Alan W. Wells

**Aug. 28:** A female Bay-breasted Warbler at Rockland Lake. Other warblers were American Redstart, Black-and-White, and Nashville. *Carol Weiss*

**Aug. 31:** Low tide was around 8 a.m. at Piermont Pier and traffic was light that early. Five species of gulls were found: Ring-billed, Herring and Great Black-backed, of course, and a single immature each of Laughing and Bonaparte's. Also noted were six species of shorebirds: one Killdeer, 10 Semipalmated Plovers, many Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, seven Lesser Yellowlegs (reported by Evan Mark) and one Spotted Sandpiper. I did not see the turnstone or sanderling that have been there in the last few weeks. Several Osprey are very active and feeding successfully. *Carol Weiss*

**Sept. 15:** At 7:45 this morning at my complex in Spring Valley, I saw an Osprey heading in a southerly direction. I was surprised to see it at such an early hour. *Linda Pistolesi*

**Sept. 16:** West Nyack—This morning I saw a Red-eyed Vireo in an elm tree, and a Palm Warbler low on a branch in the woods. *Beverly Simone* [Note: Beverly has a certified wildlife-friendly yard and certainly sees a number of desirable birds every year.]

**Sept. 20:** This morning I saw two of what I believe were Blackpoll Warblers quickly moving from tree to tree. *Beverly Simone*

**Sept. 21:** Highlight of an RAS Hook Mountain trek was a Common Nighthawk seen from the parking lot as we discussed whether to climb the mountain in the thick fog or try another site. Since not everyone had seen the nighthawk on its first fly-by, it returned so all saw it. The field trip then continued at Congers Lake. *Carol Weiss*

**Oct. 4:** At Piermont Pier at 11 a.m. I saw an American Kestrel with food in his mouth. *Ron Conzo*

**Oct. 10:** I saw a female Canada Warbler this morning. *Beverly Simone*

**Oct. 10:** I led a field trip to Doodletown on Friday and found a number of warblers: Black-and-White, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, Palm, Pine and perhaps a Chestnut-sided. Six species of woodpeckers were spotted: Downy, Hairy, Flicker, Pileated, Red-bellied and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Thrush cousins included Wood, Swainson's, and Hermit, and American Robins were there in great numbers, perhaps 200. *Carol Weiss*





Black-throated Blue Warbler at Doodletown, Bear Mountain State Park © Alan W. Wells

**Oct. 11:** White-crowned Sparrows were at the ball field in Piermont—an immature on Oct. 7 and an adult today. *Carol Weiss*

**Oct. 14:** At Iona Island around noon, I saw an American Bittern, unusual for Rockland County. It was at the edge of the causeway, south side, about 100 feet from Route 9W. The bittern was just past the roadside marker. When I stopped to take this picture, a car drove up and passed me and flushed the bird into the pickerelweed on the mudflats. (This car had a vanity plate that suggested that the occupants were birders.) When I returned 15 minutes later to get another look, another car stopped and flushed the bird again. That time it flew farther away, deeper into the marsh. *Carol Weiss*



American Bittern © Carol Weiss

**Oct. 10:** I haven't had a chance to get out recently, but had a flock of White-throated Sparrows a week to 10 days ago, and a number of Dark-eyed Juncos yesterday. Oh, and an Eastern Towhee visited my front yard on Oct. 3—the first one I've seen here in 18-20 years. They were regulars when I moved here in 1992. *Pat Murray*

**Oct. 14:** Tuxedo, Orange County—Tom and I saw a small flock of Pine Siskins up the hill from the house this weekend. We also had a Red-breasted Nuthatch in the yard on Sunday. *Elyse Fuller*

**Oct. 15:** This morning I saw at least a half-dozen Kinglets, an Eastern Phoebe, a female Eastern Towhee and a lone Monarch butterfly. *Beverly Simone*

**Oct. 15:** There was a Vesper Sparrow at Rockland Lake this morning, as well as a Gray-cheeked Thrush and 40 other species. *Carol Weiss*

