



THE URBAN AUDUBON

**Harbor Herons
Enter the Information Age**

The Fall Roost

The Christmas Bird Count



**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

Editors Lauren Klingsberg & Marcia T. Fowle
Managing Editor Tod Winston
Newsletter Committee Ellen Azorin, Lucienne Bloch, Ned Boyajian, Suzanne Charlé, Diane Darrow, Catherine Heller, Mary Jane Kaplan, Abby McBride, Sarah McGullam, Hillarie O'Toole, Jennifer Rauch, Don Riepe, Carol Peace Robins

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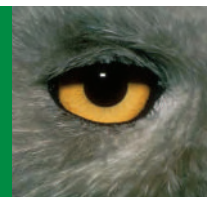
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BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Kathryn Heintz



I was recently asked to explain the differences among NYC Audubon, Audubon New York, and the National Audubon Society—and then I was asked if a person should support one or two or even all three. My short answer: We are all part of the vast Audubon grassroots network. And, yes, you should support all three.

NYC Audubon is your local Audubon chapter, working for the protection of birds and their habitat in the five boroughs of New York City. Audubon New York, based just north of Albany in Troy, is a state office of the National Audubon Society focused on conservation issues statewide, in addition to overseeing seven New York State Audubon sanctuaries. And National Audubon, engaged in the protection of entire ecosystems and migration flyways throughout both North and South America, has had its headquarters in New York City since its founding in 1905. National Audubon's presence here, and the fact that our city and state share a name, make things particularly confusing for New Yorkers—but the relationships among National Audubon and its state offices and chapters are the same throughout the U.S. Through our national and state affiliations, the Audubon community shares resources and leverages clout. New York State's 27 local chapters connect through the Audubon Council of New York State and are part of a national network that is nearly 500 chapters strong.

Local Audubon chapters are independent organizations, and most—like NYC Audubon—have their own 501(c)(3) non-profit status. NYC Audubon is a very large chapter, one of the largest in the country. We have our own board and staff, including a PhD ornithologist and several wildlife biologists. These resources allow us to act quickly and knowledgeably in response to New York City's specific bird conservation needs. Signature NYC Audubon programs like Project Safe Flight and Waterbirds of New York Harbor safeguard the wild birds that live and fly through our ultra-urban and densely populated cityscape. Birding walks, classes, and harbor cruises connect people of all ages with the wild birds in our midst. Habitat improvement projects and birding festivals create bird-friendly communities. Scientific surveys and monitoring of our parks, islands, shores, and rooftops provide reliable data on the health of local and migrating species, data that we share with decision-makers to marshal protection for both birds and habitat.

NYC Audubon's independent work cannot be done without you, our members and friends. We are your Audubon. We fight for the over 350 species that depend upon New York City's diverse bird habitat: over 50,000 acres of parks and other green spaces, 578 miles of waterfront, and over two dozen harbor islands. Your direct financial support is critical to our success. In this *Urban Audubon* issue, read about our projects and activities with pride. And please support NYC Audubon at year end as generously as your means allow. See page 23 and the enclosed envelope for more information. Every gift of every size matters—your participation means everything to us and to our birds.

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 New York 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, contact Director of Development Kellye Rosenheim at krosenheim@nycaudubon.org or 646-502-9611.

NYC AUDUBON

71 West 23rd Street
Suite 1523
New York, NY 10010
Tel: 212-691-7483
Fax: 646-606-3301
www.nycaudubon.org

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Susan Elbin, Steve Nanz, and Don Riepe

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CONSERVATION NOTES

This fall NYC Audubon concentrated primarily on making New York City safer for migratory birds via Project Safe Flight. As winter begins and the last of the fall migrants clear out, here are some updates from that project and other aspects of our work. (Just as this issue went to press, the National Park Service released its Environmental Assessment of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge's West Pond. The Preferred Alternative plan includes a repair of the breach and restoration of a freshwater West Pond and loop trail. See page 20 for more details.)

PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT

The Tribute in Light

Fall migration reached a peak on September 11, when during the Tribute in Light memorial tens of thousands of birds could be seen circling in the lights. Thanks to the continued cooperation of the Tribute's sponsor, the National September 11 Memorial & Museum (formerly the Municipal Arts Society), we were able to turn the lights off eight times between 9pm and 4am, allowing birds opportunities to rest or continue on their journey. Many insects were present in the lights as well, providing an abundant food source for bats and insectivorous birds.

Collision Monitoring

We tend to see more bird-window collisions in fall than in spring, and this fall was no exception. Many warblers collided with glass windows and buildings around the City, especially black-and-white warblers and common yellowthroats. While much of this collision data comes from the monitoring of major collision hotspots by our dedicated volunteers, we are gathering a lot of valuable information from our D-Bird website (www.d-bird.org). A huge thank you to all who have logged in sightings of dead and injured birds. We have also recently begun receiving collision data from our partners at the Wild Bird Fund; this large additional data source will give us an even more complete picture of what areas in the City are most dangerous for migrating birds.

Glass Testing

Our glass testing project with the American Bird Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Fordham University, NJ Audubon, and Ennead Architects was up and running again this fall at the Bronx Zoo. This season, Research Technician Emilio Tobón took the lead in running the tunnel, and we are learning more about how birds see glass.

Lights Out

We have received a generous grant

from the Leon Levy Foundation to study the impact of city lights on bird collisions. With partners from the Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University and assistance from the Durst organization, we hope to use a high-tech camera in midtown Manhattan that will measure light emitted from many different buildings at night to see if more light or certain types of light correlate with increased collisions.



Tens of Thousands of Birds Could Be Seen Circling the Lights During the September 11 Tribute in Light Memorial



Stopover Habitat

It's time to put our Urban Oasis to sleep for the winter. Thanks to our Garden Guardian Ann Seligman and her intrepid Greenpoint volunteers, the quarter-acre plot at McGolrick Park is off to a good start. (See page 18 for more about McGolrick Park.) NYC Audubon's stewardship is over, but we leave the garden in the good hands of the McGolrick Park community and some wonderful fall warblers (northern parula, black-and-white warbler, and American redstart).

Jacob Javits Convention Center Green Roof

In their second year of monitoring, our green-roof research assistants are hard at work. Dustin Partridge is analyzing arthropod data, and Kaitlyn Parkins is finishing up bat surveys. Nesting herring gulls are gone until next spring, but American kestrels are back

hunting for insects. On October 8 the first-ever eastern phoebe was spotted using the Javits roof.

Jamaica Bay

In mid-November, NYC Audubon completed our eighth point count survey in the North and South Gardens of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The Nature Conservancy is carrying out invasive species removal and native species planting, and we are conducting an evaluation of bird diversity and abundance pre- and post-treatment. Communications Manager and Research Assistant Tod Winston has been our ears and eyes on this project.

WATERBIRDS OF THE NY HARBOR: HARBOR HERONS

We are gearing up for our twelfth annual Harbor Herons and Other Waterbirds of the

Greater NY/NJ Harbor meeting. Hosted by the National Park Service, this meeting brings together researchers, agency staff, and citizen science volunteers to discuss the work we all do on waterbirds and habitat in the region.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

See page 15 for dates and registration information for the City's five boroughs.

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

If you would like to get involved with our citizen science efforts, please contact us at volunteer@nycaudubon.org.

You can find the latest conservation project updates on our blog, *Syrinx*, at www.nycaudubon.org/syrinx.

VOLUNTEER!



