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**Rockland Audubon Society, Inc.**

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## **Saving the Golden-winged Warbler**

### **Private Foundation Helps to Preserve Rare Species**

Beginning in 2013, the Palisades Parks Conservancy formed a partnership with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC), New York State Parks, and the Sarah K. de Coizart Perpetual Trust to conduct surveys and manage the habitat of the Golden-winged Warblers. That work, now in its second year, is part of a long-term plan to help bring back this threatened species to the New York Highlands.



Golden-winged Warbler © Seth Vornberger

The Golden-winged Warbler is one of dozens of warbler species that make New York and New Jersey its home in the spring and summer. Each year, they migrate from Central America to the Northeast to mate and raise their young before heading back south for the winter. But, like many other similar migratory species, they are in trouble. Populations of this species have plummeted over the past two decades so that today, the Golden-winged Warbler is a candidate for listing on the national endangered species list.

To ensure that this beautiful bird remains one whose calls are heard in New York, the Conservancy and the PIPC have begun a long-term project to identify important habitat and manage that habitat for ideal breeding conditions. Over the past two years, PIPC scientists and volunteers, with funding from the Conservancy and the State of New York, have scoured wetlands throughout Harriman, Bear Mountain, Sterling Forest, and Fahnstock State parks to locate warblers during the breeding season. As of July 2014, we surveyed 100 wetland sites representing nearly 2,000 acres of habitat. Thirty breeding pairs were discovered and management policies are being formulated.



Max Garfinkle and Peter Goode, PIPC and OPRHP staff supported by PPC funds, survey for warblers in Harriman © Max Garfinkle

The PIPC has also utilized New York state funding to restore five wetland sites in Sterling Forest State Park. These sites previously supported nesting Golden-winged Warblers but recent surveys found no birds due to habitat loss to invasive species and succession. Within five years we will restore these wetlands so that they will be able to support nesting birds.

If you are interested in this project, would like to volunteer, or want more information, please contact Matthew Shook [[shookm@pipc.org](mailto:shookm@pipc.org) or (845) 786-2701, Ext. 252] or Max Garfinkle [[garfinklem@pipc.org](mailto:garfinklem@pipc.org) or (845) 351-5907 Ext. 108.]

*Reprinted from "The Bear Report 2014" with permission of The Palisades Park Conservancy, Inc. (Dec. 2014)*

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## **Birds and Windows – A Deadly Dilemma**

**By Susan Trulove**

When a bird flew into the window of Becky Schneider's office at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center last year, the avian ecologist rushed outside and found a stunned flycatcher that flew off shortly afterward.

A few weeks later she heard a bird fly into her co-worker's window; the scarlet tanager was not as lucky and died from the collision.

"I looked at the windows and saw how reflective they are — more like mirrors than windows," said Schneider, a project manager with the Conservation Management Institute in Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment.

With the permission of the corporate research center, Schneider and a troop of volunteers began surveying bird collisions with windows in the park last October. Over the past year, they have documented 203 fatalities.

"The birds often do not see the glass as a barrier," said Schneider. "Instead they focus on the reflecting vegetation and sky and crash into the window."

It is estimated that close to one billion birds die each year in the United States due to collisions with glass.

Photos and a running tally of the birds found are posted on Schneider's blog, *Hope Is the Thing With Feathers*. The team has identified 50 species that have died from window collisions.

"People don't realize the number of species that are being killed. They think it is just starlings and house sparrows," said volunteer Kara Kosarski, a 2013 wildlife science graduate of Virginia Tech.

"Over the course of the project, I was amazed at how many species of birds I found and how frequently I was finding them," said volunteer Chrissy Barton, a 2012 animal science graduate.

Kosarski and Barton both joined the project to learn about wildlife and the human impact on the environment. They are the longest serving of the project's 17 total volunteers.

Schneider has a number of recommended solutions and some funds for the project, "so that we didn't immediately have to ask the corporate research center to spend money," she said.