**Oct. 19:** A very active Winter Wren entertained a few RAS members in Tallman Mt. State Park. The bird was actively feeding in a vegetation-filled tank near the Long Path/bike path through the park. The tank is very old, from the 1920s, when Standard Oil had a storage facility there. *Carol Weiss*

**Oct. 23:** On the Piermont Pier this morning it was coming up to high tide. I tried driving out but got only as far as the first curve, where the water forced me to turn back. But right there I found a lone Brant. Nice surprise. Right away I saw it as smaller and not at all acting like a Canada Goose. I headed for Tallman and when I got out of the car, saw two adult Bald Eagles flying overhead. Walking the undercliff path in Tallman I picked up some Yellow-rumped Warblers, Golden-crowned Kinglets and a Marsh Wren (heard, but not seen). It turned out to be a nice, if soggy walk. *Peter Johnson*

**Oct. 24:** Elda and I went for a walk on Piermont Pier late yesterday afternoon. Not much there, but at the ball field, hordes of sparrows: Song, Swamp, Savannah, White-throated, White-crowned (one immature at the southeast corner of field), Dark-eyed Junco (one), and Lincoln's (one in the brush at the southeast corner). *Tom Dow*

**Oct. 25:** Encouraged by our walk yesterday, we went to the pier again this afternoon. Didn't check the ball field because a game was in progress, but had five sparrow species around the boathouse at the end of the pier: Song, Savannah, Swamp, another White-crowned (adult this time), and a very cooperative Vesper Sparrow on the lawn by the boathouse. *Tom and Elda Dow*. The Dows also saw a female Common Yellowthroat.

**Oct. 28:** Two Golden Eagles and 24 Red-shouldered Hawks were among the 126 raptors that passed the Hook Mt. hawk watch today. *Carol Weiss and other observers*

**Nov. 1:** At the end of Piermont Pier this morning, the wind was blowing and the rain pouring down when I spooked a group of five or six sparrow-sized birds right in front of me. I was very surprised by their white wing patches, showing them to be Snow Buntings. I thought it quite early in the year, so checking Bob Deeds' book, I saw that they have been here as early as Oct. 21 in the past. *Peter Johnson*



Snow Bunting © Peter Johnson

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## Fishing Line Recycling Project: An Update

Ron Conzo reported that he filled a five-gallon bucket with fishing line, hooks, sinkers (and some trash) when emptying the 17 fishing line recycling containers installed around Rockland County. These receptacles are located at Bowline Town Park, Camp Addison Boyce (Girl Scout Camp), Demarest Mill County Park, Flat Rock County Park, Ramapo River (near Seven Lakes Drive in Sloatsburg), Kakiat County Park, Piermont Pier, Rockland Lake State Park, and Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site. When fishing at any of these locations, please continue to deposit all discarded monofilament line into one of these containers for recycling. Our wildlife thanks you.

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## Upcoming Nature Programs

*These programs are made possible through generous donations from our members and friends!  
Thank you!*

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 Gilchrest Road, Congers, N.Y., 10920. Meet at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments and conversation, with a one-hour nature program beginning at 7:30 p.m. 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 contribute a sweet or savory treat for the refreshments table, please add your name to the sign-up sheet at the meeting.

**Jan. 9, 2015**

**\*\*\*NOTE DATE CHANGE: SECOND Friday\*\*\***

## **Members Participation Night**



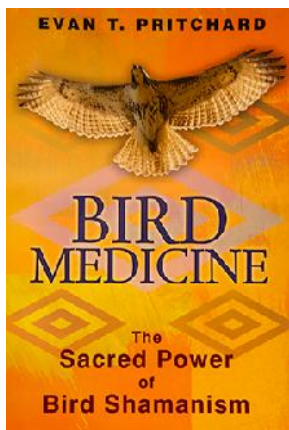
Snow Bunting, Jones Beach © Jim Previdi

Gather together on a chilly winter night to peruse the art work of other outdoor enthusiasts. Enjoy warm drinks and delicious snacks while chatting with the artists.

