



# THE URBAN AUDUBON

## The Greening of Sewage Overflows Are Bats Convening at the Javits Center?



**NYC AUDUBON  
MISSION & VISION**

**Mission:** NYC Audubon is a grassroots community that works for the protection of wild birds and habitat in the five boroughs, improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

**Vision:** NYC Audubon envisions a day when birds and people in the five boroughs enjoy a healthy, livable habitat.

**THE URBAN AUDUBON**

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# PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Harrison Maas



As this issue of *The Urban Audubon* goes to press, New York City is full of fledgling birds begging to be fed, leading us to reflect on the birds that nest in our area. The variety is astounding. Every borough has its fair share of breeders, including Manhattan, its parks filled with nesting Baltimore orioles, warbling vireos, and eastern kingbirds. In a historical first, a female ruby-throated hummingbird was found this spring sitting on a nest in Central Park's Ramble—while a common tern colony continues to grow on Governors Island. Queens and Brooklyn are home to countless breeders as well: Spotted sandpipers breed in Queens' Alley Pond Park, green herons in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, and oystercatchers and egrets thrive in Jamaica Bay. The Bronx has its own bird-rich green spaces, such as Pelham Bay Park and New York Botanical Garden, both home to nesting great horned owls, and of course Van Cortlandt Park, its forests ringing with the song of wood thrushes. The leader in terms of diversity and numbers, however, may be Staten Island, home to a spectacular range of wild habitats: The Greenbelt's diverse spaces include Clove Lakes Park, featuring nesting great blue herons, while North Mount Loretto Woods has hosted both whip-poor-wills and black-and-white warblers in recent years.

A surprising number of birds breed in New York City and stay here through the dog days of summer. And of course vast numbers migrate through the City in spring and fall, stopping in our parks to feed and rest. Considerable numbers also use New York City as their winter home. Birds and the City are a 365-day-a-year, 24/7 combination, and as birders and conservationists, we monitor their fluctuating numbers with concern. Many of us in the birding world were heartened this past spring by what seemed to be the best migration in years. In an age where birds of many species are declining, some precipitously, this spring's migration, with its abundance of birds, was encouraging. But it also reminded us of the immense and difficult task before us, in protecting birds and their habitat and doing everything possible to stabilize, if not increase, bird populations across the country, and indeed across the world.

And this, of course, is NYC Audubon's mission. We strive to protect our beaches, our woodlands, and our open spaces in order to provide habitat in all seasons and protect our birdlife at all times, through such programs as Project Safe Flight, Lights Out New York, Harbor Herons, park restoration (such as McGolrick Park in Greenpoint, Brooklyn), breeding bird surveys, and, of course, via our advocacy on behalf of birds and their habitat, plus many other initiatives described in these pages or on our website ([www.nyc Audubon.org](http://www.nyc Audubon.org)). With your help and support, NYC Audubon continues to make this city a better place to live, for both birds and people.

## NYC AUDUBON WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KATHRYN HEINTZ

We are happy to announce that Kathryn Heintz will commence work as NYC Audubon's new executive director on September 2. Kathryn served as director, principal gifts and annual fund, for the Wildlife Conservation Society for the past two years, where she was instrumental in building and implementing a campaign for elephant conservation and in developing new approaches for funding of global initiatives. From 2001 to 2012 she was director of development at Wave Hill in the Bronx. She brings a wealth of experience that will be invaluable to the organization. Kathryn, welcome to the NYC Audubon family.

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# CONSERVATION NOTES

The primary goal of NYC Audubon's conservation program is to focus efforts on activities that have the most significant impacts on priority bird species and their habitats. This past spring and summer, our staff, research assistants, summer interns, and citizen scientists have been hard at work to achieve this goal. The principal activities are summarized below:

## IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS AND PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT

### • *Improve Stopover Habitat Quality:*

A new project funded by the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund is our first major effort to improve stopover habitat for migratory songbirds and pollinators. Working with the New York City Parks & Recreation staff at McGolrick Park, Brooklyn, and NYC Parks & Recreation Field Ecologist Alexander Summers as native plant consultant, NYC Audubon Research Assistant Kaitlyn Parkins and Intern Melanie del Rosario planned and planted a native plant garden that is not only good for birds and insects but is also a beautiful neighborhood amenity. Volunteers from the area did the planting and summertime maintenance of the garden. Local school children, part of Audubon New York's For the Birds program, adopted a section of the garden.

The 6.75-acre green roof atop the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center might seem an unlikely avian stopover and nesting site, but Fordham University PhD candidate Dustin Partridge, who led a biodiversity green roof monitoring team, found herring gulls in residence, with five pairs building nests. Also, eastern red and silver-haired bats were recorded foraging over the roof (see article on page 17) and a variety of arthropods (including pollinators) were collected in traps. Bird calls were also recorded and are in the process of being analyzed.

### • *Reduce Threats to Birds from Buildings, Light, and Glass*

With funding from the Leon Levy Founda-

tion, Toyota TogetherGreen, and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, NYC Audubon partnered with the Bryant Park Corporation (BPC) to pilot a project that asked the 31-member BPC maintenance staff not only to remove dead birds, but also to report them using a new innovative text-in system. As evidenced by data from our regular monitoring efforts, Bryant Park continued to be a collision hotspot; birds found there included common yellowthroats, ovenbirds, and thrush species. The maintenance staff reported several birds this spring, including a hermit thrush, an ovenbird, and an indigo bunting. This fall we will work with BPC to expand this program to other areas of the City.

### • *Seek Solutions to Issues Facing Migrating Birds by Monitoring Collisions with Buildings and Glass and Increasing Scientific Understanding of Migration*

NYC Audubon's team of citizen science volunteers once again patrolled the streets of Manhattan for birds killed by collisions with glass. In addition to Bryant Park, the final weeks of May proved deadly at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for a number of Canada warblers, common yellowthroats, black-and-white warblers, hermit thrushes, ovenbirds, and even an orchard oriole. Once a highly problematic site, the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center has experienced reduced collisions since façade changes included the replacement of highly reflective glass with bird-friendly glass and stainless steel panels.

NYC Audubon Intern Darren Klein created "D-Bird," a web-based research tool designed to collect crowd-sourced bird mortality data in the City. This new Project Safe Flight component allows the public to record information on dead and injured birds, as a complement to the program's more scientifically rigorous research protocols. D-Bird may be accessed via our homepage or directly at <http://nycaudubon.neocities.org/D-Bird.htm>

## JAMAICA BAY

### • *Protect Sites Critical to Marsh-Nesting Shorebirds*

Darren Klein was also instrumental in helping summarize comments on the Gateway National Recreation Area (National Park Service) General Management Plan, including comments on the final draft. Klein has been sending elected officials our comments, either by mail or in person. We were able to help formalize increased protection for bird species of conservation need. (See article on page 15.)

We continue our work with Shiloh Schulte of the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (Manomet, MA) to monitor and protect American oystercatchers on Breezy Point, islands in Jamaica Bay, and on Arverne Beaches in the Rockaways. In early May, NYC Audubon Research Associate Emilio Tobon perfected his use of the "whoosh net." We were able to catch, tag, and release 16 adult oystercatchers with this low-risk lure and trap system. Adult birds tagged in 2013 returned to nest in 2014. Productivity data are being analyzed for a multiyear comparison.

NYC Audubon Intern Alison Koczek, PhD student at SUNY Syracuse, continues to conduct research on Staten Island, studying the ecology of one of NYC Audubon's focal species: saltmarsh sparrows. The continued breeding of this species on Staten Island is an indicator of habitat resilience in the face of sea level rise.

### • *Expand Opportunities for Citizen Science in Jamaica Bay*

In its sixth year, our migratory bird and horseshoe crab program continues to be a success. During the spring 2014 season more than 60 citizen scientists joined us to monitor horseshoe crab spawning activity at Big Egg Marsh, East and West Plumb Beach, and Dead Horse Bay.