The study has identified the worst of the corporate center's buildings and narrowed it to specific sides of those buildings to target for treatment. Window films are the best treatment and can last a few years, "but there is resistance because of the cost and the appearance," Schneider said. Another method is to hang "curtains" of nylon cords spaced 4.25 inches apart on the windows' exterior.

Coating the windows with UV paint is the least visible option, but the paint has to be reapplied every few months. However, "people might be more willing to use it if it works," said Schneider. She has received permission to test its effectiveness on one of the privately owned buildings in the park.

The corporate research center is currently planning its second construction phase. "I hope we can have some influence and make management aware that if they use mirrored glass again, it will likely double bird fatalities in the park," Schneider said.

"While I walk around looking for birds, a lot of people come out of the buildings to talk to me," Kosarski said. "They care about what is happening. The hurdle is to turn caring into action."

"It can be easy to ignore mortalities at a single site and to reason that the number of birds killed may not cause the population to decline," said Sarah Karpanty, associate professor of wildlife science in the college, whose work includes preserving biodiversity. "However, our environmental laws require us to consider cumulative effects whenever possible."

"Window mortalities at the corporate research center add to window mortality events at other sites, leading to a cumulative negative impact on the population," she continued. "We must do something in our small corner of the planet because it is an important piece of the larger picture of avian mortality and conservation challenges."

Birds-window collisions are a relatively unacknowledged problem, but Schneider hopes that with the recent attention on the Minnesota Vikings Stadium under construction and a public service announcement from the National Audubon Society and Toyota, people will start taking notice.

"If you are not looking for it, you don't realize the scope. But it is completely preventable, if people are willing," Schneider said. "There are many threats to migratory birds, and this is one we can do something about."

The College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech, which consistently ranks among the top three programs of its kind in the nation, advances the science of sustainability. Programs prepare the future generation of leaders to address the complex natural resources issues facing the planet.

*Reprinted with permission from **Virginia Tech News**.*

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# Crop Strategies Aim at Bee Scarcity

By Caroline McDonald, RAS Board Member

Farmers are acutely aware of the fact that honeybees are dying. Their concern is justifiable, as up to 40% of the food we consume is pollinated by bees. Survey data generated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) indicate that winter losses for commercial beekeepers are around one-third since 2007. Overall, these losses far exceed the historical rate of 10% to 15% and threaten beekeepers and the agricultural crops that rely upon pollination for production.



Honeybee © Alan W. Wells

According to a study by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the contribution of these pollinators to the production of crops used directly for human food has been estimated at \$207 billion globally—nearly 10% of the total value of food production.

While still debated, the most likely cause of colony collapse disorder (CCD) is said to be a combination of *Varroa* mites and insect diseases, stresses brought on by monocultures of crops, migratory beekeeping, and pesticides.

Mark Winston, biologist and director of the Center for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University said in a *New York Times* column, "A typical honeybee colony contains residue from more than 120 pesticides. Alone, each represents a benign dose. But together they form a toxic soup of chemicals whose interplay can substantially reduce the effectiveness of bees' immune systems, making them more susceptible to diseases."

Honeybees, a non-native species, are currently used almost exclusively for plant pollination in the United States and are the most vulnerable to CCD. But studies have found that by taking advantage of several native species of bees, growers could boost pollination of crops and profits. For example, researchers from North Carolina State University found that blueberries visited by a variety of bee species produce more seeds and larger berries, giving farmers significantly higher yields of fruit per acre.

"We wanted to understand the functional role of diversity," said Dr. Hannah Burrack, an associate professor of entomology at N.C. State and co-author of a paper on the research. "We found that there is a quantifiable benefit of having a lot of different types of bees pollinating a crop."

In the blueberry fields, the researchers identified five distinct groups of bee species: honeybees, bumble bees, southeastern blueberry bees, carpenter bees and a functionally similar collection of species that they called "small native bees." The researchers discovered that for each group of bees added, the farmers' yield increased by \$311 per acre.



