



THE URBAN AUDUBON

**Former Regional
EPA Administrator
Speaks Out**

**Rita McMahon:
Rehabilitating Injured
Birds in New York City**

**A Birder's
Basic Guide to
Social Media**



NYC AUDUBON

MISSION & STATEMENT

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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In the seasonal cycles of nature, September is heralded by the fall migration of many birds passing through our area on their way to their wintering grounds. For New Yorkers, September is forever marked by the horrific tragedy that occurred at the World Trade Center 16 years ago.

Starting in 2002, the Municipal Art Society created an elegiac and hauntingly beautiful memorial when it arranged 88 powerful xenon spotlights in 2 arrays pointing towards the heavens, evoking the twin towers. Named the "Tribute in Light," the display now occurs every year on September 11 from dusk until dawn. The twin beams reach about 4 miles into the sky and can be seen from 60 miles away on a clear night. It is a stunning sight and a fitting remembrance of the many souls lost that day.

We at NYC Audubon were aware that the lights could cause a problem for migrating birds, most of which fly at night. For reasons not entirely understood, birds are attracted to the lights. Once captivated, the birds can become disoriented, sometimes spending hours circling in the beams. They are susceptible to window collisions or even predation by opportunistic falcons, and they certainly weaken themselves by expending energy that would be better used for traveling the hundreds or thousands of miles to their winter destinations.

© Felicity Arango



Birds Trapped in the Tribute in Light Beams, September 11, 2016

NYC Audubon reached out to the Municipal Art Society and told it of these concerns. The Municipal Art Society was receptive, troubled by the idea that the elegy might inflict harm to birds. A plan was worked out whereby NYC Audubon scientists, along with volunteers, would spend the entire night on site armed with binoculars, cameras, and other equipment to monitor the volume of birds passing through or circling within the beams. Unless it's raining, there will always be a few birds, but when the number hits a "critical mass" (some hundreds of birds caught in the lights at one time) NYC Audubon sounds the alarm and the beams are shut off. They remain off for about 20 minutes, allowing the birds to disperse, then are turned back on to resume the tribute.

To me as the President of NYC Audubon, the beauty of this story is in the partnership that has made the Tribute in Light a bird-friendly experience. The Municipal Art Society and now the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, which assumed operation of the lights a few years back, remain committed to NYC Audubon's plan year after year. Fittingly, Michael Ahern, a long-time producer of the Tribute in Light, was honored posthumously at our Fall Roost last year. This collaboration highlights the critical role NYC Audubon plays in making New York City's environment friendly to birds and other wildlife by partnering with others in many of our conservation programs. We strategically leverage our knowledge and authority on bird matters to make the urban landscape a more hospitable habitat.

So, when you're observing this year's Tribute in Light and you see the beams disappear for a few minutes, know that NYC Audubon is hard at work, saving the lives of the beautiful birds that grace our city.

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Palm Warbler in Fall Plumage © Laura Meyers

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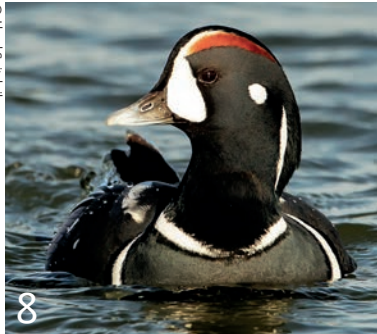
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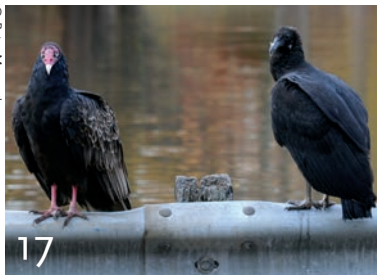
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CONSERVATION NOTES

Our conservation team and citizen science volunteers have had a busy summer, working on beaches, rooftops, undeveloped islands, and Governors Island. We are grateful to the summer's beach stewards—agency partners, citizen scientists, and dedicated volunteers—who helped educate beachgoers about sharing our city's shores with nesting birds as part of our "Be a Good Egg" outreach program. We are delighted to share with you early results from waterbird nesting and habitat enhancement, new features for our fall migration Project Safe Flight monitoring, and the latest on our green roofs initiative.

WATERBIRDS OF NEW YORK HARBOR

Usually thought of as beach-nesters, common terns have been nesting for almost a decade on decommissioned piers on Governors Island. NYC Audubon has been monitoring the colony since it was discovered in 2008. We have also been banding adults and chicks there since 2014 to learn more about this species—listed as threatened in New York State by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

This spring NYC Audubon was concerned that the terns would not come back to nest on Governors Island. Their favored nesting spot, a decommissioned section of Yankee Pier, collapsed from the weight of heavy snow during a storm this winter. In previous years, the terns also nested on Lima Pier, but did not do so in 2016.

To enhance Lima Pier and make sure it was attractive to terns, we developed and executed a multi-step plan with great diligence and cooperation from our partners National Park Service, Trust for Governors Island, Earth Matter, Billion Oyster Project and Harbor School, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 2, and Shoals Marine Laboratory. We added crushed oystershell and grass clippings to provide nesting substrate, placed 6 barriers

donated by the Yodock Company for habitat delineation, and set out 12 tern decoys to attract terns flying by. To make sure the limited habitat was not overtaken by gulls, we installed a gull enclosure over the habitat and enlisted Governors Island's goose-chasing dog, Max, to help keep gulls from nesting there. The most recent count? Thirty-three nests on Lima Pier this summer. We have been able to band 7 adults and 33 chicks so far and hope to install a webcam next year so everyone can watch this state-threatened species.

Tod Winston led our 33rd annual Harbor Herons nesting survey of egrets, herons, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and others nesting on islands in the greater NY/NJ Harbor. A preliminary total of 1,400 nesting pairs of 7 wader species was counted on 7 of 11 undeveloped islands and on one mainland site. This number roughly matches the nesting total from last year's survey.

Hoffman Island continues to support the largest number of birds, with 508 nesting pairs, while Elders Marsh in Jamaica Bay supports the greatest diversity of species, with six species. Recently abandoned nesting islands, which include Goose Island and Huckleberry Island in the western Long Island Sound, North Brother Island in the East River, and Canarsie Pol in Jamaica Bay, remained unused by long-legged waders. Thanks to a generous grant from the Eppley Foundation, we are currently analyzing population trends of NYC Harbor Herons from the time of their reappearance in

New York Harbor in the 1980s through the present.

Our work monitoring horseshoe crabs and shorebirds has concluded for the season. We had a big year for horseshoe crabs at our four main monitoring sites—East and West Plum Beach, Dead Horse Bay, and Big Egg Marsh—with several record counts in early June. Data are still being analyzed, and we are waiting to see results from sites in Long Island.

Amid reports from colleagues of low shorebird numbers at their Delaware Bay and Long Island sites, Jamaica Bay appeared to be supporting good numbers of shorebirds this May. Newly elected Board Member Dr. Dick Veit reported seeing over 1,000 red knots over the course of one day at Little Egg Marsh. We eagerly await NanoTag data to be downloaded from VHF radio towers installed throughout the eastern U.S. to tell us where the 19 semipalmated sandpipers we tagged this summer have been traveling.

PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT

Data are literally streaming in from our high-tech camera installed on the Durst Building at One Bryant Park. Dr. Greg Dobler of New York University's Center for Urban Science and Progress is in the process of downloading and analyzing the night-time light quality over lower Manhattan captured by the camera. Our dedicated Project Safe Flight volunteers will soon start their fall migration collision patrols of the 16 buildings tracked by the camera, allowing us to correlate



Baby Great Egrets Nesting on South Brother Island in New York Harbor

Susan Elbin, PhD



the light quality emitted by each building with bird collision data.

