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First Sunday at the Battlefield

By Alan Wells, RAS Webmaster, and Julia Warger, RAS Member

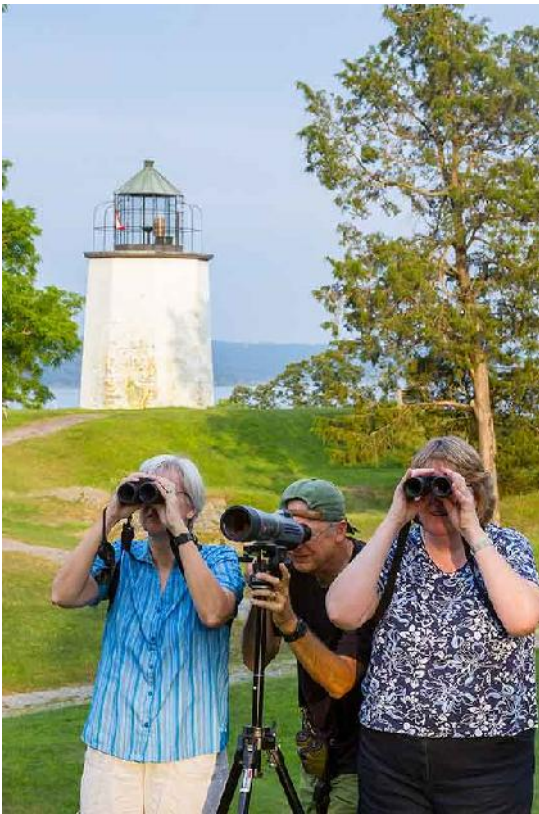
Without a doubt the most popular of the nature walks given by Rockland Audubon Society are the First Sunday walks. On the first Sunday of the each month for an entire year, a single birding location is visited. Since the program was instituted in 1999, RAS has rotated visits among Piermont Pier, Kakiat County Park, and Kennedy Dells County Park. RAS is now pleased to announce that starting September 6, 2015, the Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site will be joining this lineup. This site is not only a fantastic birding location, but is also rich in historical interest.

Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site is located on a 100-acre knobby promontory projecting into the Hudson River in the town of Stony Point, NY. The site interprets the successful midnight assault led by American General Anthony Wayne against the newly constructed British Garrison on July 15-16, 1779. A museum and soldiers camp is open April to October with costumed guides to tell the story of the battle.



Cannon at Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site © Alan W. Wells

The site also features the Stony Point Lighthouse, built in 1826 with a commanding view of the river from a 150-foot high hilltop. Lighthouses were needed following the opening of the Erie Canal to aid the increased river traffic and expanding commerce. Stony Point Light was the first of a string of 14 lighthouses eventually built to light the way.



Della Wells, Alan Wells, and Julia Warger birding near the Stony Point Lighthouse © Alan W. Wells

eBird ranks the Stony Point Battlefield among the top ten birding spots in Rockland County with respect to the number of species to be seen. At the time of this writing, eBird records 120 different species from the site (<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L2550812?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>), but there is the potential for considerably more to be found. The key to the high diversity of this site is the variety of different habitats available.

As you enter the park, there is a pond/wetland area. A pair of Mute Swan often nests here, and the area also supports a number of other smaller waterfowl. This is a good spot to look for Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser. Additionally, we find several species of long-legged waders, including Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, and Black-crowned Night Heron. Often a Belted Kingfisher can be heard chattering as it flies up and down the broad creek.

As you proceed along the entrance road, the surrounding woods are filled with life. Upland resident species such as Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Downy Woodpecker, and Northern Cardinal abound. In the spring, especially, the woods seem to burst with birds. With the arrival of the Neotropical migrants in early May, the songs of wood warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks, thrushes and tanagers resonate throughout the forest.

Following the footpath from the parking area down to the canoe launch brings one to the west shore of the Hudson River. Scanning from the shoreline often reveals shorebirds, gulls, cormorants on the marina pilings, Canada Goose, and sea ducks such as Canvasback, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, and Common Goldeneye. This is also an excellent location from which to observe Osprey and Bald Eagle as they hunt over Haverstraw Bay.

As you wander through the well-manicured grounds of the fortification and lighthouse, watch for robins, mockingbirds, and thrashers searching the lawn for a tasty bug or two. The brushy hillsides are home for noisy catbirds, phoebes and wrens. And during the colder months, all of the sparrows, juncos and towhees rustling through the dried leaves make the earth come alive.