Honeybee hive © Craig Thompson

Crop yields, and profits, are maximized if considerable acreages of cropland are left uncultivated to support wild pollinators, they found. According to the study, farms are often intensively managed, but there are usually unmanaged landscapes nearby that could encourage pollinator diversity. With highbush blueberry, wild-bee diversity improves ecosystem functions by enhancing pollination in variable climate conditions. In other words, while honeybees will only pollinate during certain sunny conditions, wild bees aren't as choosy and will pollinate plants on cloudy days as well.

Winston conducted a similar study and also concluded that a variety of wild plants in the vicinity means a healthier, more diverse bee population which contribute to pollination. He found that farmers planting an entire field would earn about \$27,000 in profit per farm, while those who left a third of the area unplanted for bee nesting and foraging would earn \$65,000 on a farm of similar size.

The challenges faced by managing honeybees and wild bees "remind us that we can manage too much," Winston said. "Excessive cultivation, chemical use and habitat destruction eventually destroy the very organisms that could be our partners."

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## Bluebird Nestboxes: An Update

By Caroline McDonald, RAS Board Member

To protect nesting Eastern Bluebirds from marauding snakes, Rockland Audubon Society members are making and attaching special baffles to some 70 nest boxes throughout the county. Peter Johnson and Ron Conzo have been busy constructing and installing the baffles. Danny Albantides and Elyse Fuller have also helped with installation, braving deep snow and frigid temperatures in the process.



Dan Albantides (left) and Ron Conzo installing predator baffles © Peter Johnson

## President's Message

Hello Fellow Birders!

I hope you had a chance to see the many Bald Eagles in our area during the winter. We are excited to announce there are a few nests in the county and across the border in New Jersey. Naturally, we will not reveal the locations to ensure the nests are not disturbed but we'll keep you posted on any activity that we are aware of.

Spring means migrants, warblers and Earth Day! As we go to press, we plan to have a table with display and educational materials at the Earth Day festival at Rockland Community College on Wednesday April 22. That evening, RAS is sponsoring the Wild & Scenic Film Festival at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern. And finally, we will have a table with both educational materials and hands-on activities at the Earth Day Celebration at Bear Mountain State Park on Saturday, April 25.

This winter, our volunteers trudged through all that snow to mount baffles on 59 of our Eastern Bluebird nest boxes. The baffles are intended to prevent predation, which impacted a number of nest boxes during last year's nesting season. We hope to see many more bluebirds fledge in 2015. Special thanks go to Danny Albantides, Ron Conzo, Peter Johnson and Elyse Fuller for braving the elements to get this job done before the start of nesting season.

Looking forward to seeing you at our meetings and on one of our many walks.

Happy Birding,  
Karen D'Alessandri

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## Welcome New and Returning Members!

Marion Anderson, C. Baver-Sorensen, Patrick Beckerle, Teresa Beutel, Edward Blanke, Paul Braus, Jeremy A. Brown, Todd & Carol Caso, Elizabeth Cherry, V. Cortesi, Rosemary Coslit, Susan Covello, Robert Crema, Penny Cruz, Annette Diskin, Lauren Doner, Doris Dudley, Marion Foote, David Gilbert, Benita Ginsberg, Edward Grant, Lester M. Guinness, Sondra Holt, Melissa & George Jacobson, Donna James, Janice Jones, Priscilla Jane Kaplan, Patrick Kilgannon, Theresa P. Knight, John Lukas, John H. Lukens, Sara & Carl Markowitz, Jean Massaro, Anthony Occhitinti, Erika Olsen, Charlotte Revesz, Barbara Rutko, Mary Spalding, Maureen & Alan Strongin, Theresa Viola, Marc Weber, Steven Weinberger, Syliva Welch, Gordon Wren, Jr., Rosaline Wunsch, Kirstin Young!

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## Congratulations Della Wells!