We are also gearing up for the Tribute in Light Memorial monitoring. This year Advisory Council member Dr. Andrew Farnsworth will help us add insect monitoring to our bird and bat monitoring, and he will continue analyzing night flight calls. (See Volunteer! below to participate in this year's Tribute in Light monitoring.)

PhD candidate Dustin Partridge is continuing his work with us as we enlarge our green roof wildlife monitoring program. As we start our fourth year of monitoring, the green roof at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center continues to teach us about the biodiversity and sustainability that can be achieved through the addition of green habitat. Our new collaborative project on the Kingsland Wildflowers Roof in Greenpoint,

Brooklyn, is teaching us about the value to wildlife when native flowers are installed on an otherwise desolate roof in the middle of an industrial complex. We are in the middle of sampling now, but species we have already seen at Kingsland Wildflowers include northern mockingbird, red-tailed hawk, and barn swallow.

Stay tuned for updates and results in the next *Urban Audubon*.

A FOND FAREWELL TO DEBRA KRIENSKY, NYC AUDUBON CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST

In July, we bid a fond farewell to our Conservation Biologist Debra Kriensky. Debra has relocated to Boston, where she will continue to use her many talents to benefit bird conservation—even as she and her husband start raising their own nestlings.

Debra had worked for NYC Audubon since May 2013, first as an intern, then as a research assistant, and most recently as conservation biologist. Debra not only adroitly managed our citizen science projects, she infused our migratory shorebird program with new technology and science. She even bolstered our communications efforts, volunteering to be the primary photographer and voice of our then-fledgling @nycaudubon Instagram account.

Although she will be located in Boston, Debra will stay involved with our shorebird stopover ecology project. Best wishes, Debra. We will miss you in New York City, but we know you will do great things for the birds of Boston.

VOLUNTEER!



Work in NYC Audubon's friendly office or in the field and make a difference for New York City's wildlife. There are many ways you can help. If interested in any of the projects listed below, contact us at volunteer@nycaudubon.org.

OFFICE PROJECTS

Help with mailings, filing, and general office work. Computer skills and birding knowledge are helpful, but not required.

THE URBAN AUDUBON

Join the newsletter committee and contribute your writing skills to four seasonal issues. Meetings are bi-monthly in the early evening.

PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT Begins Friday, September 1

During spring and fall, migrant birds confront many hazards as they pass through New York

City. Volunteers are needed to monitor buildings weekly for bird collisions, rescue injured birds, and record any casualties. Orientations will be held Monday, August 21, and Thursday, August 24, 6-7pm.

BIRD TRANSPORTERS

We often receive calls from concerned individuals who have found injured birds but are unable to transport them to a rehabilitator. We need caring volunteers to transport these birds to licensed wildlife rehabilitators in the area. A training session will be held Thursday, August 31, 6-7pm.

TRIBUTE IN LIGHT MONITORING Monday, September 11, begins at 8pm With National September 11 Memorial & Museum

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 5, 6-7pm.

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP Saturday, September 16, 10am-1pm With American Littoral Society, National Park Service, and Sadhana

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 like the American oystercatcher, is also a stone's throw away from the Harbor Heron Islands and the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Help us clear the beach and raise awareness of the importance of coastal areas to birdlife. Free bus transportation from Manhattan to Jamaica Bay is available (space is limited). Learn more and register at <http://nycaudubon.org/jicc>.

RITA McMAHON: REHABILITATING INJURED BIRDS IN NEW YORK CITY

Meryl Greenblatt

Rita McMahon has built a haven for injured birds in New York City. As executive director of the Wild Bird Fund (WBF), she runs a rehabilitation center with a staff of 20—plus 200 volunteers—where birds are professionally treated (over 4,000 birds a year) and then released back into the wild once they recover.

Rita first developed her rehab skills as a 12-year-old growing up in rural Connecticut. “I was trained by our local vet, who lived across the street,” says Rita. “Dr. Bayard taught me how to handle animals, place splints, feed them.” Caring for local birds—robins, blue jays, pigeons, even pheasants—and other woodland creatures “was a very cool thing to do.”

After getting her undergraduate degree in art history, Rita moved to New York City and began a career in TV marketing research. Thirty years later, she was led back to bird rehab after finding an injured goose beside an interstate highway. According to Rita, “This was in 1995, and I learned there was no wildlife rehab center in New York City.” She soon met Vivienne Sokol, a rehabber well known by NYC Audubon for her work with raptors and songbirds. “Vivienne mentored me for five years; I’d drive her around, and she’d send me the ‘non-native’ species—pigeons, European starlings, house sparrows, and the like.”

© Charles Cressler Photography



Rita McMahon with Recovering American Kestrel

Rita obtained her federal rehab license and started caring for birds in her home with help from a small staff, volunteers, and the Animal General Hospital. The WBF became a nonprofit in 2005. After launching an internet site, business exploded. “That’s when I realized we needed to build a center,” says Rita. When WBF opened its storefront on the Upper West Side in 2012, she made it her full-time occupation. Rita’s one “holiday” each year is spent with NYC Audubon on one of its Harbor Herons surveys.

Rita’s typical day starts before 5am: “I get up to do the day’s medical charts and feeding plan. The staff, all licensed rehabbers, picks these up at 7:45am.” These days her primary role is running the business, fundraising, and outreach. “We have 300 injured birds in-house now. I miss working with them, but

the charts help me stay connected. I know each bird.” Rita says. “Nonprofit work never stops being hand-to-mouth, but I’m pleased to say that 60 percent of our budget comes from donations from people who walk in the door with a bird. It’s because they care.”

“What I’m most touched by,” says Rita, “is that no one at WBF would ever say a bird isn’t worth their time.” The WBF takes in all birds, no matter the species. “Every bird is valuable. You can argue that pigeons and such are non-natives, but it’s good for New Yorkers to care about all wildlife. These are some of our best educational ambassadors.”

She adds, “What we do for a single bird matters most to the person who brought it in. What we do to change people’s attitudes is longer lasting.”

© Sara Allica



Cedar Waxwing Being Treated for Injured Leg at the Wild Bird Fund

BIRD MIGRATION: CHANGES OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS

Don Riepe



Blackburnian Warbler in Fall Plumage

Much has changed in a relatively short time. I started birding in 1970 at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and remember huge waves of warblers “dripping” from the trees during spring and fall, and on one occasion counted 13 species of warbler in one small tree, plus a group of bay-breasted warblers hopping on the ground by the visitor center. Nowadays, new birders get excited when one blackburnian warbler shows up.

While several senior birders in our area told me they agreed that some urban bird populations and species diversity haven’t changed substantially the past 40 years, they all believe neotropical bird population numbers are down at least 40 to 50 percent from 1977 levels. That’s a precipitous decline in warblers, thrushes, grosbeaks, orioles, and many other species seen at New York City parks and refuges during migration. What happened?

The U.S. population has grown by approximately 120 million over the past 40 years. And much of the landscape along migration routes has changed from woodland, open fields, and rural farmland to urban sprawl with associated shopping malls, corporate parks, roads, power lines, glass buildings, and other impediments to migrating birds. This habitat loss, alteration, and fragmentation of breeding, wintering,

and migratory stopover sites are certainly major threats to bird populations.

In addition to the increased development, how areas are being developed is also harming birds. It is estimated that up to one billion birds die each year colliding with glass in buildings and other structures. NYC Audubon has taken the lead in the City in identifying offending glass buildings and has pressed for bird-friendly design in renovation and new construction.