Every so often, stop and look up. Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures sail quietly overhead along with the more vocal Red-tailed Hawk, Osprey, and Common Raven. And if you are lucky, you will even catch sight of a Bald Eagle. For years, Bald Eagle were almost completely absent from the Lower Hudson River Valley. But by the late 1990s, restoration efforts began to pay off and eagles were once again seen in our area. At that time they were still very uncommon and seen only in the late winter through early spring. By the mid-2000s these majestic birds began nesting in the Lower Hudson Valley, including at the Stony Point Battlefield, and have now become established year-round residents.



Bald Eagle © Alan W. Wells

We hope that you will join us for the upcoming First Sunday Walks at the Stony Point Battlefield. Not only will you enjoy a wonderful morning of fabulous birding, but you will also soak in our rich national heritage. We are looking forward to seeing you!

For more information on the Stony Point Battlefield, visit: <http://nysparks.com/historic-sites/8/details.aspx>, www.palisadesparksconservancy.org, or call the park office at 845-786-2521.

Directions to Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site:

The Battlefield is located off Route 9W in Stony Point, NY. From Route 9W, take Park Road (a U-shaped road with two ends on 9W) downhill until it intersects with Battlefield Road. Turn into Battlefield Road, pass through the gates and proceed about ¼ mile where you will cross the one-lane bridge and follow the road to the parking lot. If you arrive early and the gate is not yet open, please park to the right side of the drive and wait for the leader to arrive with a key. Please do not block the gates or the roadways

Mixed Blessings

By Vicki Beaumont, RAS Board Member

I have a pear tree out the back door of my home in Valley Cottage that was probably planted over 50 years ago – and I detest it. It produces small hard pears that we don't eat. Of course, every tree soaks up lots of rainwater and provides shade for the house, so I've kept it because it provides much food for birds, insects, and other animals

One problem is that this pear tree starts to drop its leaves in July, which makes a huge mess. The fruit used to attract masses of American Crows but since West Nile virus decimated their numbers, only a few now come by to dine here. The fruit does still attract some Blue Jays and woodpeckers. However, adding to the accumulation of dried leaves, the pieces of fruit dropped all over the patio and driveway by the birds and squirrels in turn attracts lots of yellow jackets – oh joy!

This July when the leaves turned yellow and dropped, I noticed that the tiger swallowtail butterflies kept getting fooled into thinking they'd spotted yellow flowers. They'd flutter from one downed yellow leaf to another, only to be disappointed. Lo and behold, they did discover my hummingbird feeders near the tree and happily sipped away. I've never seen so many of these butterflies before!



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail © Alan W. Wells

Crows and hummingbirds have always been two of my favorite birds, so while I no longer see many crows, I do try to court the hummingbirds. I usually see one, or two at the most, and then only for a 1- or 2-day visit to my property. To attract hummingbirds, over time I have planted many perennials, as well as annuals like *Salvia* and cardinal flower. I have bee balm (*Monarda*) in red and pink, red *Penstemon*, Texas evening primrose, jewel weed, butterfly weed (*Asclepias*), red and orange *Crocosmia*, and coral bells (*Heuchera*). I also planted several butterfly bushes (*Buddleia*) before I knew they were not native. Additionally, I usually have a few actual hummingbird feeders around the yard.

What I do see all the time are the ubiquitous House Sparrows and European Starlings. Again, oh joy! However, I have noticed that the House Wrens and Gray Catbirds have been nesting here for the past few years. A few weeks ago I was overjoyed to spot a hummingbird feeding on the *Penstemon*, however my joy was short-lived as a catbird noisily chased it away.

So despite my quest for more crow and hummingbird sightings, what I am left with are the not-unpleasant songs of the catbirds and the constant chattering of the nesting house wrens (who chide me for being in THEIR garden!) My butterfly bushes also do attract lots of butterflies and many bees. At any one time I can spot at least five tiger swallowtails. I have also counted as many as seven different species of bees in a single pumpkin flower.

My mother used to say that every cloud has a silver lining, so rather than continuing to bemoan the lack of favored birds, I'm learning to content myself with the satisfaction of knowing that I am helping the bees thrive here and with watching the butterflies dance. At least I get hummingbird moths!

President's Message

Greetings Fellow Birders!