### Recipient of the 2015 Norman I. Stotz Award

#### By Craig Thompson, Former Board Member, Audubon Council of New York State

Della Wells of Rockland Audubon Society (RAS) was nominated and selected for the Audubon Council of New York State's 2015 Norman I. Stotz Award. The Council's annual Stotz Award recognizes that Audubon member who best demonstrates outstanding leadership in broad-based state-wide, regional and local contexts. She was given a large, framed print of John James Audubon's "Ruby-throated Hummingbirds." Also, U.S. Congressman Chris Gibson, recipient of the 2015 Hoyt Award, gave Della a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from the U.S. House of Representatives.

For 20 years, Della has shown outstanding dedication and commitment to the Audubon cause, and her dogged energy has greatly helped to promote the Council's primary goal of facilitating collaboration among local, regional and state-wide conservation partners. Recognizing Della's exceptional leadership qualities, the Audubon Council of New York State (ACNYS) asked Della to join the Council board in 2004. During her 10 years of service on the ACNYS board, eight have been in officer positions, serving as treasurer from 2005-2010 and vice chair from 2011-2014. No other (recent) ACNYS board member has participated at such high leadership levels for as long.

Della first started attending RAS public meetings in 1995. In short order she was asked to join the RAS Board and was appointed publicity chairperson, which she served as until 1998 when she became secretary and treasurer. From 2000-2002 she served as president. During that time she also did double duty stints as vice

president and treasurer. In accordance with RAS By-laws, she rolled off the Board in 2002. Della was asked to re-join the RAS Board in 2003. At that time, she served as vice president and membership chair. She then served as president from 2005, until she was again required to roll off the Board in 2009. Since returning in 2010, she has served in a variety of leadership capacities, primarily as membership chair, secretary, treasurer and field trip chair, all while maintaining the RAS electronic contacts database. She also helps edit the RAS newsletter, produces the electronic version and oversees its distribution. Della actively leads a number of RAS field trips throughout the year and staffs the RAS information table at a number of public events.

Congratulations Della!



2015 award recipients Della Wells and U.S. Congressman Chris Gibson with current Audubon Council of New York State Board Members. From left to right: MaryBeth Warburton, Larry Federman, Gini Stowe, Don Hall, Marcy Boyle, Janelle Robbins, Chris Gibson, Michael Sperling, Richard Saravay, Della Wells, Doug Bloom, Erin Crotty, Michael Bochnik, and June Summers © Alan Wells

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## Notes and Sightings: December 2014 – February 2015

Compiled by Carol Weiss

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

**Dec. 21:** Today I saw about 10 female Purple Finches across from the pool at the north end of Rockland Lake. *Kevin Quill*

**Dec. 25:** We have a juvenile Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at our feeder as well as a hawk that took out a Mourning Dove today. *Tom and Diane Cunningham*

**Dec. 26:** I was at the pier this evening at around 4:00 p.m. At the first clearing on the river I saw around 30 Canvasbacks and several Ruddy Ducks. There was an immature Bald Eagle perched on the rocks north of the pier allowing for some very good looks. At the end of the pier were two female Lesser Scaup. A large flock of gulls was also present at the end of the pier (nothing unusual among them). I was turning back when I decided to check out the wooden poles away south from the pier, near the middle of the river. Low and behold I saw three Great Cormorants perched on them. They were very distant, but eventually one took flight and I could barely make out the white hip patches. *Kevin Quill*

**Dec. 27:** Yesterday morning and today I was at the pond on either side of Wesley Chapel Road. There were the usual Mallards on the south side. On the north side were a dozen or so Gadwalls. The males were so striking with the black rumps, white wing patches and white bottoms. I love watching dabblers upending

themselves in the water to feed and even better if, like synchronized swimmers, they do it all at the same time.  
*Marianne Leech*



Gadwall (male) © Alan W. Wells

**Dec. 27:** There is a Pileated Woodpecker behind the Pearl River Middle School! *Don DiBenedetto*

**Dec. 29:** 1,650 Common Mergansers were floating on Rockland Lake, and Alan and Della Wells counted them all!

**Jan. 2, 2015:** A slow walk around Lake Welch produced 20 species of wintering birds, including Easter Bluebirds, Brown Creeper, Bald Eagles, and a Merlin in a tree near the bathhouse. *Barry Babcock, Zenon Bachir, Ron Conzo, Peter Johnson, Carol Weiss*