Calling all Rockland Audubon Society members for submissions for display. All mediums welcome. Please e-mail Judith Malo, program chairperson, at [jmalo10@aol.com](mailto:jmalo10@aol.com) by Dec. 31, with information on the pieces you would like to exhibit.

**Feb. 6, 2015**

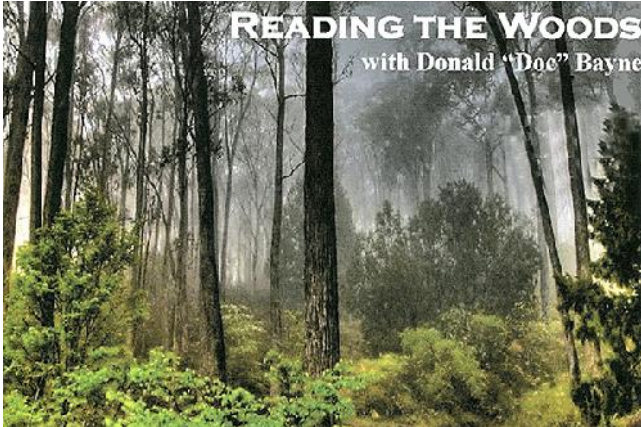
## **Bird Medicine**



**Speaker:** Evan Pritchard

Author and academic of Mi'kmaq descent, Evan T. Pritchard will use his book, *Bird Medicine*, as a platform to speak about the National Audubon Society's Sept. 9 report on the impact of climate change on North American bird life. Stories from first-hand eye witnesses will be included.

**Mar. 6, 2015**  
**Reading the Woods**



Forestscape © Donald "Doc" Bayne

**Speaker:** Donald "Doc" Bayne

Get more out of your experience outdoors. Enjoy the insight and experience of Donald "Doc" Bayne, former environmental educator at Sterling Forest State Park, as he teaches us how to *read the wood*. Learn the tell-tale signs of what lurks all around when you wander through our rich Lower Hudson Valley region.

**Apr. 10, 2015**

**\*\*\*NOTE DATE CHANGE: SECOND Friday\*\*\***

**Fungi of the Palisades Park Region**



Gills © Ray Clyne

**Speaker:** Ray Clyne

Ray Clyne, naturalist and amateur mycologist, will share photos of the wide variety of fungi found in the Palisades Park region, along with fun facts, historical theories, and the role fungi have played in medicine and our daily lives. Ray and Patricia Clyne have documented more than 260 macro and micro fungi species in the region as part of an ongoing biodiversity study.

## 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! Check <http://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!

### **Jan. 1, 2015 (THU) – Birding at Jones Beach, N.Y. (Audubon in the Parks)**

Meet Della and Alan Wells at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, at 5:45 a.m. See the first sunrise of 2015 and start your new “year list.” Bring water and snack...we will find a nice warm restaurant for lunch! 845-942-5751

### **Jan. 4 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier**

Meet Peter Johnson at 8 a.m. at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. 914-261-2895

### **Jan. 11 (SUN) – Congers Lake Memorial Park in Winter**

Meet Jim Previdi at 10 a.m. at the main parking lot of Congers Lake Memorial Park (6 Gilchrist Rd.) Check out the variety of trees, birds, and more around Congers Lake. Path is wheelchair-accessible. 914-656-2509

### **Jan. 17 (SAT) – Pelham Bay Park**

Meet Jim Previdi at 8 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. Search for owls and waterfowl in this wild(er) corner of the Bronx. Dress warmly, bring a snack and hot drink. Return by early afternoon. 914-656-2509

### **Jan. 23-25 (FRI-SUN) – Winter Birding Overnight Trip: Cape Ann and Plum Island, MA.**

A weekend trip to view wintering birds around Cape Ann and Plum Island, MA. Contact Jim Previdi for details. 914-656-2509