For many people, facing the last few weeks of summer is met with a twinge of sadness, maybe even regret. That is not necessarily the case with birders. The end of summer means the beginning of migration season which is exciting indeed! It's an opportunity to add a lifer to the list, to hone identification skills (I refer you to the "Confusing Fall Warblers" section of your favorite field guide) and to spend time outdoors with like-minded folks.

As you learned elsewhere in this publication, we will be conducting the 2015-2016 season's First Sunday walks at the Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site. While we have conducted many walks at this beautiful park, this is a new venue for First Sunday.

As is our custom, the September program includes live animals and this year is no different. Look for details in the "Upcoming Nature Programs" section of this newsletter.

Your Board of Directors always welcomes additional support. We look for volunteers who are interested in expanding their RAS experiences and making new acquaintances, no special skills required. You may contact me anytime at kdalessandri@optonline.net

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the monthly meetings and on the trails!

Karen D'Alessandri

Welcome New and Returning Members!

Kathy Bachor, Mark Breithaupt, Marjorie Borden, Lawrence Carter, Chui Y. Chan, Iris Brooks & Jon Davis, Amy Condit, Jordan Dale, Patricia B. Decola, Sharon Degroat, Milicent Dranoff, Deborah Epstein, Marta Halifi, Lauren Hirn, Marylou Hofmann, Rosanne Hughes, Janice Jones, Matthew Karp, Rosemary Kirchner, David Martello, Edward McNally, Jim Mulligan, Dean Pittsinger, Johanna Marie Rose, Eric Schreck, Daniel Shaw, John H. Sindt, Donna Sopalsky, Freia Titland, Mary Vail, Jill Wecht, David Weiss, Gordon Wren, Donna Yannazzone !

69th Christmas Bird Count

By Alan Wells, RAS CBC Compiler

On Sunday, Dec. 20, RAS members will be counting birds! From dawn to dusk, teams of counters will cover nine areas of Rockland County, enumerating the birds of each species that they see. These data are sent to National Audubon Society to be compiled and compared to other national and international counts. If you would like to participate in the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for the first time, or if you were unable to count last year, please contact Alan Wells at 845-942-5751 or awells@bestweb.net. If you counted in 2014, you will be contacted.

If you can't spend the entire day outdoors, volunteer to watch your bird feeders on Count Day, Dec. 20. Feeder watchers should submit the highest number of individuals seen *at one time*. For example, if five titmice are seen at 9:00 a.m. and three at 10:00 a.m., the number reported should be five--not eight. Feeder counts are very important as sometimes a species is seen only at someone's feeder on count day. The form to compile and report your feeder watch data is below.

The day-long CBC ends with a potluck dinner and a countdown of the day's sightings. Della and Alan Wells of Tomkins Cove will host the supper, and both field participants and feeder watchers are invited. Call Alan or Della Wells at 845-942-5751 to let them know what you will bring to the pot luck: main dish, salad, dessert, appetizer or drinks. Driving directions will be sent or emailed to participants.

To see previous year's results, visit this link: http://www.rocklandaudubon.org/ras_cbc.htm

Rockland Audubon Feeder Count – Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015

- _____ Wild Turkey
- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Red-tailed Hawk
- _____ Rock Pigeon
- _____ Mourning Dove
- _____ Eastern Screech-Owl
- _____ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- _____ Downy Woodpecker
- _____ Hairy Woodpecker
- _____ Northern Flicker
- _____ Pileated Woodpecker
- _____ Blue Jay
- _____ American Crow
- _____ Black-capped Chickadee
- _____ Tufted Titmouse
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ White-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ American Robin
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Northern Mockingbird
- _____ Brown Thrasher
- _____ European Starling
- _____ Eastern Towhee (Rufous-sided)
- _____ American Tree Sparrow
- _____ Field Sparrow
- _____ Fox Sparrow
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ White-crowned Sparrow
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco
- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Common Grackle
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Purple Finch
- _____ House Finch
- _____ Common Redpoll
- _____ Pine Siskin
- _____ American Goldfinch
- _____ Evening Grosbeak
- _____ House Sparrow
- _____ Other - please specify _____
- _____ Other - please specify _____
- _____ Other - please specify _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Ways to report your feeder count (within one (1) week of the count, please!):

1. Come to the Countdown Potluck Dinner
2. E-mail your numbers: awells@bestweb.net
3. Mail to Alan Wells, 9 Dunderberg Rd., Tomkins Cove, NY 10986-1003
4. Phone in your results: 845-942-5751

Notes and Sightings: March – May 2015

Compiled by Carol Weiss

Here are many of the sightings received for the months of March, April and May 2015 - the spring months in the world of birding. There were early and late observations of several species but no new records. A paraphrase of Zenon Bachir's March 11 observation would be, "If woodcocks dance, can spring be far behind?" Thanks to the many observers for this edition of *The Observer*.