**Jan. 2:** I went to Wesley Chapel Road, but no ducks. The pond had a thin sheet of ice on it, but in the water at the base of the boulder dam on the north side of the road was a river otter with a big fish. I was astonished, for I had never seen an otter before. *Marianne Leech*

**Jan. 11:** I saw a Merlin at Rockland Lake! It was perched on a tree by the field near the south end pool. *Kevin Quill*

**Jan. 14:** Barbara and Ray Wright saw and photographed 16 Bald Eagles along the Hudson River from West Haverstraw to Jones Point.

**Jan. 30:** For the third time this month, I saw a Brown Creeper on a tree in my yard. The Brown Creeper stayed in my yard and on several cold February days, I saw it two and three times. *Carol Weiss*

**Feb. 2:** While driving to work, Matt Beckerle stopped to look at two Bald Eagles on top of a tree on the island at the south end of Lake DeForest. The mature birds were sitting so close together that they were touching.

**Feb. 9:** Today, a male Hairy Woodpecker was at the suet feeder in my yard in Garnerville. Also at least a dozen Northern Cardinals, a Song Sparrow, Northern Mockingbird and Carolina Wren. On Sunday, Feb. 7, I was fortunate to see the Gyrfalcon in Orange County as well as several Short-eared Owls. Great birding. *Caroline McDonald*

**Feb. 11:** Was walking at Rockland Lake yesterday. Across from the entrance to the north parking lot was a group of six Eastern Bluebirds. Beautiful! *Bonnie Koop*

**Feb. 12:** I just filled my feeders and while outside, thought I heard Pine Siskins. Within a few minutes, there they were at the thistle feeder. Eight Pine Siskins have joined the dozen American Goldfinches in my yard. I'm so pleased; I don't have siskin visitors every year. On Tuesday, I drove out the Pier and found a single Ring-necked Duck with the large raft (counted 90) of Canvasbacks. There were also a dozen Scaup and many Bufflehead. *Carol Weiss*





Pine Siskin © Alan W. Wells

**Feb. 12:** Yesterday I saw a very streaky striped sparrow that I'll say is a Pine Siskin - what else could it have been? *Beverly Simone*

**Feb. 12:** For sightings: Tom and I had 30 Pine Siskins, more than 70 American Goldfinches, and more than 70 Dark-eyed Juncos in the yard on Sunday, Feb. 8. A Brown Creeper was feeding at the suet as well. Our resident Northern Mockingbird that was protecting the dogwood berries from the European Starlings seems to have flown the coop! Tom and I also saw the Gyrfalcon on the Saturday field trip, a life bird for both of us! It was beautiful! *Elyse Fuller, Tuxedo, Orange County*

**Feb. 13:** I've been hiking in Harriman three times a week this winter, mostly from the Skannatati parking lot, up to and around the Bald Rock area. Before the deep snow blanket I had five Golden-crowned Kinglets flitting about the mountain laurels. One was on the ground within four feet of me. Last week two Common Ravens were clearly having a good time taking a snow bath on top of a ridge. A Northern Mockingbird did a surprisingly good red-tailed call. Also, two Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen not far from Times Square. A flying squirrel, just down from Times Square, was seen by a group of friends who hike at night with headlamps. Our parks are more interesting than most people will ever know! *Vince Plogar*

**Feb. 13:** From our yard near Nyack College: Today we saw our third Bald Eagle of the winter. We also have observed the Pileated Woodpecker this winter more than ever before, three sightings total. We have had small flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds; all seem to be females. Today there was a Carolina Wren and one Chipping Sparrow (considered "rare" when we submitted to the GBBC). Mockingbirds get water on our deck regularly; first time we've had that happen (electric heated bowl/birdbath). A Sharp-shinned Hawk came by several times, and a couple of red-tails with a fresh breakfast of Mourning Dove. One rabbit was seen in the neighborhood last week. The past summer was a great one for Scarlet Tanagers and orioles in our yard; once had three male orioles at once. Only lifer in the yard last year was Ruby-crowned Kinglet (several times). *Belinda and Jack Cash*