While building collisions are a leading factor in bird mortality, feral cats take an even greater toll on birds, with estimates



The Osprey, One of the Raptors Species Now Thriving in New York City, Is Projected to Lose 79 Percent of Its Current Summer Range by 2080, According to National Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report

ranging between 1.4 and 3.7 billion kills in the United States yearly. Whatever the true combined numbers are from these and a dozen other causes of bird mortality, it is a staggering number—and growing.

On a positive note, raptors such as the peregrine falcon, osprey, and bald eagle have made a remarkable comeback due to the banning of DDT in 1972 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and from efforts of many biologists, government agencies, and environmental groups.

The yet unknown and possibly biggest threat to birds and their habitats is climate change: how weather patterns, vegetation shifts, prey availability, and migration timing will impact bird (and human) populations and whether birds will be able to adjust to rapidly changing conditions are questions that have only recently begun to be studied. National Audubon’s *Birds and Climate Change Report* concluded that 314 species, over half of the 588 North American bird species, are severely threatened by climate change.

How we as a society resolve these complex issues surrounding bird mortality may ultimately also determine how we as a species survive into the next century.

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© Emily Carter Mitchell

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

- NYC Audubon Events
 - Partnership Events
- Overnight Trips

• GOVERNORS ISLAND BIRD WALKS

Saturdays, September 2–October 28, and Sundays, September 3–October 29, 2-3pm

Guide: Annie Barry

Meet at Nolan Park house #17. Join longtime Governors Island volunteer and bird expert Annie Barry for a bird walk around beautiful and historic Governors Island, which boasts over 175 species recorded on www.eBird.org. Learn about the island's fascinating history and search for fall migrants, raptors, waterfowl, and more. Binoculars are available. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

• QUEENS BOTANICAL GARDEN BIRD WALKS

Saturdays, September 2, September 16, and October 14

Sundays, October 1 and October 29 9:30-10:30am

Guide: NYC Audubon

With Queens Botanical Garden

Explore Queens Botanical Garden in search of migrant songbirds and learn about the valuable resources that the Garden offers birds and other wildlife. Binoculars are available. Appropriate for all ages. Register for one date or the whole

series of five free walks. (Walk-ins are welcome.) To register, email info@queensbotanical.org or visit www.queensbotanical.org/calendar. Limited to 25. Free with Garden admission

• VAN CORTLANDT BIRD WALKS, THE BRONX

Saturdays, September 2–November 25, 8-9:30am

Guides: NYC Audubon, Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy 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, call 212-691-7483. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

• MORNING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK

Wednesday Series: September 6–October 25

Thursday Series: September 7–October 26, 7:30-10:30am

Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

THESE SERIES ARE SOLD OUT

• FALL WARBLERS

Friday, September 8, 6:30-8:30pm (class)

Sunday, September 10, 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)

• MORNING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN PROSPECT PARK

Saturday, September 9, and Sunday, October 29, 8-11am

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Join Gabriel Willow for a leisurely walk to get to know the fall migrants of “Brooklyn’s backyard,” beautiful Prospect Park. The park has a wide variety of habitats that attract great numbers of fall migrant bird species. We will explore the park’s meadows, forests, and waterways in search of migratory warblers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, waterfowl, and more. Limited to 15. \$36 (25) per walk

• FALL BIRDING AT WAVE HILL, THE BRONX

Sundays, September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10 9:30-11:30am

Guide: Gabriel Willow

With Wave Hill

Meet at 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. NYC Audubon members enjoy two-for-one admission (see www.wavehill.org for more information). Limited to 20. Ages 10 and up welcome with an adult

• BIRDING TOURS OF BRYANT PARK, MANHATTAN

Mondays, September 11–October 16, 8-9am

Thursdays, September 14–October 19, 5-6pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

With Bryant Park Corporation

Meet at the Birding Tour sign at the 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue entrance to the park. Discover the surprising variety of birds that stop in Bryant Park during migration. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

• EVENING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK

Monday Series:

September 11–October 16, 5-6:30pm

Tuesday Series:

September 12–October 17, 5-6:30pm

Wednesday Series:

September 13–October 18, 5-6:30pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Witness the spectacle of autumn migration as songbirds follow the Atlantic Flyway to their tropical wintering grounds. Look for tanagers, warblers, and other neotropical migrants in the wilds of Central Park. \$146 (102) per series

• FRIDAY MORNING FALL MIGRATION WALK IN THE NORTH END

Fridays, September 15, September 29, October 13, and October 27

9am-Noon

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Most NYC birders are familiar with the Ramble, but fewer visit the north end of Central Park, which includes equally productive woodlands, waterways, and meadows. The Pool, Loch, Ravine, and North Woods together constitute one of the wildest and most beautiful areas of Central Park, and during fall migration are full of warblers, vireos, thrushes, orioles, tanagers, cuckoos, and more. Limited to 15. \$36 (25) per walk



Blackpoll Warbler in Fall Plumage



Scarlet Tanager in Fall Plumage

© Lloyd Spahrink

• **INTRO TO BIRDING: BIRD WALK IN CENTRAL PARK**
Saturday, September 16, 8-10:30am
Guide: Tod Winston

Are you curious about "birding" but don't have much (or any) experience? Come on a relaxed walk through Strawberry Fields and the Ramble to go over birding basics and see warblers, tanagers, sparrows, waterbirds, and more. Binoculars available. Limited to 15. \$36 (25)

• **HOOK MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH, NY**
Sunday, September 17, 9am-4pm
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Part of the Palisades Interstate Park system, Hook Mountain has

commanding views of all nearby mountains 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 binoculars, water, and a bag lunch to enjoy atop the mountain watching the hawks fly overhead. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$99 (69)

• **BIRDING GEMS OF QUEENS: THE EVERGREENS CEMETERY**
Sunday, September 17, 9-10am
Guide: Corey Finger
With The Evergreens Cemetery

Meet inside the Evergreens Cemetery entrance at Bushwick Avenue and Conway Street. Explore the delights of this historic cemetery and its fall migrants. Moderately strenuous walking, with many hills and stairs. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

• **FALL MIGRANTS OF WOODLAWN CEMETERY, THE BRONX**
Sunday, September 17, 8-10:30am
Guides: Tod Winston, Joseph McManus, Susan Olsen
With Woodlawn Conservancy
 Join us for a morning bird walk and tour of beautiful Woodlawn Cemetery. Tod Winston and Joseph McManus will help look for fall migrants and year-round residents on the expansive, wooded cemetery grounds, while the Woodlawn Conservancy's Susan Olsen shares fascinating stories about Woodlawn's history and the interesting mixture of individuals interred there. Bring water. Limited to 15. \$35 (24)

• **BIRDING GEMS OF STATEN ISLAND: CLOVE LAKES PARK**
Saturdays, September 23 and October 28, 9am-1pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow
 Journey to the "forgotten borough" to discover some of the beautiful forests and incredible birding spots at Clove Lakes Park. Look for ducks

and seabirds in New York Harbor on our way across on the ferry ride and then catch a bus to the park. Numerous warblers, vireos, tanagers, and other migratory songbirds can be seen here. We'll even see one of the largest and oldest trees in NYC. Limited to 15. Bus fare (\$2.75 each way—please bring your MetroCard or exact change) not included in registration price. \$43 (30) per walk

• **JAMAICA BAY SUNSET ECOLOGY CRUISE**
Saturday, September 23, 4-7pm
With American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area
 Meet at Pier 4 (Emmons Avenue and Bedford Avenue, Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn). Enjoy a special three-hour narrated tour of Jamaica Bay aboard the *Golden Sunshine*. Learn about the history, management, and ecology of the bay and see egrets, herons, ibis, terns, laughing gulls, osprey, falcons, and shorebirds. Includes wine & cheese, fruit, drinks, and snacks. Contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or