March 7: *Veronika Krause* reported a single Osprey at Piermont Pier (earliest date is 3/4/07).

March 9: Red-winged Blackbirds are back and singing at the marsh at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, more than two weeks later than usual! They usually arrive here and start setting up territories during the third week in February! *Linda Pistolesi*

March 9: Piermont Pier remains a happening place for duck-like birds. This morning near the end on the northern side I found a Red-necked Grebe. The bird was close and we got a scope on it. It moved off a bit when I tried to get a photo, but the picture shows what it is anyway. *Peter Johnson*



Red-necked Grebe © Peter Johnson

March 9: We have been enjoying Pine Siskins every day for the last three weeks. I figured others did too. We've never have had them hang out so long. Other birds are the usual Hooded Mergansers (3 males and 2 females) in the Hackensack River by ShopRite, Pileated Woodpeckers in Tallman and north of the Rockland Lake firehouse, and the usual Bald Eagle here and there. In January there was a Purple Finch photo posted, taken at a feeder by a family on Mountainview Ave. They didn't know what it was but Jamie identified it. My next door neighbor said he saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at his suet feeder last week; he looked it up in the bird book. He is new at this so I can't vouch for that, but it is possible. *Sarah Johnson, Nyack*

March 11: I drove to the end of Piermont Pier this morning, birding by car along the way and taking a short walk at the end. On the north side near the condos three male Buffleheads were emphatically displaying, vying for the attention of a single female. A little further out, a pair of Lesser Scaup were amongst the Canvasbacks. Ruddy Ducks and Common Mergansers were also still present. *Linda Pistolesi*

March 11: I saw an American Woodcock today while taking a walk at work. He was doing that funny circular bobbing "dance" that woodcocks do. I have not seen one here before. Also, many American Robins - there were 30 in one spot. Can spring be far away? *Zenon Bachir*

March 13: Today we lucked out and met Gene Herkovics at the gate to Kennedy Dells Park. We tossed our 'equipment' into the back of his truck and he drove everything up to our first stop. From there we moved about as if on a wagon train. We completed installing predator baffles on 9 of the 12 nest boxes at this park before running short of materials. Gene told us

that two of the boxes were being checked out by Eastern Bluebirds while we were around the corner at work on a different pair. Yet another fun day in the field. *Peter Johnson*



The overpaid, underworked volunteers of RAS, goofing around on the job, while the birds sit in the trees and wait for their homes to be finished.
© Peter Johnson

March 14: A cold day but a bright day. We went to Piermont Pier hoping to verify the reported female Common Eider and we had very good looks at the swimming bird but something was not right. At one point, the duck lifted its wings to show bright white patches. Hm! Within 24 hours, all agreed it was a White-winged Scoter and not an eider. Also on the Hudson's water amid the ice floes were many Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes, three Long-tailed Ducks, as well as the other ducks that Linda mentions in her March 11 entry. *Carol Weiss, Peter Johnson, Drew Ciganek*

March 15: We started walking the old rail trail in Sparkill alongside a small swamp and were happy to see the first pointy shoots of skunk cabbage emerging. As we continued towards Piermont it was quiet in the woods. The highlight was a Brown Creeper foraging up several tree trunks, allowing us a long look. *Linda Pistolessi*

March 16: *Drew Ciganek* located a gorgeous female Merlin at Piermont Pier and kept track of it for a few hours, allowing many birders and non-birders to view it through his scope. The bird was close enough that one could see the yellow eye ring and cere, and catch the bright color of the yellow legs and feet.