Make a difference for New York City's wildlife by volunteering with NYC Audubon. To register for any of the projects listed below, contact the office at volunteer@nycaudubon.org or 212-691-7483 x304. For up-to-date information on early spring volunteer events such as beach clean-ups and native tree plantings, please visit us at www.nycaudubon.org/volunteer-events.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Help answer inquiries about wildlife and about our field trips, classes, events, and conservation work. Also help with mailings, research, data entry, photocopying, and filing. Word-processing skills and

knowledge of birds are helpful, but not required. This is a great opportunity to learn the ins and outs of a small nonprofit.

CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in contributing to NYC Audubon's conservation and science work, there are a variety of projects to choose from. Project Safe Flight volunteers monitor buildings in the city to help us learn what effect they have on migratory birds; data collected support our work to make migration through the city safer. Jamaica Bay program volunteers monitor migratory shorebirds and horseshoe crabs so that we may better understand how populations of these

species are changing and how we can work to conserve them. Harbor Herons Great Egret Foraging Study volunteers collect data on foraging long-legged waders around the New York Harbor to help us better understand how these birds use our wetlands. All of these programs can use your help in the spring, summer, and fall.

BIRD TRANSPORTERS

We often receive phone calls from concerned citizens who have found injured birds, but are unable to transport them to medical facilities. We need caring and compassionate volunteers to transport injured birds to licensed wildlife rehabilitators and veterinarians.

PRESS AND PROMOTION

Do you have a background in event promotion or advertising, and want to support bird conservation? We are looking for someone familiar with the ins and outs of press releases and event promotion who can help spread the word about our trips, classes, and other events.

HARBOR HERONS ENTER THE INFORMATION AGE

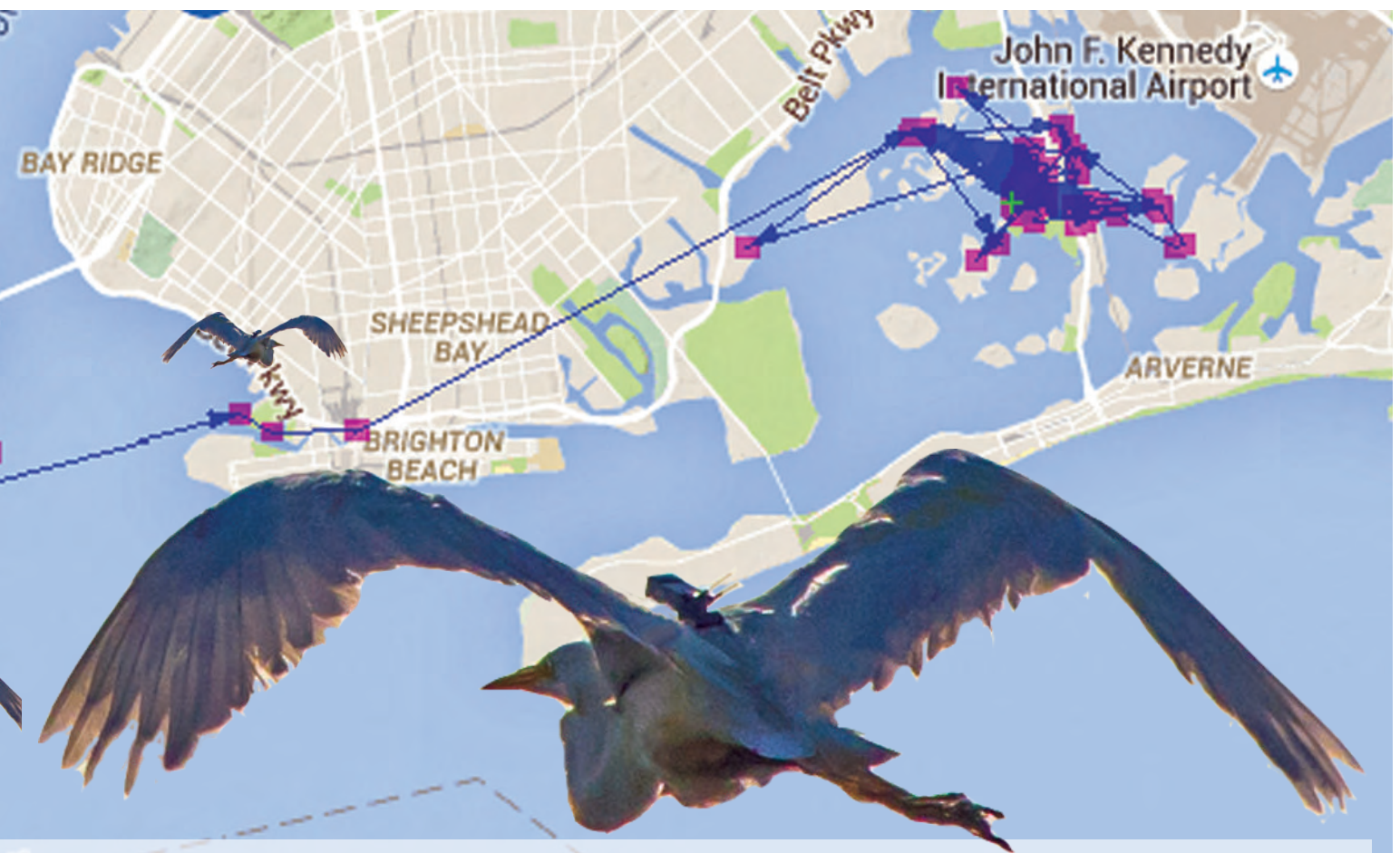
©Great Egret Image ©Natalie GRECORIO



As of this past summer, NYC Audubon's Harbor Herons program includes a new high-technology component: To the long-term surveys of nesting, reproduction, and foraging has been added GPS tracking of two of the colonies' adult great egrets.

NYC Audubon has been wing-tagging great egret nestlings since 2012 and color-banding snowy egrets since 2008, enabling researchers to identify individual birds found after they've left the breeding colonies. The new GPS transmitters, however, communicate the birds' movements three times each day for an indefinite period. The resulting data is being posted on www.movebank.org, a website developed to report the movements of tracked animals of all kinds. To see the movements of the two egrets, Edward and Clarence (originally known as Clare, until genetic sexing was done), visit <http://tinyurl.com/hhgps01>. No password is needed.

Edward and Clarence were trapped and fitted with solar-powered transmitters at Wolf's Pond on Staten Island on June 25 and 26, 2015. (Visit www.nj Audubon.org/SectionCitizenScience/HarborHeronSurveys/GreatEgretTracking.aspx for a description and



photos of the process.) NYC Audubon's participation in this project is part of a larger study being led by Dr. John Brzorad of Lenoir-Rhyne University of North Carolina and Dr. Alan Maccarone of Friends University in Wichita, Kansas. NYC Audubon, together with another partner, NJ Audubon, will expand the new GPS tracking effort thanks to funding that Dr. Nellie Tsipoura, NJ Audubon's senior research scientist and director of citizen science, has received from the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (the former Meadowlands Commission) to attach transmitters to two more egrets from the Harbor Heron colonies.

According to Dr. Susan Elbin, NYC Audubon's director of conservation and science, the GPS data will be used to assess the amount of energy an egret needs to sustain itself—in other words, how much flying does it do each day from its nesting or roosting spot to forage for food? In addition to increasing basic knowledge about the species, the answer will help NYC Audubon judge the maximum size of the breeding colony that nearby foraging areas can support. The data will also answer questions about the migration patterns of the great egrets. Where do they go in winter if they don't remain in the harbor area, as some birds do? Where do they

stop along the way? Do they return to the same breeding colony year after year?