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OVERNIGHT TRIPS

• **CAPE MAY FALL MIGRATION**
Saturday, September 23, 9am–
Sunday, September 24, 7pm
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Cape May, NJ, 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, Jake's Landing, Cape May Meadows, and Nummy Island. Transport by

passenger van included. Limited to 10. \$350 (\$50 single supplement)

• **CAPE MAY FALL MIGRATION II**
Saturday, September 30, 9am–
Sunday, October 1, 7pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Cape May, NJ, 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. \$350 (\$50 single supplement)

• **CHINCOTEAGUE REFUGE/ ASSATEAGUE ISLAND: BIRDS AND PONIES**
Thursday, November 9, 9am–
Sunday, November 12, 6pm
Guide: Don Riepe
With American Littoral Society

A great natural history weekend on the Virginia coast. See wild ponies, snow geese, bald eagles, migrating

hawks, waterfowl, shorebirds and lots more. Includes three nights' lodging at the luxurious Refuge Inn (heated pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, exercise room, observation deck), breakfast, a safari bus tour of the back dunes area, five guided hikes, evening programs, and an all-you-can eat seafood dinner. Contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriep@gmail.com to learn more and register. \$395 (\$150 single room supplement)

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

donriepe@gmail.com to learn more and register. Limited to 140. \$55 for adults, \$25 for children under 16

• BIRDING BY SUBWAY HIDDEN GEMS SERIES: KISSENA PARK, QUEENS

Sunday, September 24, 9-10:30am

Guide: Corey Finger

Meet with other birders in Manhattan and travel by subway together, or strike out on your own to this hidden gem. Spend the morning looking for wood warblers, sparrows,

orioles, and other migrant birds at this outstanding destination for autumn birding. Limited to 15. \$36 (25)

• THE BATTERY CONSERVANCY BIRD WALKS AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF MANHATTAN

Wednesdays, September 27, October 4, and October 11, 8-9am

Guide: Gabriel Willow
With The Battery Conservancy

Meet at the Netherland Memorial Flaggpole located at the entrance

to the Battery Conservancy at the corner of Battery Place and State Street. Join Gabriel Willow to explore this redesigned, replanted, and revitalized 25-acre park overlooking New York Harbor. We'll seek out migrating birds and visit the lovely Garden of Remembrance and Bosque designed by Piet Oudolf, renowned Dutch landscape architect. No limit. Free

• SPARROW ID WORKSHOP

Thursday, October 5, 7-8:30pm (class); Saturday, October 7, 9am-Noon (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. Trip location TBA. Limited to 12. \$65 (45)

• FALL RAPTOR MIGRATION AT FORT TILDEN, QUEENS

Saturday, October 7, 10am-1pm

Guide: Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area

Meet at Fort Tilden Building No.

1. Hike along the beach, dunes, and woods before visiting the hawk watch platform on top of Battery Harris East to observe the many species of hawks and falcons migrating along the coast. Contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriepe@gmail.com to learn more and register. Limited to 30. Free



© Laura Meyers

Lincoln's Sparrow

NYC AUDUBON MEMBERS-ONLY EVENTS

Join us for a free NYC Audubon member event this spring. Please note: Member events are free for Contributing NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and up. Except for the KIDS walk, all member walks are limited to 20 people. As these events are popular and fill quickly, please limit your registration to one free member event per month. Contact Kellye Rosenheim at krosenheim@nycaudubon.org or call 212-691-7483 x306 to register.

FALL MIGRATION IN ASTORIA PARK, QUEENS

Sunday, September 10, 9-10:30am

Meet NYC Audubon Board Member Kellie Quiñones at Astoria Boulevard North between 23rd and 21st Streets to seek out migrating birds.

SEPTEMBER WALK IN THE CENTRAL PARK RAMBLE

Tuesday, September 12, 7:30-9:30am

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Explore the Ramble with NYC Audubon Past President Harry Maas and revel in fall migration.

FALL MIGRATION WITH JEFF KIMBALL

Thursday, September 14, 7:30-9am

Enjoy a fall ramble with Jeff

Kimball, filmmaker of *Birders: The Central Park Effect* and president of NYC Audubon. Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street.

FALL WALK IN PROSPECT PARK

Friday, September 15, 7:30-9am

Meet at the entrance to Prospect Park across from Grand Army Plaza and join NYC Audubon Board Member Tom Stephenson, author of *The Warbler Guide* and creator of the soon-to-be-released Bird Genie app, for a fall meander.

KIDS MEMBER WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

Sunday, September 24, 3-4:30pm

Meet at 72nd Street and Central Park West and explore the park's best birding hotspots with Nancy Ward and Kellye Rosenheim. Walk

is only for pre-registered KIDS Members 8-12 years old. All KIDS Members must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please let us know if you need a pair of binoculars. To register, parents should email KIDS@nycaudubon.org. Visit www.nycaudubon.org/kids-membership for more information about our KIDS Membership program.

FALL MIGRATORY SONGBIRD RAMBLE IN CENTRAL PARK

Thursday, October 5, 4:30-6pm

Join NYC Audubon Director of Development Kellye Rosenheim for a fall stroll through the Ramble. Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street.

WALKS ON GOVERNORS ISLAND

Fridays, October 6 and October 20, 8:30-10:30am

Meet at the Governors Island Ferry (Battery Marine Terminal near the Staten Island Ferry) for a short ride to the island and a morning of birding under the guidance of expert Annie Barry.

DECEMBER WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

Wednesday, December 6, 8-10:30am

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street for a walk with Tod Winston, NYC Audubon bird guide/research assistant and National Audubon's Plants for Birds program manager. Brave the chilly weather as we search for some of Central Park's best wintering birds.

● **RAPTOR ID WORKSHOP**
Thursday, October 12, 7-8:30pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

If you've ever been to a hawk watch (such as the one we'll visit on our upcoming trip to Hawk Mountain, PA), you've probably been amazed at the ability of the hawk-watchers to call out IDs of soaring raptors so distant that they look like specks on the horizon. This class will help you distinguish between accipiters, buteos, vultures, eagles, and more. Learn how their shapes reflect their behavior and ecology, and how subtle differences in form and pattern will allow you to identify raptors with a newfound confidence. Limited to 12. \$33 (23)

● **FALL MIGRANTS OF INWOOD HILL PARK, MANHATTAN**
Saturday, October 14, 9-11:30am
Guide: Annie Barry

Join Annie Barry for a hike through a mature forest in search of kinglets, warblers, flycatchers, sparrows, thrushes, and more. Then search the shore of the park's saltmarshes for herons and ducks. Some hilly walking required. Limited to 15. \$36 (25)

● **NYC AUDUBON DAY AT HAWK MOUNTAIN, PA**
Saturday, October 14, 8am-8pm
Guides: Gabriel Willow, Hawk Mountain Education Specialist
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 education specialist

will introduce us to the variety of raptors that may be seen, including golden eagles, buteos, 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 van included. Limited to 12. \$139 (97)

● **FALL MIGRATION ON RANDALL'S ISLAND**
Sunday, October 15, 9am-1pm
Guides: Gabriel Willow, Christopher Girgenti of Randall's Island With Randall's Island Park Alliance, Inc.