March 21: A dozen or more Killdeer at the Orangeburg fields, Hunt Road. *Peter Johnson*

April 1: A loud thump against my bay window brought me to investigate. A pigeon-sized bird burst up from the ground outside, and fell down again, obviously stunned. Its back was a neat shade of slaty blue, with a two-toned tail; it struggled with long falcon wings. After a few minutes the visitor flew off, close over the ground. It was a Merlin. (The window did not suffer.) *Gene Brown*

April 2: Two Great Egrets were photographed by *Alan Wells* in a pond along Farley Drive in Stony Point. The earliest date for the return of this species is March 29, noted in 1971. No other egrets were reported until April 26, when *Linda Pistolessi and Marcel Jaloveckas* spotted a Snowy Egret on the Sparkill Creek and a Great Egret a day later.

April 3: *Ray Wright* observed a Common Loon at Lake Tappan, the first he has seen in Rockland County.

April 6: Midway along the west shore of Rockland Lake I watched a gathering of many Mallards, Common Mergansers and Buffleheads, with a few each of Hooded Mergansers, Northern Shovelers, and Gadwells. A single strikingly handsome drake American Wigeon cruised among the other birds. A few steps to the north, a pair of Wood Ducks paddled under the shoreline shrubbery. *Gene Brown*

April 11: Joyce and I spotted a pair of Ring-necked Ducks and a Hooded Merganser at Demarest Park, New City. *Rich Greenwald*

April 12: I think my wife and I just saw four Black Vultures fly over us. We are not super experienced. As the birds approached, they were too high for me to size properly – I thought they were ravens. As they come overhead we could see white wing patches on the otherwise black birds. The wings were flapping steadily, and they were playing a bit, changing plans and swooping towards each other on occasion. They were heading southeast and would have flown just south of the pier if they kept heading that way. Do you think they were Black Vultures? I can't see what else they would be. They certainly weren't caracaras. *John Leeds, Piermont*

April 13: Saturday, I heard a Pileated Woodpecker's call, and my neighbor said he saw one last week. Yesterday, I caught a quick glimpse of a thrush, but couldn't ID it. I also watched a preening Northern Flicker – what a pretty bird! This morning I was watching two tom Wild Turkeys strutting their stuff (Talk about beautiful birds! They are metallic rainbows.), when a male Wood Duck flew down to the stream. This is the third spring I've seen Wood Ducks in my yard. *Beverly Simone, West Nyack*

April 13: Rockland Lake SP: At dawn on a glassy Rockland Lake, a Common Loon, with ruby eyes and summer-checked cloak, cruises alone and well apart from the other water birds. *Gene Brown*

April 16: I did a quick walk through Kakiat today. The surprise of the day was a coyote that strolled past me near the river on the right side of the bridge near the patch of trees. It was 25 feet away and casually glanced at me a few times as it headed to the river and followed it downstream. Scary to be that close! Noteworthy birds were: Pine Warbler (at least two in the pine grove singing and very visible), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Winter Wren, Eastern Towhee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Phoebe, Swamp Sparrow, Chipping sparrow. *Frank Bonanno*

April 19: The Pileated Woodpecker is still in the neighborhood. I heard it hammering away all afternoon as I worked in the yard, and I heard his call a couple of times but couldn't tell which tree he was in. I finally got my binoculars and watched him for a while, hammering and calling one more time. As I walked inside, I glanced at the feeder and saw a Wild Turkey pecking at the fallen seeds. *Beverly Simone*

April 20: I have seen a family of Wild Turkeys in Valley Cottage over the past few years - often crossing Christian Herald Rd. in the mornings – and sometimes they wind up in my neighbor's large expanse of lawn. On Easter Sunday I saw them again, crossing the same road but there are now 9 or 10 of them and four of them had their tails open in display. A few hours later I saw the same group in my own backyard, which was surprising as my property is fenced in, but they easily hopped up to the top of the fence and continued on their way. A few days earlier, I saw a small group of redpolls in my backyard – a first for here. *Vicki Beaumont*

April 23: Palisades: A few spring migrants appeared this week at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. A female Ruby-crowned Kinglet flitted about a tree near the cafeteria at lunch on Wednesday, an Eastern Towhee sang from a small wet woodlot Wednesday evening, and flocks of Chipping Sparrows have been spotted almost daily. And in Spring Valley: Yesterday evening I finally spotted (in silhouetted flight) the Green Heron I've been hearing for a couple weeks along the Pascack Brook. *Linda Pistolessi*