**Feb. 13:** We buy lots of seed and suet for the yard feeders. ShopRite had the cheapest suet at a dollar a block. Feeders are our entertainment and nature channel. Our new bird for this season is a juvenile Yellow-bellied Sapsucker that shows up twice a week. It is nice when the woodpeckers eat hanging at the suet; you get to see the red belly of the red-bellied and the yellow belly of the sapsucker. The usual suspects include Carolina Wren, Purple Finch, Mourning Doves, Dark-eyed Juncos, nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, various sparrows, American Goldfinches, Black-capped Chickadees, European Starlings, feral cats, Downy Woodpeckers, Northern Cardinals, and Blue Jays. This past summer we had a Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest and we had never had a single hummer, despite sugar feeders. The nest inexplicably failed with two eggs. We had 76 Bald Eagles at Dunderberg Mountain this Wednesday at dusk. Last count we had 78. *Tom Cunningham*

**Feb. 14:** Caroline McDonald had an American Tree Sparrow at her tray feeder, the first time she's seen one in her yard.

**Feb. 15:** Up to 15 Pine Siskins at the feeders in my yard, along with many American Goldfinch and House Finch. *Carol Weiss*

**Feb. 16:** Four RAS members braved the cold for a partial walk around Rockland Lake. Memorable sightings were a single Pied-billed Grebe huddled among the larger Mallard ducks where the Hackensack River leaves the Nature Center, five Eastern Bluebirds and 10 Cedar Waxwings at Parking Lot #6.

**Feb. 17:** Funny: I told you [Carol Weiss] just yesterday about having just one Common Grackle in the backyard and you said it might be a "scout" bird. I guess he had a good report because when I returned home today there were 60-70 Common Grackles in the yard. *Peter Johnson*

**Feb. 18:** Peter Johnson photographed a Long-tailed Duck near the Pier. During the next weeks, two long-tails were seen in the choppy water with the scaup and Buffleheads.

**Feb. 21:** Just thought I'd share that for the past two months, a few times a week, my ride to work was made more pleasant by seeing a Bald Eagle pair near Lake DeForest on the east side of Strawtown Road. Often at 8 a.m., one or both are sitting on a utility pole near the reservoir at the foot of DeForest Court. This afternoon I parked on Millie Lane where I had a fantastic view of both birds from my car. One was sitting on a tree branch, and then it was joined by the other. *Abby Rudin*

**Feb. 21:** I dropped by the pier today around 1:00 p.m. It was pretty much completely locked in ice as was the whole river. Initially things did not look promising, but as I got further out I saw that small pockets of open water had concentrated a variety of ducks. In one, on the north side of the pier, I saw Canvasbacks, Buffleheads, Common Mergansers, Goldeneyes and scaup. Reaching the end I scanned with my binoculars and found numerous Bald Eagles, some quite close in. A scope would surely have revealed many more. On the ice to the north there were many gulls. I was particularly impressed with the unusually large numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls. As I turned to head back, I saw a sub-adult Bald Eagle in the large tree to the left of the fire and rescue boat house. It was right over the road dismembering a small duck, perhaps a Bufflehead, as several people stood below it with camera phones. *Jim Previdi*

**Feb. 21:** Today was a good day at my bird feeders. Among the usual crew were at least a dozen American Goldfinches, an American Tree sparrow, several Pine Siskins and a pair of Fox Sparrows, which I have been seeing for about a week. *Caroline McDonald*



Fox Sparrow © Caroline McDonald

**Feb. 26:** This afternoon I saw an American Kestrel perched atop one of the scrawny trees between the Palisades Mall parking lot and the Thruway. Lots of Pine Siskins at our feeder this month, as many as 30 last week, tapering off the last few days. Many Bald Eagles, but not at the feeder! *Tom Dow*