Join us for a trip 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. \$40 (28)

● **BIRDING GEMS OF STATEN ISLAND: FRESHKILLS PARK**
Sunday, October 15, 8am-3pm
Guide: Cliff Hagen

Come with NYC Audubon for a special opportunity to see Freshkills Park, in transition from what was once the world's largest landfill into an expansive park. Currently closed to the general public, the park is home to rolling grasslands, tidal marshes, successional woodlands, and a freshwater pond system. Each autumn, migrant species abound as they travel along the North Atlantic Flyway. Sparrows, osprey, waterfowl, and lingering warblers seek refuge in the park while raptors soar overhead. Late-blooming flowers attract an assortment of butterflies and dragonflies. Transport by passenger van on Staten Island included. Limited to 12. \$57 (40)

● **BEGINNING BIRDING**
Classes: Thursdays, October 19, October 26, and November 2, 6:30-8:30pm

Trips: Saturdays, October 28, 8-11am, and November 4, 9am-3pm
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 and field trips to Central Park and Jamaica Bay (transport to Jamaica Bay included). Limited to 12. \$179 (125)

● **SNOW GEESE AND TUNDRA SWANS OF BRIGANTINE, NJ**
Sunday, October 29, 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. \$125 (87)

● **DUCKS, RAPTORS, AND MORE AT PELHAM BAY PARK, THE BRONX**
Saturday, November 4, 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. The 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 unique not just within the City, but also on this continent. Bring lunch and water. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$97 (68)

● **AUDUBON'S BIRDS OF AMERICA GALLERY**
New-York Historical Society Opens Friday, November 10

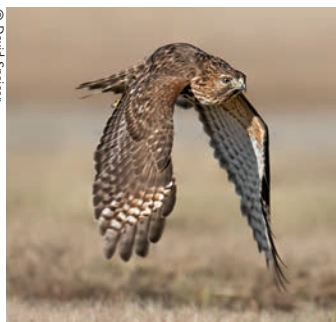
Following the acclaimed exhibition series *Audubon's Aviary: The Complete Flock*, the New-York Historical Society opens the new *Audubon's Birds of America* Gallery. There you can view John James Audubon's spectacular watercolor models for the 435 plates of *The Birds of America* (1827–38) with their corresponding plates from the double-elfin-folio series, engraved by Robert Havell Jr. The Gallery will feature monthly migrations in publication order. The initial centerpiece will be the seasonal Wild Turkey: Audubon's watercolor and the engraving, together with the copper plate on loan from the American Museum of Natural History. Visit www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions for more info. NYC Audubon members with their membership ID card receive \$5 off adult and senior admission prices through December 8.

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

Saturday, November 18, 9am-3pm
Register for our van trip to the Winter Waterfowl Workshop (see description below) and get to Jamaica Bay the easy way—by passenger van. Bring lunch and water. Limited to 12. \$53 (37)

● **WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP AT JAMAICA BAY**

Saturday, November 18, 10am-1pm
Guides: Don Riepe, Tod Winston With American Littoral Society
Meet at the Jamaica Bay Refuge Visitor Center for a slide presentation and walk along the trails and ponds to look for waterfowl and other birds. Learn about the many species of ducks and geese that spend the winter in New York City and how to identify



Red-shouldered Hawk

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

them. Contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriepenyc@gmail.com to learn more and register. Limited to 25. Free

EARLY MEMBER REGISTRATION FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

More winter and early spring events will be posted at www.nycaudubon.org and available for registration for contributing NYC Audubon members starting on Monday, November 6, at 9am. (Registration will open to all on Monday, November 20.)

TO REGISTER FOR ALL NYC AUDUBON EVENTS and for more information, visit www.nycaudubon.org or call Danielle Sherman at 212-691-7483 x304 unless otherwise specified.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **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.

- Classes meet at 71 West 23rd Street, Suite 1523.
- For paid trips requiring advance registration, the meeting location will be disclosed in your trip registration confirmation email.

- 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.

KINGSLAND WILDFLOWERS EVENTS

SECOND ANNUAL KINGSLAND WILDFLOWERS FESTIVAL

Saturday, September 23, 12-4pm

520 Kingsland Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11222

Enjoy a fun family day at Kingsland Wildflowers. The festival will celebrate the second year of bird monitoring, research, and programming at the Kingsland Wildflowers green roof and community engagement space. Visitors will be able to explore four newly installed green roofs—planted with over 22,000 square feet of native grasses, wildflowers, and sedum attractive to birds, bats, and native pollinators—atop Broadway Stages performance arts studio. Activities include tours of the roof with wildlife and plant experts, family-friendly activities, partner organizations discussing exciting Greenpoint conservation projects, and live music. Food and refreshments will be served. Learn more at www.kingslandwildflowers.com. This event is free and open to the public.

KINGSLAND FALL 2017 ARTIST LECTURE SERIES

Kingsland Wildflowers presents a monthly artist lecture series featuring local Greenpoint artists who have created environmentally focused bodies of work. Each month artists will speak at Kingsland Wildflowers about their process, inspiration, and ideas behind their unique art installations.

September

Created in collaboration with residents of Greenpoint, Martynka Wawrzyniak's latest project, *Ziemia*, will take the form of a ceramic sphere atop a garden in McGolrick Park. The sculpture will commemorate the neighborhood's many cultures, become a locus for community programming, and carry personal significance for the participants who help shape it.

October

Annie Novak, co-founder of Eagle Street Rooftop Farm in Greenpoint, will display her beautiful illustrations featuring birds native to New York City and speak about her newfound love of birding and conservation work, as well as her latest book project.

© NYC Audubon



Kingsland Wildflowers Roof in Full Bloom with Newly Installed Bird Fountain

Visit www.kingslandwildflowers.com for exact dates and times of artist lectures, as well as information on additional artists presenting at Kingsland Wildflowers this fall.

OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK WEEKEND

Saturday, October 14, and Sunday, October 15, Time TBD

Visit Kingsland Wildflowers during Open House New York. Advance reservations begin two weeks before the event. For more information visit www.ohny.org.



Funding provided by the Office of the New York State Attorney General and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund

A BIRDER'S BASIC GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Hillarie O'Toole

The birding community has an active and vibrant online presence. There are thousands of platforms (blogs, websites, apps, networks) where one can connect with like-minded people about birding, photography, and advocacy for birds and their habitat. But how can one navigate these outlets when there are so many voices and so many choices? Does the thought of venturing into the world of social media leave you pining away for your reliable birding guides or magazines? Fear not; if you make use of the following tools, you will find that it can be very simple to pinpoint—and share—the information most relevant to you.

SEARCHING FOR CONTENT

Twitter has become a popular resource when it comes to reporting bird sightings. For instance, @BirdCentralPark tweets out rare or interesting birds currently found throughout the City, while eBird (@Team_eBird) posts maps, migration forecasts, and observations available through user-provided data. On Twitter, one can enhance that experience by searching for topics or hashtags such as #eBird, #rarebird, #christmasbirdcount, or #birdcp to access thousands of tweets containing observations, photos, videos, and links to news articles. By using Twitter's advanced search functions, one can narrow down the results by geography, media type, or most recent posts.



For photography enthusiasts, Instagram provides a treasure trove of images posted by professionals, amateurs, and nature lovers alike. As with Twitter, one can search by username (also called a “handle” in social media lexicon), topic, or hashtag, such as #birdsofinstagram. Some interesting Instagram accounts to follow include @bestbirdshots and @pocket_birds, which post daily user-submitted photos, as well as @cornellbirdcams, which posts frequent video updates from nesting webcams around the world. You can use hashtags when searching to find photos of specific species such as #pipingplover or #barredowl. Be sure also to check out some of these fun hashtags: #putabirdonit (often accompanying humorous posts, this hashtag is a shout-out to the sitcom Portlandia) or #birdaday (a platform-wide challenge to users to post a photo once a day of a bird sighting).

SHARING CONTENT

Help ensure that your own content is discoverable and gains recognition



by adding hashtags to your posts. Also consider giving a shout-out to other users and organizations by “tagging” them in your posts. To do this, simply include their social media username in your caption or post. For example, if you wish to share a photo with NYC Audubon on Instagram, upload the photo on the Instagram app and type in NYC Audubon's social media handle, @NYCAudubon, as part of your photo's caption. If the location services feature is enabled on your mobile device, you can tag the location of your posts. This feature can be very helpful for nearby birders when you wish to share that you spotted a rare visitor in your neighborhood.