April 26: Yesterday at the Piermont ball field a single Yellow Warbler was singing and an Osprey and a Broad-winged Hawk flew over, all firsts of the year for us. Around the corner a Snowy Egret hunted along the Sparkill Creek. Today a Great Egret and a pair of Wood Ducks were in the Sparkill Creek just east of the old ice pond. We've seen Wood Ducks there several times this spring, sometimes multiple pairs. Along the Tallman Park marsh trail we found a Tree Sparrow and heard a Marsh Wren calling from the reeds near the swimming pool. *Linda Pistolessi and Marcel Jaloveckas*

April 26: Today I saw an Eastern Towhee, and a bird on the thistle feeder that took me a while to identify: a female Red-winged Blackbird. *Beverly Simone*

April 28: Two Northern Waterthrush along the outflow stream from Lily Pond in Harriman SP seemed to be a pair. *Alan and Della Wells*

April 29: First of season Cerulean Warbler and Hooded Warbler at Doodletown. The male cerulean was singing half-heartedly. This seems to be an early arrival date for the species. (In 2009 on an RAS field trip, a cerulean was seen in Doodletown on April 25.) *Alan and Della Wells*

April 29: During our weekly bird survey at Stony Point Battlefield, Della, Julia, and I were scanning Haverstraw Bay from the southern gazebo. Della spotted a large flock of gulls, loafing on the Hudson River just off the Point. At this distance we assumed that they were Ring-billed Gulls, but I took a photo just to check. After enlarging the photo to the maximum, I could see the gulls had black heads. We rushed to a closer vantage point and set up the spotting scope. This revealed approximately 40 Bonaparte's Gulls, most of them in breeding plumage. *Alan Wells, Della Wells, and Julia Warger*

April 30: One Lesser Scaup at Rockland Lake. Most migratory ducks, except Bufflehead, have left by this time. First of season Eastern Kingbird (3) and Warbling Vireo (3) were seen. *Alan and Della Wells*

April 30: First of Season Baltimore Oriole at Congers Lake. Single singing male. *Alan and Della Wells*



Baltimore Oriole © Alan W. Wells

May 1: *Ron Conzo* had a Horned Grebe in breeding plumage at the Pier.



Horned Grebe © Ron Conzo

May 4: This weekend, I saw a Cooper's hawk fly across the yard, then saw it the next day drinking from the stream. I heard and saw an oriole, singing, and a Gray Catbird too. And I noticed a mourning cloak fluttering by. *Beverly Simone*

May 5: Yesterday when I got home from work, this little guy was waiting for me at the feeder right outside the living room window. Nice surprise! The only other Indigo Bunting I have had was in November 2013. *Caroline McDonald*



Indigo Bunting © Caroline McDonald

May 10: Yesterday morning there was a pair of Greater Yellowlegs (vocalizing), a Killdeer, and a small flock of Least Sandpipers at the pier. At the DEC info display at the bend in the Sparkill on Paradise Ave I saw a sparrow I've never seen before. It had a short tail, streaked breast, and yellow on its face. It was not shy as it foraged on the ground in the moist grass. I think it may have been a Savannah Sparrow. Today I had another unusual sighting at the pier. I caught sight of a warbler above me in a short tree. It had a large bill and a dark eye stripe so I immediately thought worm-eating, but it was pale and unstreaked below with white undertail coverts. I keyed it to Swainson's Warbler, though that is unlikely. As soon as I keyed it the bird flew westwards towards the condos. I unfortunately did not get a look at the top of its head. *Linda Pistolesi*

May 20: This morning there were about 60 Brant at Piermont Pier – first on the south side and later, on my way back to the ball field, they had moved to the north side. I don't think I ever before saw Brant this late in May. *Veronika Krause*

May 22: At Piermont Pier this morning, Gene Brown and I watched a White-rumped Sandpiper for 20 minutes or more. We noted every field mark, including the white rump. There weren't many other birds: two Greater Yellowlegs, a Dunlin, and some Spotted Sandpipers. *Carol Weiss*

May 23: I drove to the end of Piermont Pier this morning and on the way back I saw a small shorebird in the water with some Mallards on the south side of the pier. I checked my Sibley app and it was a Red-necked Phalarope. It was only about 20 feet away so I'm sure of the ID. I drove on and ran into Drew Ciganek and we returned to the spot but it was gone. I had to leave but Drew said he was not leaving without seeing it. I hope he succeeded. *Linda Pistolesi*

Please submit your unusual, unique and interesting bird sightings to Carol Weiss at cweiss1124@optonline.net . You can also call at 845-358-3659.

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!