**Feb. 28:** From West Shore Drive in Stony Point, I saw 14 Great Cormorants riding an ice flow. Quite a number and definitely in Rockland County. *Carol Weiss*



Great Cormorants © Carol Weiss

## 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 Gilcrest 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.

**May 1, 2015**

**6:00 p.m.: Members Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner**

**7:30 p.m.: PUBLIC Program "Enhancing Wildlife Habitat Through Ecological Landscaping"**



Example of ecological landscaping © Greg Mercurio

Rockland Audubon Society members are invited to the RAS annual meeting and a potluck dinner. At the meeting, RAS members will vote on the new Board of Directors for the upcoming year. **Please bring your own plates and silverware.** Coffee, tea and cold drinks will be provided.

If you plan to attend the potluck, please contact Elyse Fuller at 845-351-2893 or [elyse\\_fuller@yahoo.com](mailto:elyse_fuller@yahoo.com) with your name, phone number and the dish you plan to bring (main dish, side dish, salad or dessert). Thank you, and we hope to see you there!

**Public program to follow at 7:30 p.m.: "Enhancing Wildlife Habitat through Ecological Landscaping" presented by Anne Putko and Laurie Seeman**

Come and learn how to incorporate ecological landscaping into your property. These practices are easy to implement, low in cost, and result in beautiful environments that attract butterflies and other beneficial insects, provide havens and sustenance for our avian friends, and support mammalian and reptilian diversity. Adults and children, alike, are sure to enjoy some of the surprise guests (expect wings, tails, or fins). The evening's activities will culminate with a live native plant exhibit and sale, provided by Greg Mercurio of Carriage House Gardens & Assoc., Inc.

**June 5, 2015**

## **Nighttime in the Animal Kingdom**

**Suggested Donation: \$5, Children 10 & under \$2**



Hedgehog © Animal Embassy

**Speaker:** Representatives of "Animal Embassy" with live animals.

Join Animal Embassy on this night-time journey through the fascinating night life of the animal kingdom! With the help of live animal ambassadors such as Red-eyed Tree Frogs, a Hedgehog, a Ball Python, a rabbit, a New Caledonian Giant Gecko and perhaps a Spectacled Owl, families will discover what these amazing creatures do while we are tucked tightly in our beds dreaming!

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## **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!

### **May 2 (SAT) – Spring Birding at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)**

Co-sponsored with Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site. Meet Alan and Della Wells at 8 a.m. in the main parking lot at the end of Battlefield Rd, accessed from Park Rd. off Route 9W in Stony Point. Take an early spring stroll through this historic site on the Hudson River. 845-942-5751, Park Phone 845-786-2521

### **May 3 (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

### **May 8 (FRI) – Weekday Walk at Ironwood Drive (Audubon in the Parks)**

Meet Elyse Fuller at 9 a.m. at the cul-de-sac at the end of Ironwood Drive in Tuxedo. This section of Sterling Forest State Park can be good for Golden-winged Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Prairie Warblers, and other shrubland species. Over by 11 a.m. 845-351-2893

**May 10 (SUN) – Winding Waters Trail (Wallkill River NWR)**

Meet Della and Alan Wells at 7 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot on Route 9W in Stony Point (just south of Hogan's Diner.) Look for migrants & nesting birds along Winding Waters Trail, off of Oil City Rd in Wallkill River NWR. Bring water, snack, and insect repellent. 845-942-5751

**May 11 (MON) – Doodletown (Audubon in the Parks)**

Meet Carol Weiss at 7 a.m. at the pull-off on Route 9W, south of Bear Mountain, just north of the Iona Island causeway for an early morning trek up Doodletown Road in Bear Mountain State Park. Look for neotropical migrants. Bring drink and snack and expect a 4-hour trip. 845-358-3659