Already the researchers have learned that from the time of release with the transmitter through September 6, Clarence spent time in three distinct locations on Staten Island's eastern shore and on nearby Hoffman Island, which is at present the largest breeding site for the Harbor Herons. He spent about 20 percent of his time on Hoffman, before flying 100 miles south to the eastern shore of Delaware Bay later in September. Edward, on the other hand, never went to Hoffman Island, instead spending the summer in the Arthur Kill area. In late September, however, he was tracked moving around Brooklyn and Queens, ending up in Jamaica Bay. Will he follow Edward south? By the time this article is in print, his GPS transmitter will have provided the answer.

This project marks a return to the long-legged waders of New York Harbor for Dr. Maccarone and Dr. Brzorad. In the early 1980s, they were among the first field biologists to study the colonies after their discovery.

THE FALL ROOST: OUR GLASS WAS MORE THAN



While wine glasses were clinking over a delicious dinner, glass was very much on the minds of attendees of this year's Fall Roost. Hans-Joachim Arnold, company co-owner and former CEO of German glass manufacturing company ARNOLD GLAS, was being toasted as one of this year's three honorees, for his invention of the revolutionary, bird-friendly architectural glass Ornlux.

Equally fêted was Marsilia (Marcy) Boyle, for 15 years of visionary leadership as a director and officer of NYC Audubon, as well as for her efforts on behalf of many other bird protection initiatives throughout the city and state. Board President Harry Maas cited her as "a powerful voice for birds," applauding her "relentless dedication."

And, for the first time, this year's Roost included an award for "Volunteer of the Year." Honored was Deborah Jones, the talented artist who, among many other volunteer activities, creates the

colorful and enchanting collage boards for most of the Roost's silent auction items. Accepting the award, she said, "Every time we look out a window and hear birds singing, we have to count our blessings."

Throughout the evening, held under the sky-high vaulted ceilings of Guastavino's event space, many of the 217 guests (a Roost attendance record!) expressed the same sentiment. They felt a warm camaraderie in this gathering of those sharing in the mission of NYC Audubon: the protection of the wild birds and their habitat within our five boroughs. There was congenial table-hopping as Executive Director Kathryn Heintz introduced the program and expressed gratitude to the many people who so generously give their time and support to the cause.

During the award presentations, Dr. Susan Elbin, director of conservation and science, surprised everyone with her impeccable German as she welcomed the six-member team from ARNOLD



GLAS, who had flown in from Germany especially for the occasion. In his acceptance speech (in equally impeccable English), Arnold related the history of Ornlux glass, which he described as an urgently needed product in which no one had originally been interested. “There simply was no market for it,” he said. “Its introduction was like an opening night with nobody in the audience.” But his belief in the product, fueled in no small part by the encouragement of groups like NYC Audubon, finally shaped a market, and he ended by announcing with pride that in 2016, ARNOLD GLAS U.S. will be launched. Arnold thanked NYC Audubon for its advocacy and support, effectively summing up the theme of the evening: “Together, we can make a difference.”

The 2015 Roost raised over \$180,000 for ongoing projects and operations, and an additional \$3,500 towards the purchase of a new Zodiac boat for waterbird conservation fieldwork.

1. Virginia Stowe, Marcy Boyle
2. Dawn Hearne, Deborah Jones
3. Marcy Boyle, Judith Sloan
4. John Zucker, Karen Benfield
5. Kathryn Heintz
6. Gerry Kane, Priscilla Bijur, Cathy and Lloyd Heller
7. Bruce Fowle, Rebecca Marshall, Ken Sanchez, Alan Steel
8. Harry Maas and young birders Jordan Spindel, Adam Rudt, Ryan Zucker
9. Robert Bate, Tracy Meade, Marcia T. Fowle
10. Stefan Göbel, Lisa Welch-Schon, Martin Schwarz, Jennifer Hoffmann, Natalie Ank, Hans-Joachim Arnold, Susan Elbin
11. Allen Levantin
12. Silent Auction display created by Deborah Jones

All Fall Roost Photos: David Rodgers

FALL ROOST ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Karen Benfield and John Zucker



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Sviba Floral Decorators, Barry Karlin
and Cathy Sviba: table decorations

©Rohan Narine



Volunteers at the International Coastal Cleanup

Although there was no swimming or sunbathing, Saturday, September 19, 2015, was a pretty special day at the beach. It was the 30th annual International Coastal Cleanup, created by the Ocean Conservancy to raise awareness of the need to protect oceans and shores from litter hazardous to fish and birds. Thirty-eight volunteers from NYC Audubon, the American Littoral Society, and local group Sadhana met at North Channel Beach in Queens. There, as expected, they encountered more trash than one would ever wish for. (Last year, 560,000 volunteers in

91 countries collected more than 16 million pounds of trash from the world's beaches, according to the Ocean Conservancy.)

Part of Gateway National Park, North Channel Beach is a small, ordinary stretch of shoreline in the middle of Jamaica Bay—with one big difference. Here, in addition to unwelcome cans and bottles, one often finds murtis, offerings to God placed there by members of the local Hindu community. That's where Sadhana comes in. This coalition of progressive Hindus, whose name means "faith in action," strives to promote

environmental justice by educating people about eco-friendly worship and the dangers of leaving non-biodegradable items on the beach. To this end the group conducts monthly beach cleanups and outreach to local temples.

This year's volunteers, armed with gloves, grasping tools, and trash bags, ranged from grade-schoolers to retirees to a contingent from Mitsubishi Corporation. They split into small groups of pickers and a recorder who, using a tally sheet, noted each item before tossing it into a bag. "Seven plastic pieces, four plastic bags, two cans, one sock" was a common refrain. "One umbrella, one stroller, one kite" was, while not common, a reality. Volunteers also encountered several dozen murtis and other Hindu artifacts, which were carefully put aside for collection by Sadhana.

Overall, the North Channel Beach volunteers logged in at least 4,460 pieces of "stuff," including 400 pieces of glass, 343 cigarette butts, 661 plastic bags, and 19 diapers. One clean beach is of course no final solution to the worldwide problem of ocean pollution that the International Coastal Cleanup seeks to highlight. But volunteers left satisfied that their day at this particular beach had made it a much healthier place for both people and wildlife.

WINTER 2015 LECTURE SERIES—NEW LOCATION!

NOTE: OUR LECTURE SERIES HAS MOVED to the Central Park Zoo 4-D theater, just north of the Arsenal building at Fifth Avenue and 65th Street. Descend the usual flight of steps into the park in front of the Arsenal and walk right around the north side of the building to reach the theater entrance. All lectures are free and open to the public. This series has been made possible by the support of Claude and Lucienne Bloch.

BEYOND WORDS: WHAT ANIMALS THINK AND FEEL

By Carl Safina, PhD

Tuesday, December 15, 6:30pm

Renowned author Carl Safina will deliver a lecture based on his latest book, *Beyond Words*. We will go inside animals' lives and minds, witnessing their profound capacity for perception, thought, and emotion, showing why the word "it" is often inappropriate as we discover "who" they really are. Dr. Safina is the founder of the Safina Center at Stony Brook University and host of PBS's *Saving the Ocean*. His books include *Song for the Blue Ocean*, *Eye of the Albatross*, *Voyage of the Turtle*, *Nina Delmar: The Great Whale Rescue*, *The View From Lazy Point: A Natural Year in an Unnatural World*, and *A Sea in Flames: The Deepwater Horizon Oil Blowout*.