NYC Audubon Site Coordinators Ann Seligman and Phil Cusimano led the survey effort on Plumb Beach. In previous



years few horseshoe crabs were seen on the west side of Plumb Beach, in part because beach erosion left little substrate on which they could spawn. As part of an ongoing Plumb Beach renourishment and protection program, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers installed stone groins. NYC Audubon and partners at Fordham University, Kingsborough Community College, and Cornell Cooperative Extension, curious about how these groins and subsequent changes to beach structure might affect the horseshoe crabs, were all pleased to find nearly one thousand spawning horseshoe crabs at the height of the season on West Plumb.

## WESTERN LONG ISLAND SOUND AND THE NARROWS/STATEN ISLAND

- *Demonstrate the Relationship between Habitat Quality and Population Health*

### *of Priority Bird Species in the Western Long Island Sound*

Colonially nesting waterbirds are excellent indicators of habitat health; a colony will abandon its site if its food supply or nesting sites are degraded. Detecting and understanding such changes is a goal of our annual Harbor Herons Nesting Survey. NYC Audubon Communications Manager and Survey Coordinator Tod Winston led an interim survey of active nesting islands and found, for the most part, that all is well: Preliminary data indicate that total wading bird numbers are stable in the harbor. The egret colony on Jamaica Bay's restored Elders Point East is doing particularly well, having increased by almost 40% since 2013. This low island colony is particularly vulnerable to disturbance by humans or predators, however. Goose Island, in Long Island

Sound, serves as a tragic reminder of what can happen if the islands are not protected: This once thriving colony was destroyed by predators (human or otherwise) in 2013 and showed no sign of recolonization in 2014. On a positive note indicating our birds' adaptability, however, a surprising redistribution of species occurred on South Brother Island. Ten yellow-crowned night-herons were found nesting in the middle of the island's double-crested cormorant colony.

If you would like to get involved with our citizen science efforts, please contact us at [volunteer@nycaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@nycaudubon.org).

You can find the latest conservation project updates on our blog, *Syrinx*, at [www.nycaudubon.org/syrinx](http://www.nycaudubon.org/syrinx).

## VISIT JAMAICA'S LUXURIOUS MOUNTAIN RETREAT: STRAWBERRY HILL

Visit the beautiful Strawberry Hill Resort and Spa in Jamaica's Blue Mountains, home to 24 of Jamaica's 26 endemic bird species, and receive a 20% discount as an NYC Audubon member. Surrounded by lush gardens and overlooking the verdant rainforest of the valley below, Strawberry Hill's 12 lovely Georgian-style cottages include studio and one- and two-bedroom options, each featuring a private veranda with magnificent views. During your stay, hike the mountainous acreage of the property and beyond, then relax by the infinity edge pool with views of the Blue Mountains and the coastal city of Kingston. The resort also offers a full service spa and fine dining options featuring a fresh take on Jamaican culinary classics. Special travel packages available. 20% discount for NYC Audubon members (discount code: AUDNYC); offer good now until December 15, 2014. To learn more and to redeem this offer, please contact Island Outpost at 1-800-OUTPOST (688-7678) or by email to [mark.collins@islandoutpost.com](mailto:mark.collins@islandoutpost.com). Learn more at [www.strawberryhillhotel.com](http://www.strawberryhillhotel.com).

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## VOLUNTEER!



Work in NYC Audubon's friendly office or in the field and make a difference for the City's wildlife. **If interested in any of the projects listed below, please register by contacting us at 212-691-7483 or [volunteer@nycaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@nycaudubon.org).**

### **INJURED BIRD TRANSPORTING With the Wild Bird Fund**

We need caring volunteers to transport injured birds to licensed wildlife rehabilitators in the area. A training session will be held at the Wild Bird Fund Center on Tuesday, September 9, 6-7pm.

### **TRIBUTE IN LIGHT MONITORING Thursday, September 11, beginning at 8pm With the Municipal Art Society**

Each year a tireless group of volunteers monitors the Tribute in Light to ensure that migrating birds do not become entrapped in the light

beams. A training session will be held Tuesday, September 2, 6-7pm.

### **INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP**

**Saturday, September 20, 10am-2pm (Raindate: Saturday, September 27), Noon-4pm With American Littoral Society and National Park Service**

Join us at North Channel Bridge to take part in a multi-state effort to improve coastline habitat. The North Channel Bridge area, used by species such as the American oystercatcher, is also a stone's throw away from the Harbor Heron Islands, the newly restored Elders Point Marsh, and the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Help us clear the beach and raise awareness of the importance of coastal areas to bird-life. Equipment, refreshments, and transportation from Manhattan are provided. Limited to 40.

# THE GREENING OF SEWAGE OVERFLOWS

**C**ombined sewer overflows (CSOs) represent a serious, and with climate change, growing problem: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates 10 trillion gallons a year of untreated stormwater runs off roofs, roads, parking lots, and other paved surfaces, often combined with household sewage, into urban rivers and waterways nationwide. In New York City alone, about 30 billion gallons of CSOs are discharged annually, a clear threat to the health of humans and wildlife.

New York City, with aging “combined” sewer lines in which street runoff is combined with household sewage, is trying to address CSOs through a variety of responses developed in part by its Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). “Gray” infrastructure—traditional solutions such as sewage treatment plants and storage tanks—are being updated or rebuilt. “Green” infrastructure—green roofs, rain barrels, rain gardens, permeable

pavement, tree pits with below-grade water catchments, and bioswales—are newer answers to the old problems, supporting the environment and the economy.

In January 2011, the DEP inaugurated its Green Infrastructure Plan, which aims to improve water quality by integrating green infrastructure with gray infrastructure. The goal: to retrofit at least 10 percent of the impervious surfaces in the City’s combined sewer catchment areas, by 2030, to capture the first inch of runoff from every rainstorm and store it for later use/treatment or let it filter back into the ground to be taken up by plants or evaporated back into the atmosphere. This Greenstreets Program converts paved, vacant traffic islands and medians into green spaces filled with trees, shrubs, and groundcover in an effort to capture stormwater.

Larry Levine, a NYC Audubon board member and senior attorney in the Natural Resources Defense Council’s water program, notes that green infrastructure gives “more

bang for the buck” in terms of storm resilience, carbon sequestration, urban heat island mitigation, augmented water supply, and increased habitat for wildlife—not to mention additional benefits to human health and the joy of seeing green spaces in what had been an asphalt jungle. The City estimates hundreds of millions of dollars in combined benefits.

New York City’s green infrastructure programs include pilot projects, some started as early as 2009 under PlaNYC, the City’s blueprint for sustainability and resilience. Completed projects have incorporated native plants, mimicking natural conditions and flowering throughout the seasons, and provided benefits for pollinators, birds, and humans—all while capturing stormwater. Municipal capital projects are being greened and various incentives are being offered to encourage retrofits on private property. The City has made a significant commitment to publicly fund green infrastructure by more than \$1 billion over a 20-year period; ...continued on page 9

## USING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TO MANAGE STORMWATER: SOME ILLUSTRATIONS FROM NEW YORK CITY

The green solutions to capture excess stormwater runoff being employed by New York City’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) run the gamut from small, individual sidewalk plantings to complex, multiyear projects encompassing wide areas and using methods as complicated as wetland construction. The samples shown here illustrate the broad range of bioinfiltration projects currently in use in the City. For more information about other forms of green infrastructure, such as permeable pavements and blue roofs, or to learn about DEP’s Green Infrastructure Grant Program, visit [www.nyc.gov/greeninfrastructure](http://www.nyc.gov/greeninfrastructure).



**1. RIGHT-OF-WAY BIOSWALES** like the one pictured at the corner of Dean Street and 4th Avenue in Brooklyn are the most common type of green infrastructure in the DEP’s toolkit for stormwater management. Runoff from the street is directed into the bioswale, a planted area in the sidewalk, where it is absorbed by engineered soil and a subsoil layer of stones, and infiltrates into the soil below. Some of the stormwater is also taken up by the vegetation for eventual evapotranspiration (water loss due to a combination of evaporation and plant transpiration).



