



THE URBAN AUDUBON

NEW YORK CITY AUDUBON CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

Fall 2011
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NYC AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

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FOUR SPARROW MARSH

Catherine Heller

©Mike Heller



Four Sparrow Marsh Preserve in Mill Basin, Brooklyn, is threatened by developer Forest City Ratner's plan to build a retail center on 15 upland acres adjacent to the 63-acre marshland.

In 1997, the marsh was dedicated by New York City Parks and Recreation (NYCPR) as one of 51 "Forever Wild" nature preserves. In the department's own words, these sites are designated to "protect and preserve the most ecologically valuable lands within the five boroughs." Yet development plans that would threaten the water quality of the site have been under consideration for years, and ground breaking for this latest proposal is set for 2014.

Past NYC Audubon President Ron Bourque and his wife Jean named the preserve Four Sparrow Marsh because it is home to nesting populations of threatened saltmarsh sparrows along with song, swamp, and savannah sparrows. Over 16 other bird species breed here, including the clapper rail and Wilson's snipe, and it

is a rest stop for thousands of migrating birds. On a recent sunny May day, brant, green herons, great egrets, spotted sandpipers, red-winged blackbirds, semipalmated plovers, yellow warblers, and many other species were seen.

Besides providing vital bird habitat, the preserve, one of the two remaining salt marshes on Jamaica Bay, filters out pollution and excess nutrients and acts as a buffer to surrounding uplands during storms. In 2004, NYCPR's Natural Resources Group completed restoration of Four Sparrow Marsh to improve these beneficial marshland functions.

As befitting its designation "Forever Wild," the land is not manicured and there are no marked walkways or paths. It is not a park in the traditional sense, though it is accessible to the public to "give New Yorkers and visitors the chance to walk in the woods, paddle a stream or observe wildlife," to quote the NYCPR's description again. Good signage explains the function of salt marshes and highlights the flora and fauna. ...continued on page 4

NYC AUDUBON MISSION & VISION

Mission: NYC Audubon is a grass-roots 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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Small Photographs Susan Elbin, Steve Nanz, and Don Riepe



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Glenn Phillips



Early this summer, I joined a group of about fifty community leaders, representing environmental groups, youth education and recreation, and city, state, and federal agencies. We gathered at Gracie Mansion for a breakfast roundtable with Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. Our charge for the morning was to come up with key strategies to meet the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative in Jamaica Bay.

The goals of the America's Great Outdoors initiative are to conserve and restore the natural and cultural resources of America's great parks, as well as to increase public access and youth engagement. The initiative will focus on urban parks, and Jamaica Bay, part of Gateway National Recreation Area in Brooklyn and Queens, will be the site of one of the pilot projects. The National Parks Conservation Association's last review of the management of Gateway National Recreation Area in 2007 gave the park a failing grade, only 53 out of 100, so the need for better access and management is critical.

The meeting was charged with excitement as both Mayor Bloomberg and Secretary Salazar expressed a firm commitment to a new approach to Gateway. Teams discussed management structure, restoration priorities, transportation, and youth engagement, and were given 60 days to follow up with concrete plans for implementation over the next year. With your help, NYC Audubon will continue to work to assure that Jamaica Bay, New York City's most important place for birds, receives the attention it deserves.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER STAFF AND INTERNS!

NYC Audubon's conservation work is reinforced by our summer staff and interns. Read below about the work of this year's summer team.

Leonor Chavez, longtime volunteer, helped with marshbird surveys at Jamaica Bay and the Rockaways.

Elizabeth Craig, a PhD candidate at Cornell University, led the nesting waterbirds survey for the fourth consecutive year.

Yoryi de la Rosa, a frequent volunteer, created a Raptors and Rat Poison brochure and a list of target buildings for brochure distribution.

Libbie Goodill, **Kristen Marzocca**, and **Carrie Vaughn**, from NYU's graduate program in urban environmental education, coordinated three local schools' participation in our shorebird and horseshoe crab project and beach clean-ups, and conducted pre- and post-cleanup classes.

Donald Kass and **Ann Seligman**, longtime volunteers, acted as site coordinators for TogetherGreen-funded horseshoe crab monitoring.

Lily Mleczko, from Fordham University's graduate program in conservation biology, focused on mapping projects and Project Safe Flight policy issues.

Adriana Palmer, having recently completed her MLS from Queens College CUNY, led creation of a statewide training workshop for Project Safe Flight and analyzed collision data.

Sarina Shahmoon-Kleinman, a junior at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, helped with education and office projects.

Alicia Srinivas, a recent graduate of Columbia University's E3B MS program, was the research assistant for our migratory shorebird project, funded by the Disney Conservation Fund.

Margot Stuchin, having recently completed a B.A. in environmental biology at Columbia University, worked on the TogetherGreen Kestrel project.