To make the most of your social media experience, be sure to follow organizations and users who post the content most interesting to you. Often the best way to find interesting users is to view your birding friends' social media profiles and see who they follow. You can also begin by connecting with us at NYC Audubon: follow @NYCAudubon on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

ENDLESS SUMMER ON GOVERNORS ISLAND

Through October 29, visit NYC Audubon on Governors Island for family-friendly activities, information on the City's birds and habitats, binoculars to borrow, and opportunities to meet avian-inspired artists at work. Our Nolan Park house #17 is open Thursday–Sunday in September (plus Labor Day) and Friday–Sunday in October (plus Columbus Day), 10:30am–4:30pm. Free bird walks take place Saturdays and Sundays at 2pm. (See page 8 for details.)

AUTUMN KIOTI artist-in-residence
Flight Patterns: Illusions of Free Will
Open studio and installation
Weekends through October 29

MARNA CHESTER *Paper Ecologies*, sculptures in paper and other natural materials
September 16 and 17,
October 7, 8, 21, and 22

JEFF MERTZ
Two-panel video installation on birds and the urban environment
September 30, October 1, 7, and 8

SABINE MEYER curator of *Bird Blinds*, photos by **TRISTAN SPINSKI**; *Baby Birds*, portraits by **ANDREW GARN** through Oct 29

Visit www.nycaudubon.org/gov-island for more information about our seasonal residency on Governors Island

FORMER REGIONAL EPA ADMINISTRATOR SPEAKS OUT

Suzanne Charlé

These days, the former administrator of Region 2 of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is much in demand as a speaker. Her topic: the state of the environment and the future of the EPA under the Trump administration. “I struggle with how not to really depress people,” Judith Enck said recently. Her solution: “I bring lollipops and hand them out.”

The lollipops are about the only bright things that Enck, who oversaw Region 2 (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) for seven years, can offer. She resigned when President Trump took office. “Trump’s environmental policies will be devastating for New York City, particularly with regard to climate change,” she said. Ninety-seven percent of scientists agree that carbon pollution is caused by human actions, “but the astonishing EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt, is not convinced of the science. He filed 14 lawsuits against the EPA as Oklahoma attorney general.”

The president has already pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Agreement. If he is successful in pursuing his policies—including his executive order to roll back the Clean Power Plan and his suggestion to roll back fuel efficiency standards for cars—carbon pollution will continue unabated. Higher concentrations of carbon will lead to more sea-level rise. New York City and the rest of the nation will see changes in weather patterns, more flooding, and extreme weather.

What does that mean for birds? “You’re going to see different migration patterns, which can interfere with nesting,” Enck said. Violent weather will threaten entire populations. National Audubon scientists reckon that climate change threatens the survival of over 300 bird species.

In New York City, the EPA is overseeing work on three Superfund sites:



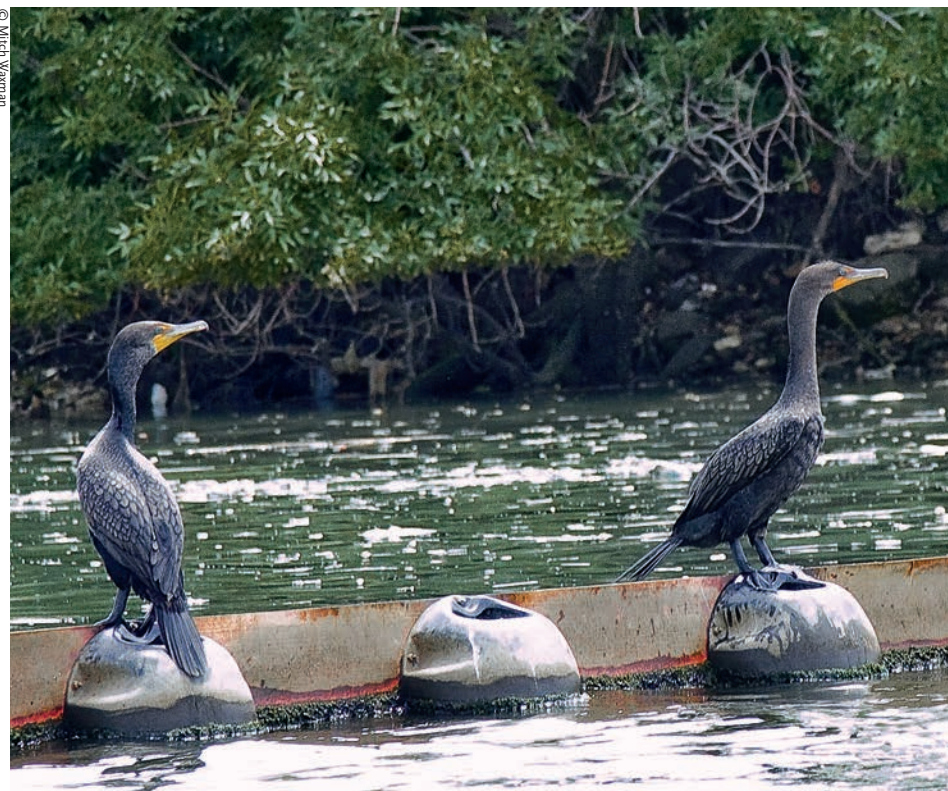
Former EPA Administrator Judith Enck

Gowanus Canal, Newtown Creek, and Wolff-Alport Chemical Company—a radioactive site once home to a thorium factory in Ridgewood, Queens. Progress has been made: cormorants, herons, kingfishers, and egrets now fish the waters of Newtown Creek, but there is still much to be done.

How much work will get done if the White House budget is approved is a big question. It calls for a cut of 31 percent to the overall EPA budget (30 percent for cleanups, and half of all EPA’s science work). EPA grants to states would be slashed by 44 percent. “Work on the Superfund sites

and other science-based cleanups would go much slower—if at all,” Enck warned. The budget would eliminate the National Estuary and Geographic Programs, thereby endangering wetlands and waterfowl. There would be little oversight of the Clean Water Act, impacting the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program and Watershed Protection Program of Jamaica Bay, home to 325 species of birds and 91 species of fish. The list goes on.

Congress needs to approve fiscal funding for 2018 by September 18. “A budget battle will precede that,” said Enck. She urges New York City residents to take political, as well as personal, action to support a healthy environment for humans and wildlife. “Call members of Congress each and every day, convince them to fight against the cuts. We, the people, need to stand up and make sure climate change does not destroy the future of our kids and grandkids.”



Double-crested Cormorants Fishing at EPA Superfund Site Newtown Creek

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ellen Azorin



SETH AUSUBEL

Seth has been a professional environmentalist his entire career, with diverse areas of involvement ranging from climate change to insects. It was the serendipitous sighting of a yellow warbler in Queens that seduced him into the world of urban birding. He has since devoted his extensive knowledge and skill to the bird

life of that borough. While most birders are aware of Jamaica Bay, Seth points out that Forest Park, Kissena Park, and Baisley Pond are among many sadly neglected areas. “Queens needs more focus,” he declares. Among his impressive credentials as an activist and avid birder: he has been on the board of the New York State Ornithological Association for the past five years, was an officer of the Queens County Bird Club, was active in the Birders Coalition for Gateway after the disastrous impact of Hurricane Sandy on Jamaica Bay’s West Pond, and has worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency since 1986. Seth is also a photographer, a writer, and a “people person” who easily engages with the community. He is attracted to NYC Audubon because of its people, its resources, its capacity to influence conservation issues, and—as he says—its “unique ability to get things done.” We welcome Seth and, with his help, anticipate getting even more things done.