2. **STORMWATER GREENSTREETS**, larger versions of right-of-way bioswales, are constructed in the street itself and represent another common solution to CSO problems. Altogether, more than 200 right-of-way bioswales and stormwater greenstreets, like this one along Morrison Avenue in the Bronx, have been created citywide. DEP has developed standardized right-of-way bioswale designs and design procedures, intended to enable cost-effective implementation of right-of-way green infrastructure on a larger scale.

3. **RAIN GARDENS** are systems of vegetation and infiltration designed with an engineered soil layer that promotes infiltration of stormwater runoff into the underlying soil. DEP constructs rain gardens in City-owned areas other than public streets or sidewalks. At Bronx River Houses, a high-density residential complex, rain gardens are one component of a pilot project that also includes other types of green infrastructure for stormwater control.

# THE GREENING OF SEWAGE OVERFLOWS (CONTINUED)



4. **GREEN ROOFS** like the one pictured at the Brooklyn Navy Yard consist of a vegetative layer in soil, underlain by a drainage layer. The Navy Yard project was partially funded through DEP's Green Infrastructure Grant Program. (For another example of a green roof, see page 17.)

5. **HIGHWAY BIORETENTION AREAS** such as the North and South Conduit Avenue highway median in Queens include subsurface infiltration and storage capacity designed to handle highway surface runoff that would otherwise flow directly into the CSO system. This project was part of the Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection Plan of 2010 and it is hoped that its design can be replicated throughout the City.





depending on the results of early efforts, the DEP may divert more funds from gray to green infrastructure to satisfy Clean Water Act requirements. “It all depends on which is most cost effective,” says Levine.

Currently, NYC Audubon is involved in one of the pilot projects with New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, HDR, Inc., and SCAPE Studio. (Another green infrastructure concept designed by SCAPE was featured in a recent exhibit at MoMA.) The swale/rain garden, in a Greenstreets traffic triangle in the Gowanus watershed, should be completed sometime this fall. The current triangle will be enlarged from 4,000 to 5,500 square feet, 3,000 of which will be green. Like all new green infrastructure in the City, it is required to capture the equivalent of one inch per rainfall.

NYC Audubon is working with SCAPE to create a habitat for birds that provides for foraging and perching, including red dogwood, serviceberry, meadowsweet, and joe-pye weed. “All plants should be able to stand up to wet conditions, as well as help the area infiltrate storm runoff into the soil,” explains Lanie McKinnon, the landscape architect in charge of the project. A gravel base underneath the swale should further slow the water, until it seeps to the water table. McKinnon adds that what is learned here, in terms of habitat, plants, and water filtration, will be incorporated in designs for future sites.

Lots of work still remains before the City’s overall CSO reduction efforts can be called a success. Levine notes that the City’s current plans are projected to reduce overflows by about 40 percent, to 18 billion gallons per year, which would still leave New York City with more overflows than any other city nationwide. Under New York State supervision, the DEP is continuing to study what additional investments may be needed. To stay up to date on these efforts—and learn about opportunities to make your voice heard—you can subscribe for email updates from the DEP at [ltcp@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:ltcp@dep.nyc.gov), and from the Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) Coalition at [www.swimmablenyc.info](http://www.swimmablenyc.info).



6. **WET MEADOWS** such as this pilot project at the Spring Creek MTA depot in Brooklyn support wetland plants, in this case by accepting highway runoff and maintaining a one-foot pool. A nearby bioswale is designed to receive overflow from the wetland and slowly release it into the soil.
7. **LARGE, MULTICOMPONENT PROJECT.** Begun in the 1970s and still a work in progress, the Staten Island Bluebelt will provide stormwater management for about a third of Staten Island’s land area when finished. The “bluebelts”—adaptations of natural drainage corridors—include a variety of wetland systems that provide diverse wildlife habitats like the one pictured, among other benefits.

# EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

- NYC Audubon Events
- Partnership Events

- FALL WARBLERS

Thursday, September 4,  
6:30-8:30pm (class);  
Sunday, September 7, 8-11am (trip)  
Instructor: Joe Giunta, Happy  
Warblers LLC

Identifying “confusing fall warblers” can be tricky, even for the experts. Come study some of the most puzzling species that stop through our area during fall migration with expert Joe Giunta, and then enjoy a second session in the “classroom” of Central Park. Limited to 12. \$65 (45)

- VAN CORTLANDT BIRD

**WALKS, THE BRONX**  
Saturdays, September 6-November  
29, 8-9:30am  
Guide: NYC Audubon  
With the Van Cortlandt Park  
Conservancy

Meet at Van Cortlandt Nature Center. The history of birding and Van Cortlandt Park are inseparable. Influential birders such as Roger Tory Peterson and Allan D. Cruickshank got their starts on Van Cortlandt’s ecologically diverse grounds. These walks celebrate the tradition set forth by these great ornithologists. Participants will look for various species of residents and migrants and discuss a wide range of avian topics. For more information, please call 212-691-7483. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

- BIRDING FOR FAMILIES IN CENTRAL PARK

Sundays, September 7–November  
30, 10-11am  
Guides: NYC Audubon  
Offered by the Central Park  
Conservancy

Meet at the Dana Discovery Center (inside the park at 110th Street between Lenox and Fifth Avenues). Bring the kids and visit one of New

©Francois Portmann



*Wood Ducks*

York City’s richest bird habitats. As a family, learn how to spot and identify our feathered neighbors in their natural surroundings. Binoculars can be borrowed from the Dana Center. For weather cancellation information, call 212-860-1370. Limited to 20. Ages 5 and up. Free

- MORNING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK

Wednesdays, September 10, 17, 24;  
October 1, 8, 15; 7:30-10:30am  
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers  
LLC

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Birders of all levels can enjoy this fun and educational series of six walks, observing the diverse and ever-changing waves of migrants that stop over Central Park during fall migration. Limited to 15. \$140 (99)

- BIRDING GEMS OF QUEENS: UDALLS COVE AND RAVINE NATURAL RESOURCE AREA

Saturday, September 13, 8am-1pm  
Guide: Jeff Kollbrunner

Udalls Cove is tucked right alongside Little Neck Bay in Queens. This small but precious park provides resources for saltmarsh, freshwater wetland, and forest species of birds and other animals. Look for great and snowy

egrets, belted kingfishers, common terns, ospreys, and even clapper rails. Transport by passenger van included. Limit to 11. \$75 (52)

- FALL BIRDING AT WAVE HILL, THE BRONX

Sundays September 14, October 12,  
November 9, and December 14 (all  
walks 9:30-11:30am)  
Guide: Gabriel Willow  
With Wave Hill

Meet at the Perkins Visitor Center. Naturalist Gabriel Willow contributes his extensive knowledge of bird species and their behaviors on these captivating walks. Wave Hill’s garden setting overlooking the Hudson River flyway provides the perfect habitat for resident and migrating birds. Advanced registration is recommended, either online at [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org), at the Perkins Visitor Center, or by calling 718-549-3200 x251. (Walks run rain or shine; in case of severe weather call the number above for updates.) Ages 10 and up welcome with an adult. NYC Audubon members enjoy two-for-one admission

- EVENING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK

Monday Series: September  
15-October 13; 5-6:30pm  
Tuesday Series: September  
16-October 14; 5-6:30pm  
Wednesday Series: September  
17-October 15; 5-6:30pm  
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Witness the spectacle of autumn migration as songbirds follow the Atlantic Flyway to their tropical wintering grounds. Look for tanagers, warblers, and other neo-tropical migrants in the wilds of Central Park. Choose from our Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday evening series. Limited to 15. \$122 (85)

- MEMBERS-ONLY

September Member Walk in  
Central Park

Friday, September 19, 7:30-9am  
Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Come ramble in the Ramble of Central Park with NYC Audubon President Harry Maas and enjoy the beginning of fall migration. Please call Angela Januzzi at 212-691-7483 x306 to register. Limited to 20. Free for Contributing NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and up

- HOOK MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH, ROCKLAND COUNTY, NY

Sunday, September 21, 9am-4pm  
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers  
LLC