Sept. 18, 2015 *NOTE DATE CHANGE...THIRD Friday*****

Talons! A Birds of Prey Experience

*****Suggested Donation: \$5 for adults, \$2 for children 12 and under*****



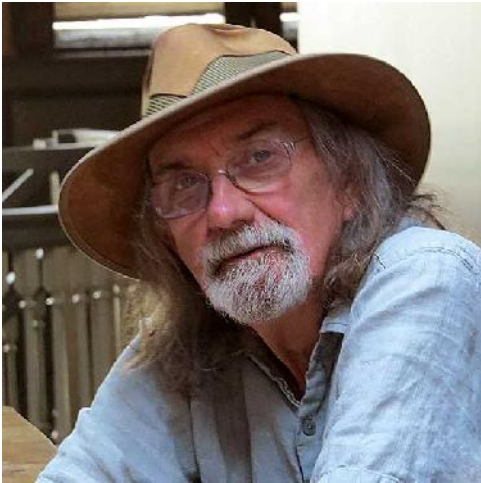
Saker falcon, "Prince Ravi" © Lorrie Schumacher

Speaker: Lorrie Schumacher, Master Class Falconer

Exciting free flying fun! Become the trees in the forest as Lorrie's owls, hawk, and falcon show off their awesome acrobatics. Learn about the amazing skills and adaptations of these magnificent predators. Once in a lifetime experience for an up close experience with raptors. Photography is encouraged, so come take a "Selfie" with Big Mama.

Oct. 2, 2015

Foraging and Cooking Edible Wild Plants



Paul Tappenden © Paul Tappenden

Speaker: Paul Tappenden

Rockland forager, Paul Tappenden, has been exploring the natural world and all its gift for over 40 years. He combines his knowledge of wild foods and training as a chef to produce tasty and nutritious meals from wild crafted ingredients. In this presentation, Paul will introduce us to several common edible wild species that grow in this area and show ways in which they can be incorporated into your culinary experiences. After meeting some of our plant friends and discovering their special gifts, you will never look at weeding your yard the same way again.

Nov. 6, 2015

Central Highlands of Papua New Guinea



Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher © Paul Sweet

Speaker: Paul Sweet, Collection Manager, Ornithology Department, American Museum of Natural History
Paul will tell tales of a recent expedition to the central highlands of Papua New Guinea. As part of the Museum's Explore21 scientific initiative, a team of specialists set out to a remote site in the rugged mountains of the island to survey the vertebrate fauna. Find out about the difficulties of working in these challenging environments and the exciting discoveries.

Dec. 4, 2015

In Search of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker



Mark Michaels © Patricia Johnson

Speaker: Mark Michaels, Project Coyote

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker has been a source of wonder, obsessive interest, and controversy for nearly a century. While the last universally accepted sighting was in 1944, there have been over 150 since then - perhaps most notoriously, the fiercely contested reports from Arkansas, published by Cornell in *Science* in 2005. Yorktown resident Mark A. Michaels has been searching for the Ivory-bill since 2007, mostly in parts of Louisiana that were overlooked during the organized searches that followed the "rediscovery." Mark will discuss his search, his adventures in Louisiana and the history of Ivory-bill reports from the 1930s to the present. www.projectcoyoteibwo.com.

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** <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.

SEPT 6 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Carol Weiss 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. 845-358-3659

SEPT 12 (SAT) – Hudson River Birding Ramble 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 fall stroll through this historic site on the Hudson River. 845-942-5751, Park Phone 845-786-2521

SEPT 13 (SUN) – Kakiat County Park

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. in the Kakiat parking lot, off Route 202 in Montebello (park entrance is directly opposite drive to Viola School.) Stroll through the park looking for migrating and resident bird species. 845-358-3659

SEPT 19 (SAT) – Hook Mountain Hawk Watch (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Jim Previdi at 9 a.m. by the flagpole at the Executive Golf Course, Rockland Lake State Park South. Walk to the top of Hook Mtn. to view migrating hawks. Bring hat, binoculars, water. Bring food if you plan to stay all day. 914-656-2509

OCT 4 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Peter Johnson 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. 914-261-2895

OCT 9 (FRI) – Doodletown (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the parking area on Route 9W, opposite the Doodletown historic marker. We will take the old road, stopping to bird as we go uphill. There should be hawks and passerines migrating southward. The trip will take from 3 to 4 hours. Bring a beverage and a snack. 845-358-3659