**May 16 (SAT) – Doodletown for Beginners (Audubon in the Parks)**

Meet Della and Alan Wells at 8 a.m. at the pull-off on Route 9W, south of Bear Mountain, just north of the Iona Island causeway. Practice bird ID and binocular use. Some uphill walking. 845-942-5751

**May 17 (SUN) – Tackamack Town Park**

Meet Matt Beckerle at 9 a.m. in the Tackamack parking lot on Clausland Mountain Rd. A spring stroll to look at trees, ferns, and birds. 845-735-5411 or 914-715-6399

**May 23-25 (SAT-MON) – Birding Delaware on Memorial Day Weekend (3-day Trip)**

Call Alan and Della Wells for details 845-942-5751.

**May 30 (SAT) – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR in Nesting Season**

Meet Della and Alan Wells at 7 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot on Route 9W in Stony Point (just south of Hogan's Diner) for carpooling to this hotspot for grassland birds. 845-942-5751

**May 31 (SUN) – Buttermilk Falls County Park**

Meet Matt Beckerle at 9 a.m. in the Buttermilk Falls parking lot at 199 S. Greenbush Rd., West Nyack. See a variety of trees, ferns, wildflowers and birds as well as a cascading stream and falls and several scenic overlooks. Steep walk in places. Bring water. 845-735-5411 or 914-715-6399

**June 7 (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

**June 14 (SUN) – Dragons & Damsels of Rockland (Audubon in the Parks)**

Meet Alan and Della Wells at 9 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 9W in Stony Point (just south of Hogan's Diner) for carpooling. Learn to identify common dragonflies and damselflies at Lily Pond in Harriman State Park (short drive followed by short hike). Bring water, snack, binoculars (preferably close focus). Camera optional. Call to confirm if rainy or overcast. 845-942-5751

**July 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

**Aug. 2 (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

**Aug. 9 (SUN) – Birds and Cameras at Jamaica Bay**

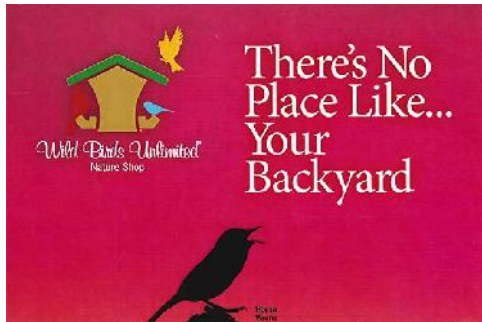
Meet Alan and Della Wells at 7:30 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot Route 303 North, West Nyack for carpooling to this birding hot spot. Alan's group will concentrate on photography. 845-942-5751

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## Special Announcements

### Discount at Wild Birds Unlimited, Paramus, N.J.

Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) is offering a **10% discount** to members of Rockland Audubon Society. Check out WBU for an amazing array of items for and about birds, including all types of nesting boxes, seed and suet, and even jewelry. The store is located at 189 Route 17 South, Paramus, N.J. Phone: 201-599-0099. Visit the website at [www.wbu.com/paramus](http://www.wbu.com/paramus)



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## 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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## Board of Directors and Committee Members

### Officers

**President:** Karen D'Alessandri  
**Vice President:** <open>  
**Secretary:** Elyse Fuller  
**Treasurer:** Vicki Beaumont

### Committee Members

**Conservation:** Vicki Beaumont, Elyse Fuller, Joanna Galdone  
**Education & Outreach:** Joanna Galdone, Joyce Greenwald, Lorrie Pallant  
**E-contacts:** Della Wells  
**Field Trips:** Alan Wells, Della Wells  
**Fundraising:** <Open>  
**Hospitality:** Peter Johnson  
**Hotline Phone:** Ron Conzo  
**Membership:** Della Wells  
**Newsletter:** Caroline McDonald, Della Wells  
**Programs:** Judith Malo  
**Publicity:** Caroline McDonald  
**Webmaster:** Alan 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***

**Editing:** Caroline McDonald

**Layout:** Della Wells

**Copyediting:** Alan Wells, Della Wells

Newsletter submissions welcome!

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

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