Part of the Palisades Interstate Park system, Hook Mountain has commanding views of all nearby mountain ridges and the Hudson River. From this inland hawk watch spot we expect to see many species of migrating raptors, including broad-winged and red-shouldered hawks, bald eagles, accipiters, and falcons. Note: this trip requires



a 35-minute hike up and down the mountainside. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$95 (66)

● **BIRDING TOURS OF BRYANT PARK, MANHATTAN**  
**Thursdays, September 25-October 23, 8-9am**

**Guide: Gabriel Willow**  
**With Bryant Park Corporation**  
 Meet at the Birding Tour sign at the 42nd Street and 6th Avenue entrance to the park. Discover the surprising variety of birds that stop in Bryant Park during migration. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

● **BIRDING GEMS OF QUEENS: FOREST PARK'S STRACK POND**  
**Saturday, September 27, 8:30-11am**  
**Guide: Jeff Kollbrunner**

Meet at the corner of Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive. Visit "Strack Pond"—a natural kettle pond where herons and a variety of songbirds may be seen including thrushes, warblers, and a variety of sparrows. Also look for birds of prey like great horned owls, eastern screech-owls, and red-tailed hawks. Limited to 15. \$50 (35)

● **JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE**  
**Saturday, September 27, 3-6pm**  
**Guides: Don Riepe, Mickey Cohen**  
**With American Littoral Society**

Meet at Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. Enjoy a three-hour narrated cruise aboard the 100-foot catamaran "Golden Sunshine." Visit backwater marshes near JFK Airport and learn about the 13,000-acre Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. See nesting peregrine falcons, ospreys, egrets, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Includes wine and other refreshments. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or [donriep@gmail.com](mailto:donriep@gmail.com). Limited to 140. \$55

● **BIRDING BY CANOE IN CONSTITUTION MARSH, PUTNAM COUNTY, NY**  
**Sunday, September 28, 9am-5pm**  
**Guides: Gabriel Willow, Constitution Marsh Naturalist**  
**With Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary**

Join Gabriel Willow and a Constitution Marsh naturalist to explore Constitution Marsh Audubon Sanctuary—a spectacular 271-acre tidal marsh just outside of Cold Spring, NY. Observe marsh birds up close as you canoe through this pristine freshwater habitat—possible sightings include Virginia rails, spotted sandpipers, and bald eagles. Then look for warblers and other fall migrants on the

sanctuary's trails and enjoy a picnic lunch while learning more about the marsh's ecology. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$143 (100)

● **CAMERA CLUB**  
**Wednesdays, October 1, December 3; 6:30-8:30pm**  
**Instructors: David Speiser, Lloyd Spitalnik**

Meet at the National Audubon office, 225 Varick St., for the first meeting of our 2014-15 season. Whether you're a beginner or a more advanced photographer, our Camera Club is the place to discuss diverse photography-related topics, hone your skills, and learn about the great photography opportunities available in the New York City area. Professional bird and nature photographers David Speiser and Lloyd Spitalnik will share their expertise and help you improve your work. Registration required. No limit. Bimonthly meetings; \$10 per meeting. For more information and to learn about additional photography workshops and classes, visit [www.nycaudubon.org/photography-club](http://www.nycaudubon.org/photography-club)

● **MEMBERS-ONLY**  
**October Member Walk in Prospect Park**  
**Friday, October 3, 7:30-9am**

Meet at the entrance to Prospect Park across from Grand Army Plaza, and join NYC Audubon Board Member and *The Warbler Guide* author Tom Stephenson for a fall migration walk in Prospect Park. Please call Angela Januzzi at 212-691-7483 x306 to register. Limited to 20. Free for Contributing NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and up

● **BIRDING GEMS OF QUEENS: "THE WATERHOLE" OF FOREST PARK**  
**Saturday, October 4, 8:30-11am**  
**Guide: Jeff Kollbrunner**

Meet at the corner of Park Lane South and Metropolitan Avenue. Visit "the waterhole"—a veritable migrant magnet that is known for rarities, and where dark-eyed juncos, red-breasted nuthatches, pine siskins, and a variety of thrushes and warblers may be seen. Also look for birds of prey like great horned owls, eastern screech-owls, and red-tailed hawks. Limited to 15. \$50 (35)

● **FALL MIGRANTS OF WOODLAWN CEMETERY, THE BRONX**  
**Sunday, October 5, 8-10am**  
**Guides: Tod Winston, Joseph McManus**

**With Woodlawn Conservancy**  
 Meet at the Jerome Avenue entrance of Woodlawn Cemetery. Join us for a morning bird walk and tour of beautiful Woodlawn Cemetery: Tod Winston and Joseph McManus will look for fall migrants and year-round residents on the expansive, wooded cemetery grounds, while a Woodlawn Conservancy docent shares fascinating stories about Woodlawn's history and the interesting mixture of individuals interred there. Bring water. Limited to 15. \$35 (24)

● **HAWK WATCH AT FORT TILDEN, QUEENS**  
**Sunday, October 5, 10am-1pm**  
**Guide: Don Riepe**  
**With American Littoral Society**

Meet at 10am at Bldg. 1 in Fort Tilden for a hike to the hawk watch platform to view falcons, hawks, ospreys and other migrating raptors. We'll also hike along the beach and dunes to look for songbirds and shorebirds. For more information, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or [donriep@gmail.com](mailto:donriep@gmail.com). No limit. Free

...continued on page 12



*Cedar Waxwing*

● **FALL FOLIAGE BIRD WALK IN QUEENS BOTANICAL GARDEN**  
**Thursday, September 25, 8:30-10am**

**Guide: Jeff Kollbrunner**  
**With Queens Botanical Garden**  
 Meet at 43-50 Main Street (between Dahlia and Elder Avenues). Enjoy the beauty of turning leaves and returning feathered friends amidst the carefully cultivated autumnal exhibits of the Garden. Admission to the Queens Botanical Garden is included. Limited to 15. \$39 (27)

©Michaela Saglowatz

# EVENTS AND ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

## ● SPARROW ID WORKSHOP

Thursday, October 9, 6:30-8pm (class);

Saturday, October 11, 9am-12pm (trip)

Instructor: Gabriel Willow

Sparrows are one of the most challenging groups of birds to identify, yet beautiful and fascinating once they can be distinguished. Learn to identify those LBJs (little brown jobs) by studying behavior, field marks, and songs. Sparrow species seen in prior years include field, swamp, savannah, white-crowned, and Lincoln's. Limited to 12. \$58 (40.50)

## ● RAPTOR TRUST AND GREAT SWAMP, NJ

Saturday, October 11, 9:30am-6pm

Guides: Don Riepe, Tod Winston

Visit the Raptor Trust rehabilitation center and see owls and hawks up close. Then hike the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge to look

for fall migrants, reptiles, and amphibians. Bring lunch. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 11. \$107.50 (75)

## ● NYC AUDUBON DAY AT HAWK MOUNTAIN, PA

Saturday, October 18, 8am-8pm

Guides: Hawk Mountain Raptor Educator, Gabriel Willow

Mid-October is the perfect time to visit Hawk Mountain, one of the premier hawk-watching spots in the East. Gabriel Willow and a Hawk Mountain guide will introduce us to the variety of raptors that may be seen, including golden eagles, hawks, and falcons. The path to the hawk watch site is a 3/4-mile hike through mountainous woodland. Bring lunch. Group program, trail admission, and transportation by coach or van included. Participants may also arrange their own transportation. Transportation option limited to 30. \$122 (85)

## ● BIRDING GEMS OF QUEENS: ALLEY POND PARK

Sunday, October 19, 8am-1pm

Guide: Jeff Kollbrunner

Look for birds in the hilly woodlands and salt marshes of Queens' second largest City park—and its most ecologically diverse. We'll look for belted kingfishers, fox sparrows, thrushes, American redstarts, horned grebes, bufflehead, red-breasted mergansers, northern harriers, or even great horned owls—as well as shorebirds and wading birds feeding on the exposed mudflats. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 11. \$75 (52)