THE NARROW EDGE: A TINY BIRD, AN ANCIENT CRAB & AN EPIC JOURNEY

By Deborah Cramer

Tuesday, January 19, 6:30pm

Each year red knots undertake a near-miraculous 19,000-mile journey from one end of the earth to the other and back. In her book *The Narrow Edge*, Deborah Cramer accompanies them on their extraordinary odyssey along the length of two continents, tracking birds from remote Tierra del Fuego to the icy Arctic. Come hear about the journey first-hand, and learn what's at stake: for shorebirds, for horseshoe crabs, and for us all. (See our review of the book on page 18.)

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

- **NYC Audubon Events**
- **Partnership Events**

Overnight Trips

- **CAMERA CLUB**

**Wednesday, December 2,
6:30-8:30pm**
Instructors: David Speiser, Lloyd Spitalnik

Meet at the National Audubon office, 225 Varick St. Whether you're a beginner or more advanced photographer, our photography 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. \$14.50 (\$10) per meeting

- **CENTRAL PARK WINTER WALKS**

**Sundays, December 6, January 3,
February 7; and Saturday, March 5;
10am-1pm**
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Some of the best sightings await hardy nature-lovers willing to venture out in winter. Several species of owls are found in Central Park in the colder months, along

with "winter finches" such as pine siskins, redpolls, and crossbills. Observing the adaptations for cold-weather survival among blue jays, titmice, and other resident species is fascinating as well. Warm up after the walk with a hot chocolate by the fireplace at the Loeb Boathouse. Limited to 15. \$36 (25)

- **MEMBERS-ONLY**

December Member Walk in Central Park
Wednesday, December 9, 8-10am
Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street for a members-only walk with NYC Audubon Communications Manager Tod Winston. Come brave the chilly weather and spot some of Central Park's best wintering birds. Please contact Kellye Rosenheim at 212-691-7483 x 306 or krosenheim@nycaudubon.org to register. Limited to 20. Free for Contributing NYC Audubon members at the Student/Senior level and up

- **WINTER BIRDING ALONG THE HUDSON: WAVE HILL, THE BRONX**

**Sundays, December 13, January 10,
February 14, and March 13;
9:30-11:30am**
Guide: Gabriel Willow
With Wave Hill
Meet at the Perkins Visitor Center. The Hudson River valley hosts an

impressive diversity of bird species, even during the winter months. Explore the beautiful gardens and woodlands of Wave Hill and observe the hardy birds that spend the winter in this urban oasis. Advanced registration is recommended, either online, 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 (see www.wavehill.org for more information)

- **THE FRESHWATER PONDS OF LONG ISLAND'S SOUTH SHORE, NY**

Thursday, December 17, 8am-3pm
Guide: Tod Winston

Visit up to seven South Shore freshwater ponds that provide refuge to a surprising variety of wintering waterfowl—and great viewing opportunities to birders. Possible sightings include hooded mergansers, green-winged teal, ring-necked ducks, northern pintail, and redhead. We'll also make a short stop or two by the bay to look for loons, grebes, and sea ducks. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$93 (65)

- **WINTER BIRDS AT JAMAICA BAY**

Saturday, December 19, 10am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe
With American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area
Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center for a hike around the pond and gardens to look for late migrants and arriving winter birds. Learn how birds and other wildlife survive winter, and how to identify many species. For more information and to register, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriepe@gmail.com. Free

- **NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACH WALK, FORT TILDEN, QUEENS**

Friday, January 1, 11am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe, Mickey Cohen
With American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area
Meet at Fort Tilden in Breezy Point for a brisk hike along the beach, dunes, and woods to welcome in the New Year. Look for saw-whet and snowy owls. Enjoy champagne, coffee, and cookies afterward at the Rockaway Artists Alliance. For more information, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriepe@gmail.com. No reservations necessary. No limit. Free

- **MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND WITH DON RIEPE, LONG ISLAND, NY**

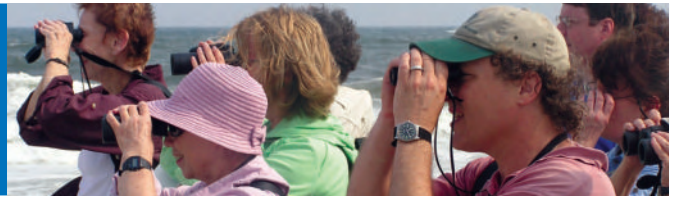
**Friday, January 8–Sunday,
January 10**
Guides: Mike Bottini, Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe
With American Littoral Society
Spend a quiet weekend at Montauk during peak winter birding time. Visit the seal haul-out site and see many species of seabirds including loons, scoters, and goldeneye. Accommodations at the luxurious Manor House. For reservations and details, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriepe@gmail.com. \$395

- **WINTER BIRDING ON THE SOUTH SHORE OF LONG ISLAND: JONES BEACH AND SHINNECOCK INLET**

Saturday, January 9, 9am-6pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow
Winter in New York brings the excitement of possibility: Will snowy owls appear in the dunes? Will harlequin ducks move westward from Cape Cod and Montauk, and appear in closer waters? Will irruptive northern finches and bohemian waxwings move south from Canada? All of these species and more are possible on Long Island in the winter, along



Ring-Necked Duck



with more expected species such as loons, grebes, scaup, eider, northern harriers, purple sandpiper, and more. Bundle up and brave the cold for some of the best birding our area has to offer. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$93 (65)

● **BIRDING GEMS OF STATEN ISLAND: WINTER AT FRESHKILLS PARK**

Sunday, January 10, 10am-5pm
Guides: Cliff Hagen and Tod Winston

With NYC Parks

Meet at the Manhattan terminal of the Staten Island Ferry. Winter at Freshkills Park is an exciting time for birding. The grass-covered slopes offer birds plenty of seed and shelter to huddled flocks of horned larks, snow buntings, and sparrow species, as rough-legged hawks soar overhead. Down below the mounds are a crisscross of tidal creeks filled with a variety of waterfowl. Grebes, geese, and coots swim alongside over a dozen species of ducks including teal, mergansers, and pintails. Transport by passenger van on S.I. included. Limited to 12. \$68 (47)

● **WINTER SEALS AND WATERBIRDS OF NY HARBOR**
Sundays, January 10–March 13, 12-2pm (no cruise on Sunday, February 7)

Guide: NYC Audubon

Meet at South Street Seaport's Pier 17 and come aboard NY Water Taxi's eco-friendly vessel for a winter adventure in New York Harbor. Look for harbor seals on the rocky shores of Governor's Island and the more remote Hoffman and Swinburne Islands. Learn about the surprisingly diverse winter birds of New York City, including ducks, geese, loons, and sandpipers, many of which migrate south from the Arctic. See the Statue of Liberty and pass under the Verrazano Bridge. Dress

warmly. Limited to 90. To register, contact New York Water Taxi at 212-742-1969 or www.nywatertaxi.com. \$35 for adults; \$25 for children under 12; \$105 for family pack for 2 adults and 2 children

● **SNOW BIRDS OF FLOYD BENNETT FIELD AND FORT TILDEN, QUEENS**
Saturdays, January 16 and February 13, 10:30am-4pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Winter brings many rare birds to the City that can't be found here at any other time. Perhaps most exciting are the "snow birds" of the Arctic tundra, such as snow buntings and snowy owls, that can occasionally be found in tundra-like habitats further south. Look for these and other winter visitors such as horned larks, American tree sparrows, and rough-legged hawks, as well as wintering ducks, grebes, and loons. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$86 (60)