JENNY MARITZ

Jenny’s love for nature began in childhood. She spent summers at the Jersey shore and at her grandparents’ mountain home in the Poconos. These early experiences with the natural world were fundamental in shaping her lifelong dedication to environmen-

talism and conservation; she’s made it her mission to help others make these connections as well. She served for 10 years on the board of the Walking Mountains Science Center in Colorado, where the emphasis is on providing outdoor experiential science programs, including courses in sustainability, to over 4,400 local schoolchildren, as well as family-oriented guided nature hikes. “Get them outdoors,” she says. Jenny splits her time between her apartment in Manhattan and her home in Avon, Colorado. A devoted birder, she can often be found in Central Park, but is ever ready to pack a lunch and explore other urban refuges in the City. She is full of ideas for engendering love and respect for nature through outreach and education, and looks forward to working on the expansion of these programs at NYC Audubon.



DICK VEIT

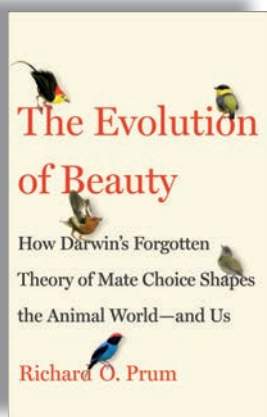
Dick Veit has spent a lifetime studying birds. At age 14 he joined the Linnaean Society so he could go on its field trips. He hasn’t lost his fascination with birds since. “People often ask me, ‘How can you be interested in birds when you live in NYC?’” Well, given that over 350

species can be found here, it’s not hard, and Dick makes it his business to show the uninitiated the abundant world of urban birds. A professor of avian ecology at the College of Staten Island, he carries out hands-on work with his students, as well as organizing field trips and enlisting participation in his many conservation efforts. One example is his work to preserve the former Fresh Kills Landfill as grassland habitat, and he believes we can help nature reclaim many other landfills. He also plays a leadership role in the effort to control feral cats, a growing problem on Staten Island and elsewhere. Dick is an ardent believer in citizen science projects and looks forward to working together with NYC Audubon to further our constantly growing roster of such programs.

REMEMBER THE BIRDS

Make sure that New York City remains a haven for the birds and wildlife you love. A bequest is a generous and straightforward way to safeguard birds and their habitat in New York City’s five boroughs. It can be expressed as, “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.” To learn more, contact Director of Development Kellye Rosenheim at krosenheim@nycaudubon.org or 646-502-9611.

THE EVOLUTION OF BEAUTY: HOW DARWIN'S FORGOTTEN THEORY OF MATE CHOICE SHAPES THE ANIMAL WORLD—AND US
By Richard O. Prum
Doubleday, 2017



There is a warranted buzz surrounding the release of Richard O. Prum's book *The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World—and Us*. Prum brings to light a long-ignored theory from Darwin's *Descent of Man*, first published in 1871. Darwin had then proposed that natural selection does not act alone, that aesthetics and mate choice, specifically female mate choice, exert their own forces on evolutionary change.

Prum, an ornithologist, professor, and curator at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, leads the reader through several case studies, providing evidence and anecdotes to support his “Beauty Happens hypothesis.” While it has long been accepted by evolutionists that animals select their mates based upon indicators of strength, health, and intelligence, Prum deftly points out that this assumption proclaims that animals are more capable of logic than humans. By exploring the intricate designs of manakins' leks and the mating habits of ducks, we learn that freedom of choice and beauty, for the sake of pleasure, play integral

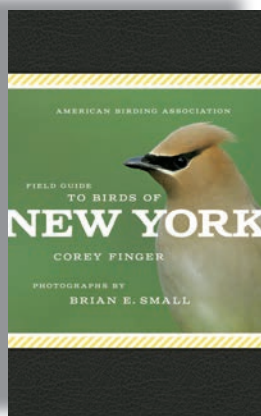
roles in the development of a species' biology and behavior over time. Prum then builds upon his theory and makes the leap to demonstrate the same forces are shaping human evolution—our biology, behavior, culture, and power dynamics.

The book is ambitious and sets the stage for countless explorations into biological, behavioral, and cultural studies. Raising more questions than providing answers, the text encourages the amateur reader to delve deeper into the science of how behavior shapes biology.

While certainly not a light read, the book is a captivating page-turner. Prum masterfully weaves excerpts from literature and poetry into his examples, calling attention to common aesthetic themes that have shaped human development. The text leaves one wondering: what if our community of scientists and artists could agree that art and science are not mutually exclusive? It would certainly help make the case that “the arts matter”—and to accept the pursuit of beauty, in all its forms, as a fundamental tenet. —HOT

AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF NEW YORK

By Corey Finger, photographs by Brian E. Small
American Birding Association
State Field Guide, Scott & Nix, Inc., 2016



Geared toward the beginner to intermediate birder, this handsome guide will help you become familiar with 285 birds of our state's 485 recorded species. Finger and Small provide lively descriptions of each bird's salient characteristics, beautiful photographs, and often a list of preserves where the bird can be found. The book also offers a game plan: the section “A New York Birding Year” describes important birding sites and arranges them by month so you can create a strategy for birding the vast natural resources in our state.

For the more experienced birder, it's a pleasure to leaf through, remember how nice it is to look upon a field of bobolinks, and reminisce about birds one hasn't seen in a long time. Let's say that you wanted to recall how wonderful it is to watch short-eared owls:

A bird of open country, the Short-eared

Owl is a rare breeding bird and an uncommon migrant and wintering bird in New York State. Generally spotted in the air at dusk or dawn, this species courses low over marshes, fields and other open habitat in search of voles and other mammals. . . . Flight call, not often heard, is a hoarse bark. Often found at Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Area, Fort Edward Important Bird Area, and, especially on migration, over coastal marshes.

Details about field marks and other identifying traits are presented in the photo captions.

A worthwhile addition to the library of every birder, and with a special appeal to the novice, this guide is a pleasure from geese to finches. (Corey Finger will present a NYC Audubon lecture on Thursday, November 16. See page 17 for details.) —KR

TURKEY VULTURE AND BLACK VULTURE

Don Riepe

While not classically beautiful, vultures are nature's 'sanitary engineers' and deserve our appreciation. Two species can be seen in the New York City area. The more common and larger is the turkey vulture, so-named because its naked red head resembles the head of a wild turkey. They are scavengers that feed on carrion and rely on an excellent sense of smell to find food. It's estimated that a turkey vulture can detect an animal carcass from distances of one to two miles. Once a dead animal is found, they feed by plunging their heads into the rotting carcass. The naked head prevents fouling of feathers that would be difficult to clean.

When disturbed or threatened, turkey vultures will throw up on whatever or whomever is harassing them. Bird banders have learned this the hard way. And during hot summer days, the birds may defecate onto their own feet to cool them off.

Despite these objectionable habits, turkey vultures are a majestic sight in flight. They ride the thermals for hours without flapping their wings and can easily be mistaken for bald eagles or ospreys. To buffet against strong winds, they hold their wings in a slight 'V' shape (call it 'dihedral' to impress your friends), whereas flying eagles and ospreys hold their wings out straight. Turkey vultures can be seen in

much of the U.S., Mexico, and South America.

Although common in the southern states, black vultures are rare visitors to New York City. They can be distinguished from turkey vultures by their gray naked heads, whitish wing tips, shorter tails,

and rounder flight silhouettes. Also, black vultures more frequently flap their wings in flight. I've only seen one at Jamaica Bay in the 35 years I've been birding there, but in nearby upstate you can often pick out one or two black vultures soaring with dozens of turkey vultures. They will occasionally kill small mammals, and in the Everglades they have learned to "eat" windshield wipers and rubber trim on cars, presumably for the salt content. Ranchers in Ohio and

many of the southeastern states have reported predation of newborn calves and sheep by black vultures.