## ● HIKE TO THE GREENBELT'S MOSES MOUNTAIN, STATEN ISLAND

Sunday, October 19, 9:15am-4pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

With NYC Parks and the Greenbelt Conservancy

Meet at the Manhattan terminal of the S.I. Ferry and join us as we

journey to Moses Mountain, which provides a panoramic view of Staten Island and points beyond. We'll look for migrating hawks, warblers, and other songbirds—with crimson sumac and other autumn foliage as a backdrop. Bring lunch and water. Transportation on Staten Island provided. Limited to 18. \$40 (28)

## ● BEGINNING BIRDING

Thursdays, October 23, October 30, and November 6, 6:30-8:30pm (classes);

and Saturdays, November 1 and 8 (trips)

Instructor: Tod Winston

Learn the keys to identifying the spectacular variety of birds that migrate southwards through New York City every fall. Even if you've never picked up a pair of binoculars, you'll soon be identifying warblers, thrushes, waterbirds, and more—both by sight and by ear. Three fun and educational in-class sessions

# NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

## ASSATEAGUE/CHINCOTEAGUE WEEKEND

Thursday, September 18, 9am-

Sunday, September 21, 6pm

Guide: Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society

A great wildlife weekend along the Virginia Coast. See wild ponies, sika deer, bald eagles, and many other species of wildlife. Includes three nights at the Refuge Inn, a bus tour of backwater flats, plus an "all-you-can-eat" seafood buffet. Transportation included. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or [donriep@gmail.com](mailto:donriep@gmail.com). Limited to 30. \$495 (\$180 single supplement)

## CAPE MAY MIGRATION WEEKEND WITH JOE GIUNTA

Saturday, September 27, 9am-

Sunday, September 28, 7pm

Guide: Joe Giunta

Cape May, New Jersey, is one of the best birding venues in the United States, especially during fall migration. Visit the Cape May hawk watch on two days, once late in the day and then early to get a good variety of hawks. Also visit birding hotspots such as Higbee Beach, Cape May Point, Jake's Landing, Cape May Meadows, and Nummy Island. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 10. \$325 (\$50 single supplement)

## CAPE MAY MIGRATION WEEKEND WITH GABRIEL WILLOW

Saturday, October 4, 9am-

Sunday, October 5, 7pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Cape May, New Jersey, is the East's capital of birding, and is particularly bird-rich in the fall. On good fall migration days, the area's forests and marshes are swarming with warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other songbirds, and of course the hawk watch is legendary as well. We'll visit Cape May Point, Higbee Beach, Cape May Meadows, and more in search of songbirds, raptors, wading birds, ducks, and terns. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 10. \$325 (\$50 single supplement)

©David Spenser



*Blue-Winged Warbler*



## Hawk Mountain

and two field trips to Central Park and Jamaica Bay (transport to Jamaica Bay included). Limited to 12. \$160 (112.50)

### ● FALL MIGRATION ON RANDALL'S ISLAND

**Sunday, October 26, 9am-1pm**  
**Guides: Gabriel Willow, Christopher Girgenti of Randall's Island With Randall's Island Park Alliance, Inc.**

Meet on the N.W. corner of 102nd Street and FDR Drive. We'll walk across the foot bridge to Randall's Island, an under-explored location in the East River that hosts restored freshwater wetlands and salt marsh. We'll look for fall migrants as we explore the results of recent restoration efforts. Two miles of walking and some modest climbs. Limited to 20. \$35 (24)

### ● DUCKS, RAPTORS, AND MORE AT PELHAM BAY PARK, THE BRONX

**Sunday, November 2, 9am-3pm**  
**Guide: Gabriel Willow**

Come explore the lovely coves and rocky outcroppings of Pelham Bay Park, looking for wintering ducks, migrating raptors, and more. Pelham Bay Park's combination of open water, salt marsh, rocky shore, both young and old growth forest, rare coastal tall grass meadows,

and patches of dry and wet oak savanna are not just unique within the City, but also on this continent! Bring lunch and water. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$90 (63)

### ● SNOW GEESE AND TUNDRA SWANS OF BRIGANTINE, NJ

**Sunday, November 9, 9:30am-7pm**  
**Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC**

Brigantine, part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, is one of the East Coast's premier sites for waterbirds, offering a diversity of species and panoramic views. Bring lunch and water. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$109 (76.50)

### ● BIRDING GEMS OF QUEENS: FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK'S WILLOW LAKE

**Sunday, November 16, 8:30-10am**  
**Guide: Jeff Kollbrunner**  
 Meet at Park Drive East and 73rd Terrace. Explore one of the City's last freshwater wetlands. Observe the great avian diversity of this park from strategic points along Willow Lake Trail, including looks from a wildlife blind at the 47-acre Willow Lake. In addition to songbirds, swallows, and swifts, observe great blue herons, black-crowned night-herons, and ospreys. We may

even see the immature bald eagle known to haunt nearby Meadow Lake soaring overhead! Limited to 15. \$43 (30)

### ● CAMERA CLUB

**Wednesday, December 3, 6:30-8:30pm**

Please see October 1 listing.

### ● WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP AT JAMAICA BAY

**Saturday, December 6, 10am-1pm**  
**With Gateway National Recreation Area**

**Guides: Don Riepe, Tod Winston**  
 Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center for a slide ID program and walk to look for wintering waterfowl. Learn about their behavior and biology and how to identify them in the field. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or [donriep@gmail.com](mailto:donriep@gmail.com). Limited to 25. Free

### ● VAN TRIP TO THE WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP AT JAMAICA BAY

**Saturday, December 6, 9am-3pm**  
 Register for our van trip to the Winter Waterfowl Workshop and get to Jamaica Bay the easy way. Transport by passenger van. Bring lunch and water. Limited to 12. \$28.50 (20)

### ● MEMBERS-ONLY

**December Member Walk in Central Park**  
**Wednesday, December 10, 7:30-9am**

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street for a members-only walk. Come brave the chilly weather and spot some of Central Park's best wintering birds with NYC Audubon Communications Manager Tod Winston. Please call Angela Januzzi at 212-691-7483 x306 to register. Limited to 20. Free for Contributing NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and up

### ● CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, ALL BOROUGHES

Save the date for the Christmas Bird Count! See dates below; more information will be included in the winter *Urban Audubon*.

**Manhattan, Queens:**

**Sunday, December 14**

**Brooklyn, Staten Island:**

**Saturday, December 20**

**The Bronx:**

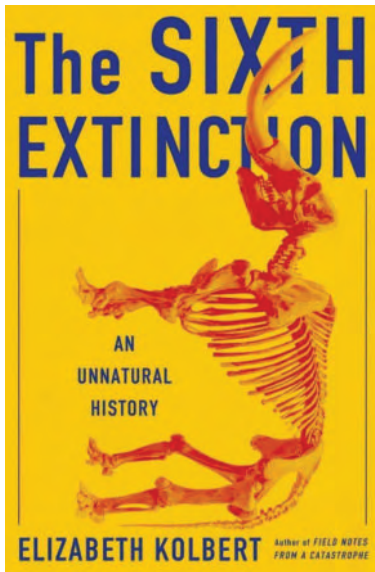
**Sunday, December 28**

● **TO REGISTER FOR ALL NYC AUDUBON EVENTS and for more information, visit [www.nyc Audubon.org](http://www.nyc Audubon.org) or call Darren Klein at 212-691-7483 x304 unless otherwise specified.**

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Classes meet at 71 West 23rd Street, Suite 1523.
- Contributing Members (Student/Senior level and up) receive a 30% discount on most local trips and classes (on discounted events, the discounted price appears in parentheses after the nonmember price). See membership form on page 19.
- For all coach and van trips, the meeting location is in front of 71 West 23rd Street in Manhattan unless otherwise specified.
- We depart promptly at the stated start time.
- For all overnight trips, membership in NYC Audubon at the Student/Senior level and up is required. See membership form on page 19.

*The Sixth Extinction:  
An Unnatural History*  
By Elizabeth Kolbert  
Henry Holt & Co., 2014



It will be us, in case you're wondering.