● **EAGLE WATCH AND BIRD WALK AT INWOOD HILL PARK, MANHATTAN**

Saturday, January 23, 8:30-10:30am

Guide: Annie Barry

Meet at the western end of Dyckman Street in front of La Marina restaurant and join Annie Barry for a winter hike through the various landscapes and habitats of Inwood Hill Park. Located at the northern tip of Manhattan where the Harlem River meets the Hudson, Inwood Hill Park offers shoreline vistas, mature forest, and the last natural salt marsh in Manhattan. We will begin on the Hudson shore in search of the bald eagles that have been sighted there frequently in recent winters, then move into the forest to search for wintering and year-round birds, and finally to the salt marsh to look for wintering ducks. Some hilly walking required. Limited to 15. \$36 (25)

● **WINTER WATERFOWL WEEKEND AT MONTAUK, LI**
Saturday, January 23, 9am–Sunday, January 24, 7pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

The gatherings of sea ducks around Montauk Point are the largest winter concentrations in New York State; the Christmas Bird Count on Montauk Point consistently tallies from 125 to 135 species, one of the best totals in the Northeast. Species that come to feed on the Point's rich kelp and mussel beds include common and red-throated loon, common eider, all three scoter species, bufflehead, common goldeneye, great cormorant, and red-breasted merganser. Harlequin duck and king eider also occur here regularly during the winter. Accommodations at Daunt's Albatross in Montauk. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$300 (\$50 single supplement)

● **WINTER EAGLES ON THE HUDSON, NY**

Saturday January 30, 9am-4pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at Grand Central Terminal and join NYC Audubon in seeking out one of the most incredible avian spectacles in New York: bald eagles wintering along the frozen Hudson River by the dozens or even

hundreds. We will travel in comfort by Metro North to Croton Point Park, where we will look for eagles before hiking up to Croton Point Park to seek out wintering short-eared and snowy owls, snow buntings, horned larks, and other cold-weather specialties. The walk is about two miles over easy terrain. Limited to 20. Round-trip Metro North fare (\$20.50) not included in trip price. \$53 (37)

● **CAMERA CLUB**
Wednesday, February 3, 6:30-8:30pm
See December 2 listing for details.

● **WINTER BIRDS OF DEKORTE PARK, NJ**

Friday, February 5, 9am-2pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Come explore the wilds of the New Jersey Meadowlands at DeKorte Park. Here, the Hackensack River meets extensive coastal marshes, creating a rich habitat for wildlife—especially wintering waterfowl and raptors. We'll be on the lookout for large flocks of canvasback, ruddy ducks, green-winged teal, northern pintail, bufflehead, and northern shoveler, along with common and hooded mergansers. And we'll scan the skies for hunting raptors including rough-legged and Cooper's hawks, northern harriers, and perhaps even a snowy

©Mark Watson



Bald Eagle

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

or short-eared owl. We can warm up at the environmental center and learn about the Meadowlands' ecology. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$86 (60)

● WINTER WATERFOWL OF THE BROOKLYN COAST

Saturday, February 6, 9am-3pm
Guide: Kellye Rosenheim

Join Kellye Rosenheim on a tour of Brooklyn's most productive coastal winter waterfowl sites. We'll visit Bush Terminal Piers Park, Gravesend, and Calvert Vaux in search of saltwater species such as common goldeneye, long-tailed ducks, loons, and horned and red-necked grebes. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$86 (60)

● SOARING RAPTORS: EAGLES AND OWLS OF THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY, NY

Saturday, February 13, Noon-7pm
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

You don't have to travel to Alaska to see our country's emblem, the American bald eagle. Thanks to one of the most successful reintroduction programs on record, many eagles now soar over the nearby Hudson Valley. Travel with us to see this spectacular raptor, as well as possibly spot the secretive short-eared owl. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$102 (72)

● WINTER WATERFOWL ID WORKSHOP

Thursday, February 18, 6-7:30pm (class) and Saturday, February 20, 10am-1pm (trip)
Guide: Gabriel Willow

If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck... but is it a dabbling duck or a diving duck? Or could it be a grebe? This class will help you distinguish between ducks, geese, loons, grebes, and more. Following our class, we'll put our newfound skills to work as we seek out the diverse mix of dabbling



White-breasted Nuthatch

ducks, bay ducks, sea ducks, grebes, loons, and cormorants to be found in New York Harbor from Battery Park. Limited to 12. \$68 (47)

● WINTER BIRDS OF THE BARRIER ISLANDS, LI

Friday, February 26, 8am-4pm
Guides: Peter Mott and Tod Winston

Several bird species that nest in the far north spend the winter at Jones Beach, in a habitat similar to their summer homes. We'll visit Point Lookout and Jones Beach in search of harlequin ducks, common eider, scoters, horned larks, and snow buntings. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 11. \$90 (63)

● WINTER THAW BIRD WALK AT JAMAICA BAY

Saturday, February 27, 10am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area
 Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a hike around the ponds and gardens to look for very early signs of spring as well as late winter birds. For more information and to register, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriep@gmail.com. No limit. Free

● WINTER BIRDS OF BARNEGAT, NJ

Saturday, March 5, 9am-4pm
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Explore Barnegat Inlet's expansive beach to view the winter birds that gather where land, bay, and sea meet. Search for harlequin ducks, horned larks, Lapland longspurs, snow buntings, and snowy and short-eared owls. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$115 (80)

● WINTER BIRDS OF SANDY HOOK, NJ

Saturday, March 12, 10am-5pm
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC

Sandy Hook, a spectacular barrier island at the northernmost point of the NJ coast, hosts a variety of species including Arctic-bound migrants and harbor seals that lie on the beach to warm up in the sun. Other possible sightings include loons, sea ducks, snow buntings, and horned larks. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$103 (72)

● EARLY SPRING BIRD WALK AT JAMAICA BAY

Saturday, March 26, 10am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area
 Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a slide program and walk to look for eastern phoebes, American oystercatchers, osprey, and other early migrants. For more information and to register, contact Don Riepe at 718-474-0896 or donriep@gmail.com. No limit. Free

● INTRO TO BIRDING: BIRD WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

Sunday, March 27, 8-10:30am
Guide: Tod Winston

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Are you curious about

"birding" but don't have much (or any) experience? Come on a relaxed walk to some of Central Park's hotspots to go over birding basics and see sparrows, finches, warblers, ducks, and more. Binoculars available. Limited to 15. \$36 (25)

EARLY MEMBER REGISTRATION FOR SPRING EVENTS

Spring and early summer events will be posted at www.nycaudubon.org and available for registration for Contributing NYC Audubon members starting on Monday, February 8. (Registration will open to all on Monday, February 22.)

● TO REGISTER FOR ALL NYC AUDUBON EVENTS and for more information, visit www.nycaudubon.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 23.
- 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 23.

HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Jennifer Rauch

The 116th Annual Christmas Bird Count December 19, 20, and 27, 2015

The 19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15, 2016

On a chilly December day, six of us stood on Staten Island's Clove Road, peering through a chain-link fence at a distant pond. The spot can be a real honey pot for birds. "Mallard, Canada goose, American wigeon, green-winged teal," observed one member of our circle. He counted individuals of each species, and the team leader jotted down the totals. Seeing a square-headed duck with drab coloring and a black bill, I called out, "There's a gadwall, too!" As a Christmas Bird Count novice, I was excited when everyone acknowledged the contribution: "Good call!"

Camaraderie like this is just one reason to get involved with the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). There's also the singular thrill of spotting birds. There's the opportunity for beginners to learn and for seasoned birders to share their knowledge. And, there's the satisfaction of collecting data for the nation's longest-running citizen-science project, which has helped conservationists track changes in birds' winter ranges and population sizes since 1900.