Populations of turkey and black vultures are on the rise, most likely due to the proliferation of roads and consequently road kills. The Annual Breeding Bird Count sponsored by the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center showed that black vultures in North Carolina increased by 150 percent from 2000 to 2010. Both species breed in New York State, although the black vulture's range is for now confined to the lower Hudson Valley. I expect we'll see more of them in New York City in the near future.



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FALL 2017 LECTURE SERIES

All lectures are free and open to the public. This series has been made possible by the support of Claude and Lucienne Bloch.

THE BIRDS OF NEW YORK STATE

By Corey Finger

Thursday, November 16, 7pm

Founder of the "10,000 Birds" website and veteran birder Corey Finger has authored the *American Birding Association Field Guide to Birds of New York*. Learn from the expert about what makes birding in New York, and especially Queens, so special. Finger will point you to some of the best sites and best birds in our state. (See our review of *American Birding Association Field Guide to Birds of New York* on page 16.)

ONE MORE WARBLER

By Victor Emanuel

Thursday, December 7, 7pm

Victor Emanuel, the founder of VENT, the largest avian ecotourism company on earth, shares his journey from inspired youth to world's top birder in his recently released book, *One More Warbler*. For our lecture series, this master raconteur will share some of his biggest adventures, rarest finds, and the people who mentored and encouraged his passion along the way. (See our review of *One More Warbler* in the summer 2017 *Urban Audubon*.)

Our lectures are held at Reidy Hall at the Unitarian Church of All Souls, located on Lexington Avenue between 79th and 80th streets in Manhattan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NYC Audubon's conservation work and public programs are made possible by philanthropic contributions from members, friends, corporations, foundations, and government agencies. We are grateful to all those who have sustained our work this past season, including the 904 members and donors whose individual gifts in amounts up to \$2,499 collectively provided \$61,152 in support of our mission from January 1 to June 1, 2017.

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Estate of Helen S. Mattin
Estate of Evelyn Nethercott

THANK YOU TO OUR SPRING AND SUMMER STAFF AND INTERNS

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

RON BOURQUE, MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER, JOSE RAMIREZ-GAROFALO, and EVAN GEVER assisted with shorebird surveys, horseshoe crab egg sampling, and bird banding.

ROBERT CIARDULLO, recent graduate of Fordham University, assisted Dustin Partridge in identifying arthropods on the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center green roof.

CHRIS COOPER and SYBIL COSTELLO created and led the Feathered Friends after-school pilot birding program at P.S. 344 AmPark Neighborhood School in the Bronx.

ELIZABETH CRAIG, PhD, tern conservation program manager at Shoals Marine Laboratory and former NYC Audubon Harbor Herons Nesting Survey coordinator, collaborated in habitat enhancement planning for the tern colony on Governors Island.

PHIL CUSIMANO, CHRISTINE NEALY, ANN SELIGMAN, and DOTTIE WERKMEISTER worked as horseshoe crab site coordinators, managing our volunteers in Jamaica Bay in collecting crab spawning data.

THOMAS DAUDELIN, ANDRIANA LAMENDOLA, DANIEL OGOGO, and ZAHIR SHADICK, shorebird outreach interns based at the Rockaway Waterfront Alliance, educated beachgoers about sharing the shoreline with nesting birds.

IAN HAYS, undergraduate at Fordham University, assisted Dustin Partridge in identifying arthropods on the Kingsland Wildflowers green roof.

REBECCA MEYER, Cornell University student, assisted Danielle Sherman with program implementation for our summer residency on Governors Island and aided conservation program staff in the field.

KAITLYN PARKINS, education director at the Lower East Side Ecology Center and former NYC Audubon research assistant, conducted bat surveys on the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center and Kingsland Wildflowers green roofs and analyzed bat data.

DUSTIN PARTRIDGE, PhD candidate at Fordham University, designed and conducted arthropod and bird surveys on the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center and Kingsland Wildflowers green roofs, coordinated seasonal interns, and analyzed data.

JENEA ROBINSON and REBECCA NOAH, both MA students at New York University, taught students near Jamaica Bay about the connections between birds, beaches, and people via our Tidal Connections program curriculum.

NAILEA RODRIGUEZ and LAUREN SALITAN, New York Harbor School students, educated Governors Island visitors about birds and conservation while staffing NYC Audubon's summer residence at the island's Nolan Park house #17.

THANK YOU TO CHRISTINA RUBIN

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to Christina Rubin, who has served as art director of *The Urban Audubon* since 2012. Additionally, during this time she volunteered her resources and efforts to design our *Annual Report* and special projects like the striking “Birding by Subway” brochure. Having learned a great deal from her about production and design, we are now able to publish the newsletter in house. We look forward to working with Chris on future projects.

NEWS & NOTES

BIRDING BY SUBWAY IN THE NEWS

Our “Birding by Subway” brochure was featured in two articles published in *The New York Times*. The brochure was first highlighted in Francis X. Cline’s “Take the A Train, as in Audubon” editorial on May 8. The brochure was then featured in a follow-up column, “New York Today: Birding by Subway,” on May 22. For that piece, co-writer Jaclyn Peiser visited Prospect Park, one of the birding hotspots featured in the brochure, accompanied by Director of Development Kellye Rosenheim and Board Members Rob Bate and Tom Stephenson.

WELCOME BACK TO KAITLYN PARKINS

As we say goodbye to Debra Kriensky, we say hello (again) to Kaitlyn Parkins, who will replace Debra as NYC Audubon conservation biologist. She has been the director of education at the Lower East Side Ecology Center, and before that she had been a research assistant at NYC Audubon. We are thrilled to have her back working full-time on our conservation programs.

SUPPORT NYC AUDUBON'S MISSION

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO PROTECT NEW YORK CITY'S WILD BIRDS

In addition to becoming a member or making a one-time donation, there are several ways to play a larger role in supporting NYC Audubon's mission to protect wild birds and their habitat in the five boroughs of New York City:

GIVE MONTHLY

Provide ongoing monthly support to ensure our birds are protected throughout the year. You can make a huge difference for as little as \$5 per month. See the membership form below or donate online at www.nycaudubon.org/donate.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN KESTREL CIRCLE

Soar above the rest by making a donation of \$2,500 or more. American Kestrel Circle Patrons enjoy special access and exclusive tours. See the membership form below or donate online at www.nycaudubon.org/donate. Contact us to learn more.

GIVE A MATCHING GIFT

Supporters can double or triple the value of donations through their employers' matching gift programs. Contact your company's personnel office to learn how. Be sure to specify New York City Audubon as the designee.

LEAVE A LEGACY

When you designate New York City Audubon as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, life insurance policy, or investment/bank account, your gift will support the conservation of the birds you love for many years to come. Visit www.nycaudubon.org/leave-a-legacy, or contact us to learn more. For more information on a bequest, see the **REMEMBER THE BIRDS** box on page 15.

To learn more about any of the above, contact Director of Development Kellye Rosenheim at krosenheim@nycaudubon.org or 646-502-9611. Save paper, time, and money by making your contribution online 24/7 at www.nycaudubon.org/support-us.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE Contributing members are essential to our conservation and outreach work. As a member of NYC Audubon, you will receive *The Urban Audubon* newsletter and *The eGret* email newsletter; enjoy discounts on field trips and classes; and make a difference in helping to protect the City's wildlife and natural areas.

I would like to become a member by making a **recurring** donation in the amount of \$ _____ **each month**.

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Wednesday, October 18, 2017

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