Past mass extinctions may have been caused by catastrophic events like an asteroid collision, but the next will be caused by man, writes acclaimed *New Yorker* environmental writer Elizabeth Kolbert in *The Sixth Extinction*. She provides facts, not theories, through example after example of how humans are damming up, chopping down, polluting, and otherwise transforming our planet as no other species ever has. She begins with evolutionary history and man's role in the disappearance of the mastodon. She recounts the killing of the last two great auks. And she explains our part in the imminent demise of the Sumatran rhino and the Panamanian golden frog.

But it's her reporting from the places we've harmed most that really hits home. In the Great Barrier Reef she points to the acidification of the ocean by carbon dioxide that has killed 50 percent of the coral and

its dependent wildlife in the last 30 years. From the once immensely diverse Amazon rain forest she describes how remaining small islands of forest, surrounded by deforested areas, have lost great numbers and species of birds and other creatures. As for invasive species, like the white-nose syndrome fungus that's killing bats, we transported these destructive organisms from one ecosystem to another—intentionally or not.

Humans may work slower than asteroids, but Kolbert warns that already “one third of all reef-building corals, a third of all freshwater mollusks, a third of sharks and rays, a quarter of all mammals, a fifth of all reptiles, and a sixth of all birds are headed toward oblivion.”

## THE FORT TILDEN OBSERVATION PLATFORM: FALL BIRDING AT ITS BEST!

Lynne Hertzog

One hundred feet above sea level, sitting on top of an old military building, is one of the best fall birding spots in New York City—a simple wooden observation platform. From mid-September through November, on a day with prevailing northwest winds (it's very important to get the right winds), you can see flock after flock of blackbirds, robins, waxwings, finches, pipits, bluebirds, swallows, accipiters, and falcons on their way south—passerines more so in the early morning and raptors in the late morning or early afternoon. With a 360-degree view, on a good day, it's a migration spectacle like no other in our area.

The birding is great because Fort Tilden, situated on the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens, lies directly on the coastal portion of the Atlantic Flyway—a migration route for 500-plus bird species and millions of individual birds. Fort Tilden, part of Gateway National Recreation Area, sits between Jacob Riis Park to the east and Breezy Point to the west. The viewing platform was constructed in 1995, 400 feet from the ocean on the highest point of the peninsula; its location saved it from damage by Hurricane Sandy. It is from Fort Tilden that volunteer

Donald Davis has been counting raptors for Gateway for the past 10 autumns. His data show the most frequent raptor migrants to be American kestrels, sharp-shinned hawks, and ospreys.

But getting to the platform is tricky: There are NO signs posted leading you to it. To get there, follow the main entrance road of Fort Tilden (Heinzelman Road) until you reach a T intersection. Turn right. Follow this road 0.02 miles to the big “Do Not Enter” sign. Park there, by the ball field (parking is allowed anywhere after September 15). Walk past the Do Not Enter sign (which only applies to cars) and continue straight for 0.03 miles (going past the red painted swing gate) to the graffiti-covered “Battery Harris East” building. Platform steps are on the east side of the battery. The platform is also graffiti-covered, unfortunately, but don't let that deter you from enjoyment of the avian wonder of migration on a northwest wind-filled autumn day!

See page 11 to learn about our October 5 visit to the Fort Tilden Hawk Watch. To see more photos, go to [www.nycaudubon.org/hawk-watch-at-fort-tilden](http://www.nycaudubon.org/hawk-watch-at-fort-tilden).

# NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ADOPTS LONG-AWAITED GATEWAY GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Larry Levine



*Great Egret Chicks on Jamaica Bay's Restored Elders Point East Island*

In mid-June, the National Park Service (NPS) formally adopted a new General Management Plan for Gateway National Recreation Area, the first update in 35 years.

The final plan is based on a vision that emphasizes recreation as the primary objective, above the protection of natural resources, even though NPS identified an alternative approach with greater resource protection as the “environmentally preferable alternative.”

Through last fall and winter, NYC Audubon developed recommendations for strengthening NPS’ original proposal and worked to build political and public support for them. The final version of the General Management Plan has been revised to include some of the changes NYC Audubon advocated. It is clear, however, that much work is still needed to ensure that sensitive habitat areas are protected and restored, even as NPS seeks to increase visitation and the range of activities offered to visitors.

In response to our comments, NPS decided against lifting restrictions on access to the islands of the Jamaica Bay and Staten Island units. The final plan designated all of

these islands, which provide important bird habitat, as “sensitive resource subzones,” effectively barring all camping and visitation. The final plan also rezoned many other critical habitat areas to afford greater protection than originally proposed, including the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Breezy Point Tip, Bergen Beach, Floyd Bennett Field, Great Kills Park, and Plumb Beach, where NPS has cancelled a major recreation program in order to prioritize the protection of shorebirds and horseshoe crabs.

Yet many challenges remain. For example, despite the plan’s expectation that annual visitation will increase by between 450,000 to 900,000 visitors, NPS did not commit to staffing the Jamaica Bay unit with commissioned rangers trained in resource protection.

The final plan states that site-specific environmental review will still be needed for projects that expand camping and transportation infrastructure; that additional protections for certain areas remain under consideration, such as a 300-foot buffer around Hoffman Island and saltmarsh islands in Jamaica Bay to protect nesting wading birds from boat visitors; and that more data will be

collected to track disturbance to threatened and endangered species and, potentially, adjust conservation measures.

NYC Audubon would like to thank all those that have supported us in our efforts to improve the General Management Plan, including the offices of Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, Congressman Gregory Meeks, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, and Congressman Joseph Crowley.

We will continue to work to ensure NPS protects Gateway’s unique and precious habitat. You can join us in our efforts by contacting NPS Planner Helen Mahan at [helen\\_mahan@nps.gov](mailto:helen_mahan@nps.gov).

The Park Service’s “Record of Decision” summarizing the plan, as well as the full plan and environmental impact statement, can be found under the “Document List” on the left-hand side of this page: [www.parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=16091](http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=16091). More details on NYC Audubon’s comments on the draft plan, and how NPS responded in the final plan, can be found on our website at: [www.nycaudubon.org/gateway-gmp](http://www.nycaudubon.org/gateway-gmp).

## REMEMBER NYC AUDUBON

New York City is forever changing, and with time the need to protect our urban wildlife and habitat becomes more and more critical. A bequest is a generous and straightforward way to safeguard birds and their habitat in the City’s five boroughs. It can be expressed “I bequeath [a sum of money or a percentage of my estate] to New York City Audubon Society, Inc. a not-for-profit organization with offices at 71 West 23rd Street, Suite 1523, New York, NY 10010, for its general purposes.” To learn more, please give Development Manager Angela Januzzi a call at 212-691-7483 x306.

# NYC AUDUBON WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

*Cathy Heller*

**N**YC Audubon is happy to welcome three new members to our board of directors. They hail from diverse backgrounds and bring knowledge of the arts and law as well as passion for conservation and birds.

## **ROBERT BATE**

Rob Bate has spent most of his working life as a carpenter and contractor. He has also pursued a career as an abstract artist, using traditional paint media, oil and acrylic, with a focus on color study. But he recognizes that he has always had a love for the natural world, and spent summers on the Pennsylvania farm where his mother grew up. She had an interest in birds and regularly identified what came to the feeder, though the family story was that her uncle was the expert birder. Rob still remembers the thrilling sight of a rose-breasted grosbeak that he spotted while his mother was gardening.

A birding turning point came in autumn 2007, when a long stretch of indoor work in Rob's art studio left him yearning for fresh air. He signed up for Joe Giunta's NYC Audubon Fall Migration Walks in Central Park. The spectacle of so many birds and the challenge of identifying them inspired him, and he's been at it ever since. He is now president of the Brooklyn Bird Club and leads walks and trips of his own.