Every year, tens of thousands of nature lovers across the country participate in the Christmas Bird Count. In 2014, volunteers reported 157 species in New York City, with unusual winter sightings such as black vulture in the Bronx, Cassin's kingbird in Brooklyn, golden eagle in Manhattan, Wilson's warbler in Queens, and pileated woodpecker in Staten Island. This year, the 116th Christmas Bird Count will take place in the City on December 19, 20, and 27, 2015.

©Laura Meyers



Also this winter, the 19th Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held February 12-15, 2016. Last year, people in more than 100 countries submitted the largest-ever number of GBBC observations, including a record 671 species in the U.S. Some local highlights in 2015 included an irruption of snowy owls and a huge number of pine siskins—10 times as many as the previous year—feasting on a glut of spruce cones.

Both of these counts create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Both play a critical role in gauging how birds respond to climate change. Yet these citizen-science projects are conducted in different ways:

- CBC participants work together in established "count circles" to tally everything they see and hear. Then, they report observations through team leaders and local count compilers.
- GBBC volunteers count species independently in their backyards or local parks, for as little as 15 minutes at a time. Then, they submit sightings either online or through the free BirdLog app.

Both counting events are free and fun for birders of all ages. To take part in the CBC tradition, just get in touch with the count compiler for your borough (see below).

To join the Great Backyard Bird Count, you can register at www.birdcount.org.

COUNT	DATE	CONTACT	EMAIL
Brooklyn	Saturday, 12/19	Bobbi Manian	roberta.manian@gmail.com
Staten Island	Saturday, 12/19	Will Lenihan	wlenihan@statenilandmuseum.org
Manhattan	Sunday, 12/20	Debra Kriensky	christmasbirdcount@nycaudubon.org
Queens	Sunday, 12/20	Corey Finger	10000birdsblogger@gmail.com
The Bronx	Sunday, 12/27	Michael Bochnik	bochnikm@cs.com

BUFFLEHEAD (*BUCEPHALA ALBEOLA*)

Tom Winston

Birder 1: "He's up! Just to the left of the buoy!"

Birder 2: "Where?" "WHICH buoy?"

Birder 1: "The... Ab, too late; he's down."

This fragment of excited and ultimately disappointing conversation will be familiar to any who've spent time focused on the sea ducks, grebes, and loons that winter along our shoreline—all of which merit a closer look. If I had to choose a favorite among this varied though sometimes frustrating group of waterbirds, however, it would be a diminutive diving duck that is easy to spot, especially beautiful, and exquisitely adapted to its particular ecological niche: the bufflehead.

The smallest of North American ducks at just 13.5 inches in length, the bufflehead's name is thought to derive from a combination of "buffalo" and "head"; while displaying, the male raises feathers on its large head, creating an odd shape. Male bufflehead stand out against the gray expanse of winter water because of the brightly contrasting white and black of both their heads and bodies. (On closer inspection, their "black" coloring reveals an iridescent green and purple sheen.) The female is grayer in tone, with a smaller white patch behind the eye. Wintering across North America and as far south as the Yucatan and Cuba, bufflehead can be found bobbing about in small groups in ponds, lakes, and sheltered coastal waters. As the birds feed, one individual often "stands watch" for predators at the surface, as its companions dive with a distinctive and energetic whole-body movement in search of fish and crustaceans. (Bufflehead are themselves prey to many raptor species, as well as the great black-backed gull.) Whether because of its small size or its undeniably cute character, I am always awed by the bufflehead's perfect adaptation to

©Abby McBride



life in frigid waters, conditions that humans can withstand for minutes at most. An ancient bird, the bufflehead has survived in its present form for at least two million years.

Bufflehead are among the last sea ducks to leave our area in the spring, when they head north to the boreal forest of Canada to breed. There this species, so well adapted to diving and hunting beneath the water, nests in an unexpected locale: abandoned nesting cavities of the northern flicker. So closely is the bufflehead's ecology intertwined with that of the flicker that its breeding range lies entirely within that of this woodpecker. Bufflehead, which are largely monogamous, raise broods of up to a dozen or so young—which tumble to the ground from their nest hole, miraculously unharmed, within a day or two of hatching.

Though the bufflehead is considered a "species of least conservation concern," it is hunted frequently—and recovered from overhunting in the early 20th century following adoption of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Migratory Bird Convention Act by the U.S. and Canada. The greatest current threats to the bufflehead's survival are development of its wintering habitat

and clear-cutting of its boreal forest nesting grounds—and, of course, climate change. (See pages 12-14 for a number of opportunities to see bufflehead this winter.)

SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NYC Audubon is seeking nominations to its board of directors for three-year terms beginning in June 2016. Please submit your suggestions to David Speiser, chair of the nominating committee, at nominations@nycaudubon.org.

GOOD EGGS: FOSTERING THE FUTURE STEWARDS OF THE SHORELINE

Hillarrie O'Toole

©Emily Miller



Hauling Trash Away

“I was surprised to see that many of them would have liked to spend more time cleaning up the litter from the beach!” That statement is probably not what you would expect to hear about a group of middle school students, but it was indeed the sentiment expressed by NYC Audubon intern Jennifer Leigh Bombardier as she recalled a mid-June field

trip to Plumb Beach, along the shore of Jamaica Bay. The seventh-grade students from Edward B. Shallow School in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, were participants in NYC Audubon’s “Be a Good Egg” program, along with their teacher Diana Halvey

Perhaps not so surprising is that for nearly 50% of the students, it was their very first time visiting the beach. When current statistics are reporting that children are spending less time outdoors and ever-increasing time in front of a screen, how are we to ensure that they have an opportunity to simply become acquainted with the natural environment, let alone learn to love and care for it?

Bombardier and fellow NYC Audubon intern Emily Miller,

both master’s degree candidates studying environmental conservation education at NYU’s Steinhardt School, helped to lead the Be a Good Egg program, which is a collaboration with the NYU Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education. The program’s goal is to connect students with local beaches and wetlands so that they understand the ecological value of these sites. The curriculum focuses on the interrelationship of living species and on protection of local migratory shorebird habitat, culminating in a field trip to Plumb Beach. Plumb Beach is an important breeding site for horseshoe crabs—and the vast numbers of eggs laid by the horseshoe crabs are an important food source for migratory shorebirds. In addition to observing species they have studied, students lend a hand to clean the beach and gain valuable skills in data collection, critical thinking, and stewardship.

Speaking of the program’s impact, Miller said “Students become more aware of what important roles the animals have in the ecosystem, and how human activity can have a positive and negative impact on this local natural environment.” After the field trip, the students were asked to present their observations and data. One group summed up what they’d learned by stating, “The litter on the beach affected the survival of many of the species. The less you litter, or if you don’t litter at all, you can save the habitat.”

The Be a Good Egg program is in the midst of its seventh year collaborating with Halvey’s classroom; plans are already in motion for the 2015-16 school year.

©Emily Miller



Students from the Edward B. Shallow School, Bensonhurst, Brooklyn

©Emily Miller



Spotting a Horseshoe Crab

UPDATE: THE URBAN OASIS IN MCGOLRICK PARK

Suzanne Charlé

The initial work is finished in this New York City landmark, the birds are coming back—and so are the kids.

In May 2014, with a \$25,000 grant from the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (part of the settlement with ExxonMobil for the Greenpoint oil spill), work started to transform the barren landscape of a corner of Brooklyn's McGolrick Park into a quarter-acre native plant garden. (See "Going Native," *The Urban Audubon*, Winter 2014-15.)

"The idea was to improve the habitat for migrating birds, insects, bats, and butterflies," says Debra Kriensky, NYC Audubon's conservation biologist. The project—a joint effort by NYC Audubon, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, and the Lutheran Church of the Messiah, which borders the park—got off to a running start in June 2014. Volunteers planted over 4,000 native plants in three days, and NYC Audubon conducted two bird surveys, before and after planting.