OCT 17 (SAT) – Trees of Tallman Mountain State Park (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Matt Beckerle at 10 a.m. at the south entrance of Tallman Mountain State Park on Route 9W to learn about the trees of the park and view the fall foliage. 845-735-5411 or 914-715-6399

OCT 25 (SUN) – Piermont Pier for Beginners

Meet Carol Weiss at 8 a.m. at the parking lot by the ball field at the Piermont Pier entrance. Practice bird ID and binocular use on ducks and other birds. 845-358-3659

NOV 1 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Ron Conzo 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. 914-393-5053

NOV 7-8 (SAT & SUN) – Fall Migration at Brigantine and Cape May

All-day trip Saturday to Brigantine Unit of Edwin B. Forsythe NWR, N.J. Meet Jim Previdi at 6:30 a.m. at the Commuter Parking Lot, Route 303 North, West Nyack. If desired, continue on to Cape May for an overnight stay, and then birding on Sunday. 914-656-2509

NOV 27 (FRI) – Leader's Choice Field Trip

Contact Jim Previdi a few days in advance to find out the details of the day after Thanksgiving field trip. 914-656-2509

DEC 6 (SUN) – First Sunday Walk at Stony Point Battlefield (Audubon in the Parks)

Meet Carol Weiss 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. 845-358-3659

DEC 20 (SUN) – Annual All Day Christmas Bird Count & Potluck Dinner

Join a team for our 69th Christmas Bird Count. Check www.rocklandaudubon.org or call Alan Wells at 845-942-5751.

Chapter Financial Report for FY'15

2015 CHAPTER FINANCIAL REPORT
National Audubon Society
Chapter Name: Rockland Audubon Society, Inc.
Chapter Code: R06

Balance Sheet and Statement of Revenues and Expenses
for the 12-Month Period, July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

REVENUES

Audubon Society Net Payment	2,291.75
Additional Membership Revenues	100.00
Bequests	
Collaborative Funding	700.00
Contributions	883.65
Educational Events	400.00
Field Trips	
Fundraising Events	3,438.00
Grants	
Interest and Investments	0.90
Program Meetings	
Sales, Store, Videos	
Other, Miscellaneous	407.74
Total Revenues	\$8,222.04

EXPENDITURES

Administration	2,856.76
Newsletter/Postage/Mailing	234.33
Educational Events	1,997.53
Fundraising	455.83
Regional/State Offices/State Council	1,236.30
Grants Contributions to Others	
Collaborative Funding Project	1,377.45
Memberships	120.00
Other	100.00
Total Expenditures	\$8,378.20

NET INCOME (OR DEFICIT) IN OPERATING FUNDS	(\$156.16)
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$13,721.91
ENDING BALANCE	\$13,565.75

ASSETS

Cash and Equivalents (Checking Account, etc.)	13,300.35
Miscellaneous, Petty Cash	36.00
Accounts Receivable (Owed to Chapter)	
Other (Videos, Store Goods)	229.40
Net Fixed Assets (furniture, equipment, not including value of land or buildings)	
Total Assets	\$13,565.75

LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE

Liabilities

Accounts Payable (owed by chapter)

Unearned Income (not credited in this fiscal year)

Other

Total Liabilities

0

Funds

Restricted (Endowments, Scholarships, etc.)

Reserved (Committed to Special Programs)

Unreserved (Not Committed)

Total Fund Balances

\$13,565.75

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

Officers

President: Karen D'Alessandri

Vice President: Jim Previdi

Secretary: Elyse Fuller

Treasurer: Vicki Beaumont

Committee Members

Conservation: Vicki Beaumont, Elyse Fuller

Education & Outreach: Joyce Greenwald

Electronic Communications: Della Wells

Field Trips: Della Wells

Fundraising: <Open>

Hospitality: Peter Johnson

Hotline Phone: Ron Conzo

Membership: Della Wells

Newsletter: Della Wells, Alan Wells

Programs: Judith Malo

Publicity: Judith Malo

Webmaster: Alan Wells

Membership

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

Della Wells, RAS Membership Chairperson

9 Dunderberg Road

Tomkins Cove, NY 10986-1003

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

The Observer

Newsletter submissions welcome!

Please send your contributions for *The Observer* to Della Wells at dmwells@optonline.net. The editor reserves the right to edit any copy for clarity, accuracy and space requirements.

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