There have been other benefits of birding for Rob. In spring 2008 he visited Jamaica Bay in the late afternoon to check out the birds there. While enjoying a sandwich in the parking lot, a Mercedes drove up and a cat was shoed out the door. Knowing the harm that feral cats can do to birds, particularly shorebirds, he decided to capture the cat. A woman joined him in the chase and they managed to capture the cat. He and Tracy married the following year, and they still have the cat, an indoor pet named Jamaica Bay.

## **ALEXANDER EWING**

Sandy Ewing describes himself as an enthusiastic but not necessarily expert birder. But he does have expertise that will prove invaluable to NYC Audubon.

After college and law school at Yale, Sandy clerked for a Federal District judge and then joined Debevoise & Plimpton as a litigation associate. After eight years, he was ready to pursue his real goal of working for the public interest as an environmental lawyer. From 1995 to 2000, he was a staff attorney at the Environmental Law and Policy Center in Chicago. He led campaigns to make interstate highways more environmentally responsible, helped pass laws to reduce incinerator pollution, and promoted clean energy.

Sandy moved to New York in 2000, where he has an independent law practice focusing on environmental and zoning laws. He has a keen understanding of NYC Audubon's work. In his words, our work

"protects not only birds but all other species, including people, that depend on the remarkable ecosystems found in the City."

Having grown up on a cattle farm in an agricultural community in Dutchess County, New York, Sandy knows the importance of ears as well as eyes in birding. He respects the skill of more prolific birders, such as fellow board member Jeff Kimball, who introduced him to NYC Audubon.

Sandy is married to Wynn Senning and they have two teenage sons. Wynn is an interactive media producer and is on the board of Pentacle, an organization that aids performing artists in fulfilling their vision. They work mainly with dance companies, a venue that is familiar to Sandy. Before the cattle farm, his father was general manager of the Joffrey Ballet, and later he was chancellor of the North Carolina School of the Arts. And Sandy's grandmother was Lucia Chase, a dancer and a founder of American Ballet Theater.

## **JUDGE EUGENE NARDELLI**

A Good Neighbor Award that Eugene Nardelli received in 1945 at age 11 was the start of a career in public service. Even at that young age, he possessed a voice for conciliation in response to unrest in his East Harlem neighborhood.

Eugene was born in Italy and moved to New York City as a youngster. His father ran a produce store, and Eugene often delivered the fruits and vegetables. At the time, homing and racing pigeons were raised on roofs and fire escapes, and he helped clean, feed, water, and exercise the birds as well as maintain their screened box homes. For fun there were pigeon races, often called "poor man's horse races." He remembers that a young hawk was raised along with the pigeons, though it did not attack.

After attending Fordham for college and law school, the future Judge Nardelli did a stint in private practice. He later served as legal counsel to the New York City Housing Bureau and became active in local Democratic politics.

Judge Nardelli was elected as a judge of the Civil Court of New York City in 1975 and justice of the Supreme Court of New York County in 1986. In 1993, Governor Mario Cuomo designated him as associate justice of the Appellate Division, from which he retired in 2010.

In addition to his Good Neighbor Award, Judge Nardelli is proud of being appointed by Governor Andrew Cuomo as a trustee of the IOLA Fund, and of being a member of both the New York State Continuing Legal Education Board and the Attorney Disciplinary Committee's Policy Committee.

Several years ago, Judge Nardelli was invited by board member Richard Andrias to the NYC Audubon ecocruise in New York Harbor. The sight of snowy egrets and double-crested cormorants was inspiring, and an interest in birds and conservation was rekindled.



# ARE BATS CONVENING AT THE JAVITS CENTER?

Ned Boyajian

**T**wo recording devices on the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center's new green roof are recording bats' calls, nightly from late April to October of this year.

Recently, the Javits Center completed a large-scale renovation in which vast sections of its original glass walls were replaced with bird-friendly glass and metal panels in order to reduce bird strikes, in consultation with NYC Audubon (see the fall 2013 issue of *The Urban Audubon* on our website to learn more). Project Safe Flight data suggest that the renovation has resulted in a substantial reduction in bird deaths, and we will be honoring the Javits Center in part for their cooperation in this project at this fall's Fall Roost (see page 20). A less obvious part of the center's renovation, however, is a 6.75-acre green roof, that is, a roof covered with plantings in order to conserve energy and reduce water run-off. But green roofs also can create inviting habitat for arthropods—insects, arachnids, and crustaceans—which, in turn, may offer a smorgasbord for bats. Leading the project to learn if bats are feeding at Javits is Kaitlyn Parkins, NYC Audubon research assistant and PhD student in conservation biology at Fordham University. Her study is part of a broader acoustic survey of the City's green spaces.

To monitor bat activity over the Javits Center green roof, the roof is fitted with two

©KROWLE/fpa&in



*The Jacob K. Javits Convention Center's 6.75-Acre Green Roof Is an Inviting Habitat for Birds, Bats, and Insects*

microphones, and sounds captured by these microphones are turned into spectrograms. Because it is not possible to know how many individual bats are calling, researchers use an “index of activity” to compare relative activity between sites and, when possible, species.

“We can often use the frequency and shape of a call to identify a bat species,” Parkins says. “However, bats adapt their echolocation to the environment in which they are foraging. So if two different bat species are going for the same prey item, in the same environment, their calls may be indistinguishable.”

Over the three years Parkins has been surveying bat calls throughout the City, she

has identified six species: silver-haired, eastern red, big brown, hoary, tri-colored—and a very few little brown bats. Even given the difficulty of picking out species, the dearth of little brown calls may be telling. This was one of the City's most common bats, but the species suffered a dramatic decline recently due to white-nose syndrome. Caused by a fungus, this disease is killing off vast numbers of cave-roosting bats, like the little brown bat, across the Eastern United States.

Data from the Javits Center microphones will be collected and analyzed following the study's conclusion in October. Look for an update in a future issue of *The Urban Audubon*.

## FALL 2014 LECTURE SERIES

All lectures are free and open to the public and are held at The Arsenal, Central Park, 5th Avenue at 64th Street, 3rd Floor. This series has been made possible by the support of Claude and Lucienne Bloch.

### BUILDING RESILIENCE POST-SANDY: LIVING BREAKWATERS

By Gena Wirth

Tuesday, September 23, 6pm

Since June 2013, SCAPE PLLC, a leading-edge landscape architecture and urban design studio based in New York City, has been working with stakeholders throughout the Sandy-affected region to develop innovative rebuilding solutions. SCAPE landscape architect Gina Wirth will tell us about the Living Breakwaters project, which reduces risk, creates habitat for finfish, shellfish, and lobsters, and connects educators to the shoreline, inspiring a new generation of harbor stewards and a more resilient region over time.

### THE SECRET WORLD OF NEW YORK CITY GREEN ROOFS

By Dustin Partridge and Kaitlyn Parkins

Tuesday, October 28, 6pm

Who would have thought that the perfect place for birds, bats, and bugs would be on the roof? And what makes a roof become good habitat? Fordham University PhD candidates Dustin Partridge and Kaitlyn Parkins have been studying the diverse wildlife of these unexpected urban oases. Learn how different types of green roofs provide more or less habitat for native wildlife in the City, and find out where these hidden habitats are.

## In Memoriam

The NYC Audubon community was saddened this past June by the passing of Jean Bourque, wife of past NYC Audubon president Ron Bourque and longtime supporter of NYC Audubon. A leading advocate for wildlife conservation in New York City, Jean was particularly instrumental in the protection of the grasslands of Floyd Bennett Field and the founding of a native plant garden at Marine Park/Gerritsen Creek, and along with husband and partner in advocacy Ron was responsible for many conservation initiatives over the years in New York City. A person with her commitment and unflagging willingness to go the extra mile on behalf of the City's wildlife cannot be replaced. She will be missed.

## News & Notes

### RESTORATION OF THE WEST POND

Following the adoption this past June of a new General Management Plan for Gateway National Recreation Area (see page 15), the decision-making process concerning the restoration of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge's West Pond is moving forward. NYC Audubon provided input at a meeting with the National Park Service this past July, and will continue to advocate for a West Pond restoration plan that serves species of greatest conservation need and includes freshwater habitat. Publication of restoration alternatives for the West Pond is expected this fall; please visit our website to view NYC Audubon's restoration recommendations and learn how you can participate in the decision-making process.