### **Feb. 1 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier**

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. 845-358-3659

### **Feb. 7 (SAT) – Winter Birding at Shawangunk Grasslands NWR**

Meet Jim Previdi at 2 p.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack, for carpooling. See raptors and field birds. Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls are usually sighted just before sunset. 914-656-2509

### **Feb. 14 (SAT) – Owl Prowl at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)**

Meet Jim Previdi at 7 p.m. at the main parking lot at the end of Battlefield Rd. Access is from Park Rd., off Route 9W in Stony Point. Search for the resident Great Horned and Screech Owls. **This very popular walk is by advance reservation only and will be limited to the first 35 registrants. Please call the Battlefield Museum at 845-786-2521 before Feb. 13 to register. Children must be 10 years or older. Free admission.**

### **Feb. 16 (MON) – Presidents’ Day Birding at Kennedy Dells County Park**

Meet Vicki Beaumont at 8 a.m. at the main (upper) parking lot of Kennedy Dells in New City. Walk through the park on graveled paths looking for winter species. [845-268-2990](tel:845-268-2990)

### **Feb. 22 (SUN) – Congers Lake Memorial Park in Winter**

Meet Matt Beckerle at 10 a.m. at the main parking lot of Congers Lake Memorial Park (6 Gilchrist Rd.) Check out the variety of trees, birds, and more around Congers Lake. Path is wheelchair-accessible. 845-735-5411 or 914-715-6399

### **March 1 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier**

Meet Ron Conzo at 8 a.m. at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. 914-393-5053

### **March 15 (SUN) – Kakiat County Park**

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the Kakiat parking lot, Route 202 in the Village of Montebello, opposite Viola Elementary School. 845-358-3659

**March 21 (SAT) – Woodcocks at Kakiat County Park**

Meet Jim Previdi at 6:30 p.m. at the Kakiat parking lot, Route 202 in the Village of Montebello, opposite Viola Elementary School. Bring a flashlight. 845-942-5751

**April 5 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Piermont Pier**

Meet Peter Johnson at 8 a.m. at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. 914-261-2895

**April 18 (SAT) – Celery Farm, Allendale, N.J.**

Meet Peter Johnson at 8 a.m. at the Celery Farm parking lot on Franklin Turnpike, Allendale, NJ. Look for waterfowl and very early spring migrants. Great for beginners, may be wet underfoot. Over by noon. 914-261-2895

**April 19 (SUN) – Spring Stroll at Mt. Ivy Swamp**

Meet Veronika Krause at 9 a.m. at the 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

**April 24 (FRI) – Weekday Walk at the Elk Pen (Audubon in the Parks)**

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

**April 26 (SUN) – Lord Stirling Park, Great Swamp, N.J.**

Meet Ron Conzo at 8 a.m. at the Joseph St. Lawrence Community Center, Torne Valley Rd. and Orange Ave., Suffern. Seek out spring migrants along the trails of Lord Stirling Park in the western part of New Jersey's Great Swamp, Bernards Township, Somerset County. Bring lunch. Return by 2 p.m. 914-393-5053

## 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.

## Board of Directors and Committee Members

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**President:** Karen D'Alessandri

**Vice President:** <open>

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**Education & Outreach:** Joanna Galdone, Joyce Greenwald, Lorrie Pallant

**E-contacts:** Della Wells

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**Membership:** Della Wells

**Newsletter:** Caroline McDonald, Della Wells

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## Membership

To join, send a \$20 check payable to **National Audubon Society** to:

Della Wells, RAS Membership Chairperson  
9 Dunderberg Rd.  
Tomkins Cove, NY 10986-1003

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

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## *The Observer*

<b>Editing</b>	Caroline McDonald
<b>Layout</b>	Della Wells
<b>Copyediting</b>	Alan Wells
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Newsletter submissions welcome!

Please send your article contributions for *The Observer* to Caroline McDonald at [carolinem38a@gmail.com](mailto:carolinem38a@gmail.com). The editor reserves the right to edit any copy for clarity, accuracy and space requirements.

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