This year in May and June, additional

plantings were overseen by Garden Guardian Ann Seligman. In all, over two dozen native varieties are now in residence in the 124-year-old park. Some—including common milkweed and royal ferns—haven't become established Brooklynites yet, but others like joe-pye weed, black raspberry, and the recently planted common and Canadian serviceberry, blackhaw viburnum, and highbush blueberry, are doing very well, says Kriensky.

In May and June, Kriensky oversaw additional bird surveys. Eight species of birds were counted: house sparrow, European starling, rock pigeon, American robin, fish crow, mourning dove, northern cardinal, and chimney swift. On September 18, 2015—the last survey—Kriensky saw American redstart, black-and-white warbler, and northern parula. "Nice to see that migrating songbirds are in fact stopping in the park," she notes.

Kriensky adds that, since the area is so small and the native plants have yet to fully establish themselves, it's hard to prove the benefit of the plantings in the historic park,

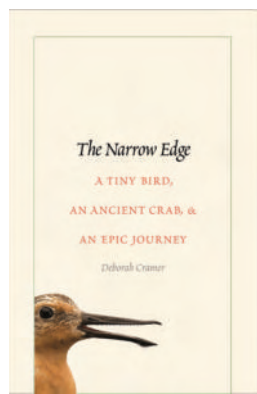
which is on the National Register of Historic Places. But the effort is important nonetheless: "In addition to habitat, there's the educational component." Children from two nearby schools are often in the park, bird-watching.



A Young Canadian Serviceberry Grows among New England Asters and Goldenrod

BOOK REVIEW

Carol Peace Robins



*The Narrow Edge:
A Tiny Bird, an Ancient Crab
& an Epic Journey*
By Deborah Cramer
Yale University Press, 2015

It's an amazing adventure story, its ending yet unknown. A hardy sandpiper called the rufa red knot and an ancient mariner known as the horseshoe crab meet on East Coast beaches every spring. The bird is on its way to its Canadian Arctic breeding grounds from its winter home at the tip of South America—a 19,000-mile round-trip. The crab is crawling ashore to lay its eggs.

For *The Narrow Edge*, Deborah Cramer decided to follow the red knot "to the edge of the sea from one end of the earth to the other." Her goal was not only to witness the highlights of this astounding migration and relationship but to explore both the plight of the shorebird, recently listed as a threatened species, and that of the horseshoe crab, whose numbers are rapidly dwindling.

Cramer accompanies scientists as they count and flag birds by plane, helicopter, and ATV through blistering heat and bitter cold. Beginning at the knot's winter home in Tierra del Fuego, she admires the art of counting birds from the air. In Delaware Bay she sees emaciated knots arriving for two weeks of rest and fattening up on nourishing horseshoe crab eggs. In the Arctic she visits the birds' Southampton Island breeding grounds, in hopes of finding numerous nests.

But everywhere she travels, there are far fewer knots, horseshoe crabs, and nests than in past years. Knots have declined because crabs have declined. And crabs have declined because fishermen value them as bait and medical researchers prize their blue blood for its remarkable ability to detect toxins.

Unlike the red knot, Cramer takes a number of detours on her way, discoursing on the dangers of wind farms, avian flu, and red tide; she tells tales of early explorers, monumental oil spills, and the migration of eels. Her wide-ranging account is complemented by the lovely drawings of Michael DiGiorgio.

With holidays approaching, we're offering a few suggestions of books to inspire the youngest birders and their families. (Our thanks to Ann Levine of Bank Street Book Store for her suggestions.)

NON-FICTION AND HANDS-ON

In her **Field Guide to the Neighborhood Birds of New York City**, Leslie Day, a science teacher who lived on a boat at the 79th Street Boat Basin, has produced a delightfully informative book that helps identify 90 of the City's bird species. With a foreword by our own Don Riepe, illustrations by Trudy Smoke, and photographs by Beth Bergman. (Johns Hopkins University Press)

Egg: Nature's Perfect Package teaches beginning biologists all about eggs—from those of the extinct elephant bird to those of the chicken and crocodile. With ingenious illustrations of cut and torn papers by Steve Jenkins and clever text by Robin Page. (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

Audubon Birds – A Field Guide to North American Birds—available as free apps for iPhone, Android, and Kindle—gives kids all the info they might want, allowing them to search birds by color, size, etc. They can even record bird sightings in a virtual notebook. (www.audubon.org/apps)

Aviary Wonders Inc. is a “catalog” cleverly crafted by Kate Samworth, offering birders young and old a chance to create their own birds with an assortment of wings, beaks, and crests; the birds can even be taught to sing. Counterbalanced by sobering facts about exotic species that are now extinct. (Clarion Books)

“**Bird Sleuth: Bird Spy Bingo**” is just one of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's creative lures to attract children to the out-of-doors. The goal: to fill an entire Bingo line by getting four common observations of birds correct in a row. Another resource, “Bird Sleuth Game Cards,” features 36 large photos of Eastern birds and information about them. (www.birdsleuth.org/502/)

FICTION

In **Shh! We Have a Plan** by award-winning illustrator Chris Haughton, four friends try to catch a bird, but the youngest keeps calling “Hello, Birdie!,” foiling the others' plan. A perfect read-aloud book. (Candlewick Press)

In **A Home for Bird**, Philip C. Stead follows Vernon the toad and his friend, a silent blue “Bird,” on a fantastic and ultimately successful search for home. A Kirkus Reviews Best Children's Book of 2012. (Roaring Brook Press)

You Nest Here with Me is a lyrical bedtime portrait of birds' nesting habits and habitats, while following sleepy swallows, terns, and a dozen more, all in rhyme. By mother-daughter team Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple and illustrator Melissa Sweet. (Boyd's Mill Press)

Owl Babies finds three owlets awake in their hole in a tree, awaiting their mother's return. A perennial favorite by Martin Waddell with illustrations by Patrick Benson. (Candlewick Press)

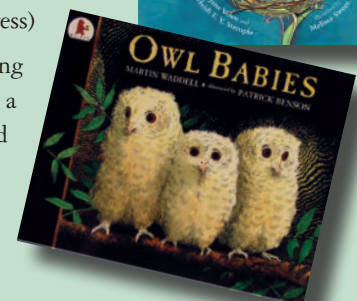
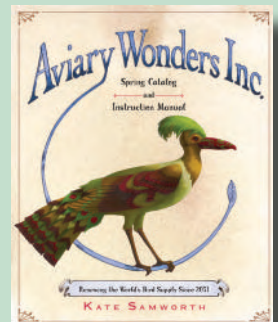
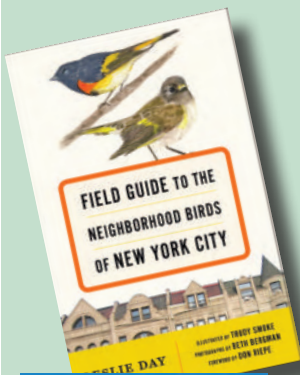




FIGURE 5: ALTERNATIVE B CONCEPTUAL DESIGN - THE NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

WEST POND PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE RELEASED

In early October the National Park Service (NPS) released its long-awaited Environmental Assessment (EA) for the breach repair of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge's West Pond. The NPS Preferred Alternative would "emphasize repair of the primary and secondary breaches and the subsequent restoration of West Pond and the loop trail. This alternative would also include replacing the water control structure, possible installation of a groundwater well or municipal water source, implementation of resource management strategies to improve seasonal use by wildlife, and opportunities for natural resource-based activities such as birding, walking, and improved interpretive activities." As *The Urban Audubon* went to press, NYC Audubon conservation staff were reviewing the EA in detail, but pleased that the Preferred Alternative would restore a crucial freshwater habitat to the Jamaica Bay ecosystem. Following its release, the EA was available for public review and comment until November 6. Please visit www.nycaudubon.org to get current details.