### BOARD, ADVISORS, & STAFF

NYC Audubon welcomes three new board members: Robert Bate, Alexander Ewing, and Eugene Nardelli (see article on page 16). We also welcome Alison Strong to the advisory council.

After seven years serving NYC Audubon as executive director, Glenn Phillips left the organization this past April. We thank Glenn for his service and many contributions to NYC Audubon's mission of bird conservation in New York City, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

We are also sorry to say goodbye to Outreach and Volunteer Manager Adriana Palmer and Research Assistant Kaitlyn Parkins; we thank them both for all of their good work for our organization.

We are pleased that Darren Klein and Debra Kriensky have joined us in the respective roles of program manager and research assistant.

## THANK YOU TO SUMMER STAFF AND INTERNS

This spring and summer, NYC Audubon's field work was accomplished with the help of a talented and enthusiastic team:

**KATE BILLER**, an MS student at New York University, taught students near Jamaica Bay about the connections between birds, beaches, and people via our Be a Good Egg curriculum program.

**ELIZABETH CRAIG**, a doctoral candidate at Cornell University, helped with banding cormorants, egrets, and common terns in New York Harbor.

**PHIL CUSIMANO**, **DENNIS GALCIK**, **ANN SELIGMAN**, and **DOTTIE WERKMEISTER** worked as horseshoe crab site coordinators, managing our teams of volunteers in collecting crab spawning data.

**MELANIE DEL ROSARIO**, enrolled in Fordham University's certificate program in Conservation Biology, worked on various projects including installing a native plant garden in McGolrick Park, Brooklyn.

**DARREN KLEIN**, a recent MS graduate from the New School, assisted on various field work projects, including Jamaica Bay advocacy and Project Safe Flight mapping.

**ALISON KOCEK**, a PhD student in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Biology and Management at SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry, conducted saltmarsh sparrow field research on Staten Island.

**JOSEPH O' SULLIVAN** managed our wading bird citizen science project in the role of Harbor Herons Foraging Survey project coordinator.

**DUSTIN PARTRIDGE**, a PhD student at Fordham University, coordinated the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center green roof biodiversity project. He also conducted arthropod surveys and helped analyze data.

**TARA MEI SMITH**, a Toyota TogetherGreen fellow, was instrumental in our partnership with the American Littoral Society for marsh planting and the Sustainable Seafood Cruise. She was also the site coordinator for horseshoe crab surveys at Dead Horse Bay.

**EMILIO TOBON**, a recent PhD student at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and experienced field technician, conducted NYC Audubon's American oystercatcher surveys, which he has done since 2010.

**TERRA WEILAND**, a recent graduate of Middlebury College, VT, led the outreach program for our Be a Good Egg campaign in Pelham Bay and the Rockaways.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NYC Audubon's conservation work and education programs are made possible by generous contributions from members, friends, corporations, foundations, and agencies. We'd like to express our gratitude to all those who have sustained us in our work this past season. In particular, we'd like to thank the Leon Levy Foundation for its leadership support of science and conservation.

## AMERICAN KESTREL CIRCLE

Anonymous  
 Claude and Lucienne Bloch  
 Ronald and Jean Bourque  
 Clifford Case and Karen B. Dubno  
 Judy Craig  
 Charles Denholm and Elizabeth Woods  
 Joseph and Barbara Ellis  
 Andrew Farnsworth  
 Marcia and Bruce Fowle  
 Philip Fried and Bruce Patterson  
 Cathy and Lloyd Heller  
 Jeffrey Kimball  
 Lauren and Ethan Klingsberg  
 Steve Nanz and Heidi Steiner  
 Fredric and Winnie Spar  
 Virginia K. Stowe

## CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Audubon New York  
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 SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
 TogetherGreen: Audubon and Toyota  
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## TRIBUTE GIFTS

*In honor of Richard T. Andrias*  
 Cecelia Traugh and Andy Doan  
*In honor of Stephen Billicek and Bruce Yolton*  
 John and Gaily B. Beinecke  
 Craig Katz  
 Eugene Lee  
 Peter, Ann, and Jakob Palches  
*In honor of Philip Fried and Bruce Patterson*  
 Charles Natt and Karen Siegel  
 Daniel Nichols  
 Annick Rossi  
*In honor of Susan Malbin*  
 Hasia Diner  
*In honor of Sean McBride*  
 Royal Fox  
*In honor of Scott Walsh*  
 Lori Moses

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

*In memory of Gerard DeFrancesco*  
 Joseph and Deborah McManus  
*In memory of Manny Levine*  
 Morris and Shirley Weinstein  
*In memory of Mr. and Mrs. H.G. Moy*  
 Judy Moy  
*In memory of Regina Patchell*  
 Joseph and Deborah McManus  
*In memory of Melinda Pendleton*  
 Richard Doll and Nancy Heidel  
*In memory of Harold Robbins*  
 Lori and Evan Kornrich  
*In memory of Starr Saphir*  
 Anita and Daniel Mann  
*In memory of Paul Julien Sude*  
 Dean Thompson  
*In memory of the beloved Sugar*  
 Terry Shargel  
*In memory of Joseph Tobin*  
 Margaret Tobin

## BEQUESTS

The Estate of Mark B. Leeds  
 The Estate of Esther Morse

## JOIN NYC AUDUBON

Members are essential to our education and conservation work. Help protect birds and habitats in the five boroughs by joining our flock. As a Member of NYC Audubon you will: • Receive *The Urban Audubon* newsletter • Enjoy discounts on field trips and classes • Make a difference in your city's wild-life and natural areas.

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## THE FALL ROOST

Thursday, October 16, 2014  
At the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center  
River Pavilion

Silent Auction and Reception 6pm  
Dinner and Program 7-9pm

### Honoring

- Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
- Convention Center Development Corporation
- FXFOWLE Epstein Architects

Fall Roost Artwork Courtesy of Kristen Bannister



Join NYC Audubon as we celebrate our tenth annual Fall Roost on Thursday, October 16, 2014 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center River Pavilion. At this year's Roost, we honor the creative team that dramatically transformed the Center: the **Jacob K. Javits Convention Center**, **Convention Center Development Corporation**, and **FXFOWLE Epstein Architects**. Once among the deadliest buildings for birds in New York City, the Center is now a remarkable example of bird-friendly design integrated with sustainable architecture. Hazardous reflective glass has been replaced with new high-performance patterned glass and stainless steel panels to vastly reduce bird strikes.

Known as the "Marketplace for the World," the **Jacob K. Javits Convention Center of New York**, which opened in 1986, was originally designed by I.M. Pei & Partners. The iconic facility has since become New York City's primary venue for large conventions and trade shows, hosting millions of visitors a year. These large-scale events generate up to \$1.5 billion in annual economic activity for New York City and New York State, supporting as many as 14,000 jobs in and around the facility.

The Convention Center Development Corporation is dedicated

to the renovation and future expansion of the existing Jacob K. Javits Convention Center on the west side of Manhattan. Once complete, the renovation will modernize the facilities and allow the Javits Center to accommodate larger events, bringing new businesses and opportunities to New York City.

The synergies and expertise of the **FXFOWLE Epstein Architects** partnership have restored the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center's technological promise, overhauled its environmental and quality-of-life impact, introduced bird-safe measures, and reconnected the building to the urban fabric. FXFOWLE retained the integrity and vision of the building's original design while capitalizing on innovative design opportunities to revitalize this world-class facility. Epstein provided convention center design expertise, project management, and specialized engineering services.

Proceeds from the Fall Roost support NYC Audubon's work in environmental education, conservation, and advocacy. The evening will begin at 6pm with a cocktail reception and silent auction, followed by a seated dinner. Tickets start at \$375. For tickets or more information, please contact Angela Januzzi at 646-502-9611 or [ajanuzzi@nycaudubon.org](mailto:ajanuzzi@nycaudubon.org).