ALL EYES ON THE JAVITS CENTER

The Jacob Javits Convention Center's recent bird-friendly renovation and green

roof continued to receive positive media coverage this summer and fall, including a July 22 article in the *Wall Street Journal* ("A Project that's Literally for the Birds"), a feature on CBS This Morning in early August (watch it at <http://tinyurl.com/CBSJavits>), and a September 4 article in the *New York Times* ("Renovation at Javits Center Alleviates Hazard for Manhattan's Birds"). NYC Audubon Director of Conservation and Science Susan Elbin was interviewed for all three pieces concerning the success of the Center's renovation in reducing bird collisions, as well as NYC Audubon's continuing monitoring of the green roof's gull colony, bats, and other wildlife.

STATE FUNDING FOR TNR VETOED

We are happy to report that in late October, Governor Cuomo vetoed legislation to provide state funds to feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs, which have not been scientifically proven effective at reducing feral cat populations. Feral cats pose great risks to New York's wild bird populations.

EFFORTS RAMP UP TO "BAN THE BEAD"

On October 26, NYC Audubon testified to the New York City Council Committee on Consumer Affairs in support of proposed legislation that would ban the sale

of products containing plastic microbeads in the City: Int. No. 0928-2015. We also support pending New York State legislation, Res. No. A.5896/S.3932 (also known as the "Microbead-Free Waters Act"). Microbeads, a common ingredient in modern hygiene products, do not biodegrade and are harmful to water quality, and ultimately to waterbird and human populations alike. Please visit www.nycaudubon.org to learn more

CONSERVATION ON THE BIG SCREEN

This fall, NYC Audubon participated in discussion panels following the screenings of two films concerning imperiled bird populations: *The Messenger* and *Poached*. Learn more about *Poached* at www.poachedmovie.com. *The Messenger* will have its theatrical U.S. release on December 4. Learn more at www.themessengerdoc.com.

BOARD, ADVISORS, AND STAFF

After over nine years of service, Mary Tyler Moore has stepped down from the Advisory Council. Ms. Moore was instrumental in bringing attention to the removal of Pale Male's nest from its Fifth Avenue site in 2004, and was honored at NYC Audubon's Fall Roost in 2006. More recently, she provided crucial support for publication of our "raptors and rodenticide" brochure. We thank Mary Tyler Moore for her dedication to conservation and for her contributions to NYC Audubon's work.

We are happy to welcome our new Controller, David Cavill, who joined us in October. David (who prefers to go by "Cavill,") has a professional background in non-profit finance, operations, and management. Much of his connection to mission-driven organizations comes from a sense of spiritual motivation. He holds a master of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School and is currently pursuing rabbinic ordination at the Academy for Jewish Religion.

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NYC Audubon's conservation and education work would not be possible without the help of hundreds of volunteers who donate thousands of hours each year. If you volunteered during the period from October 2014 to September 2015 and your name is not on this list, please let us know! We strive to keep accurate records for our funders and want to make sure you receive the recognition you deserve.

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Madison Abadi-Biscaino
CON
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Tiffany Adams CBC, EO, JB
Deborah Allen CBC
Barbara Alpert EO, TIL
Oakes Ames OA
John Anderson JB, PSF
Patrick Andrews MP
Richard T. Andrias OA
Jan Arendtsz WE
Felicity Arengo CBC
Julia Armstrong JB
Stephen Garrett Arnold JB
Sarah Grimké Aucoin OA
Seth Ausubel BC
Ellen Azorin EO, UA
Patrick Baglee CBC
Michael Baglole UA
Mike Baird WE
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Show that you care by giving a gift that makes a difference.

Help protect wild birds and habitat in New York City with a gift membership to NYC Audubon. Members receive *The Urban Audubon* newsletter and *The eGret* enewsletter; enjoy discounts on field trips and classes; and make a difference in the City's wildlife and natural areas.

American Kestrel Circle \$2,500 Conservationist \$250 Supporter \$100
 Family \$75 Dual \$50 Friend \$25 Student/Senior(65+)\$15
 New Renewal

Additionally, I would like to make a donation to NYC Audubon in the amount of \$ _____.

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VOLUNTEERING ORGANIZATIONS

Children's Museum of Art EO
Columbia University Environmental Club
PSF
Earth Matter EO
Governors Island Alliance EO
Kenneth Cole CON
Little Eva's EO
McGolrick Park Neighborhood Alliance MP
The Mission Continues CON
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National Park Service EO
Rocking the Boat CON
Sadhana CON, EO
Volunteer for Wildlife IBT
Wild Bird Fund EO, PSF
Wildlife Conservation Society PSF
William E. Macaulay Honors College PSF

LEGEND

BC = Birders Coalition for Gateway
CBC = Christmas Bird Count
CON = Conservation
EO = Education and Outreach
FR = 2014 Fall Roost
HH = Harbor Herons
IBT = Injured Bird Transporters and Raptors NYC Group
JB = Jamaica Bay (includes Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Surveys)
OA = Office Administration
LA = Look Around New York City
MP = McGolrick Park
PSF = Project Safe Flight
TIL = Tribute in Light
UA = *The Urban Audubon*
WE = Website and *The eGret* eNewsletter

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO PROTECT BIRDS 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 \$10 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 NYC AUDUBON** box on page 2.

To learn more about any of the above, contact Director of Development Kellye Rosenheim at krosenheim@nycaudubon.org or 646-502-9611.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Contributing members are essential to our education and conservation work. Help protect birds and habitat in the five boroughs by joining our flock. As a member of NYC Audubon you will receive *The Urban Audubon* newsletter and *The eGret* eNewsletter; enjoy discounts on field trips and classes; and make a difference in the City's wildlife and natural areas.

American Kestrel Circle \$2,500 Conservationist \$250 Supporter \$100
 Family \$75 Dual \$50 Friend \$25 Student/Senior(65+) \$15
 New Renewal

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

Additionally, I would like to make a donation to NYC Audubon in the amount of \$_____.
I'm already a member but would like to make a **gift** in the amount of \$_____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: H: _____ C: _____ Email: _____

Enclosed is my check payable to NYC Audubon

Charge my credit card: VISA MC AMEX JDS

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HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR THE BIRDS



Give a Gift That Travels the Hemisphere

This holiday, give the gift of a banded bird or tagged horseshoe crab! Threatened American oystercatchers and common terns have headed south for the winter, but they'll be returning soon to nest in New York City. NYC Audubon can track these and other birds throughout the year thanks to generous support of our bird-banding research, conducted each spring during nesting season. When you give the gift of an adopted tern, oystercatcher, egret, snowy owl, or horseshoe crab, you'll be helping to fund valuable ongoing research—and the “adoptive parent” will receive a beautiful photo of his or her adopted animal, a field update, and the tracking number of the actual banded bird or horseshoe crab sponsored. Price varies according to animal selected.

Gifts may be ordered at www.nycaudubon.org/support-us or by calling the NYC Audubon office at 212-691-7483.

Give the Gift of Membership

Share your love of New York City's birds with a NYC Audubon Gift Membership. Includes all regular membership benefits plus a set of eight holiday gift cards. See page 22 for details.

Happy Holidays!