Emilio Tobon, a PhD student from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, monitored American oystercatcher nests at Breezy Point, Jamaica Bay.

Kristen Vrancken, a law student at the Vermont Law School, worked on Lights Out NY, invasive species issues, and data collection and management.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Susan Elbin



New York City is a really good place for hawks—most of the time. Typically, red-tailed hawks live in open country habitat where they perch on tall trees or fly over open fields, hunting for their prey. They form monogamous pairs and raise their young together. But in New York City, our urban hawks are faced with many challenges, including injury from vehicular traffic, secondary poisoning from rodenticide, disease from eating pigeons with frounce, and predation by feral cats.

Rapid communication is critical when a fledgling hawk (eyas) or an adult needs human intervention. In May 2009, NYC Audubon facilitated the formation of a small rapid exchange network, linking 13 people who actively engage in observing, protecting, and fielding reports about raptors nesting throughout the city. This nimble team includes representatives from raptor watchers, NYC Audubon, rehabilitators, and Urban Park Rangers. When a raptor is in trouble, the alert goes out, and we do the best we can to save the bird. A recent example was a kestrel fledgling that, too young to get any altitude, wound up sitting on a bench in the New York Restoration Project's Herb Garden in Harlem. The word went out, and one of our network members was at the scene within the hour. The young kestrel was moved to a nearby rooftop and reunited with its mother and sibling. Quick action led to a happy resolution.

Some of the raptor rescue events from this year included the following: a single female red-tail fledged two young in early June at Riverside Park. Park rangers provisioned her extra food while she was rearing her young alone. Her mate died from having consumed a rat poisoned with brodifacoum.

A pair of red-tailed hawks became famous after having nested on the window ledge on the twelfth floor of the Bobst Library in Washington Square Park—just outside the office of the NYU President. The pair began nesting in March, successfully hatching one of three eggs on May 6, while all of New York City watched closely via the *NY Times* webcam. There were suspected problems with the female's leg, and plans had been made to catch and treat her. But the team decided not to interfere, and the eyas fledged successfully.

Pale Male, easily New York City's most famous bird, had two young this year at his Fifth Avenue nest. This is the first time that he (with a new mate) has produced viable eggs since the nest was removed and the nesting structure replaced in 2005.

Many thanks to the dedicated birders, rehabilitators, New York City departments of Parks and Recreation and Environmental Protection, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and concerned citizens who alert us to hawks in distress and who help provide support.

VOLUNTEER!



Make a difference for New York City's wildlife! Volunteers help NYC Audubon achieve its mission in countless ways, in the field and office. To learn how you can help, sign up for our September Volunteer Orientation by contacting the office at (212) 691-7483 or volunteer@nycaudubon.org.

TOGETHERGREEN VOLUNTEER DAYS

NYC Audubon is holding a series of volunteer events this year

supported by TogetherGreen, an alliance between Audubon and Toyota.



We will be cleaning beaches, removing invasive plants, and planting native species. For more information or to sign up, please contact John Rowden at 212-691-7483 or jrowden@nycaudubon.org.

BEAUTIFY BROOKLYN'S PLUMB BEACH

Saturday, September 17,
10am-2pm

With American Littoral Society

Join us at Brooklyn's Plumb Beach, as part of the 26th Annual International Coastal Cleanup. In 2010, 9,235 volunteers cleaned and documented 186,582 pounds of debris along 397.5 miles of New York State's shoreline. We can do even more this year. Transportation from Manhattan provided.

BOTANIZE THE BRONX'S VAN CORTLANDT PARK

Saturday, October 22,
9:30am-2pm

With New York City Department
of Parks and Recreation

Meet at the Kelly Fields ball field on the western edge of Van Cortlandt Park, at Broadway and West 269th Street. As part of the Million Trees NYC initiative, we will plant 6,000 trees in one day to improve habitat for migratory and breeding birds.

With the exception of a Cadillac dealership that would be built on a parking lot adjacent to an existing Toys'R'Us, no retailers have committed to leasing the proposed commercial space. At the scoping meeting held in February 2011, State Senator Carl Kruger, who was indicted in March on charges of corruption and taking bribes from developers, supported the project with the caveat that no big box stores be permitted. He deemed a classy retailer, such as Lord and Taylor, more acceptable, although Kings County Plaza Mall is half a mile away and features Macy's, Sears, The Gap, Armani Exchange, Nine West, and many other stores.

NYC Audubon and other environmental groups, residents, local business people, and concerned citizens have spoken out against the plan. New York City's designation of Four Sparrow Marsh as "Forever Wild" should be respected. There



Saltmarsh Sparrow

is no shortage of shopping centers in this area of Brooklyn, but wild areas are endangered.

WELCOME ABOARD! *Carol Peace Robins*

NYC Audubon is pleased to introduce two new Board Members: Larry Levine and Brenda Torres-Barreto.

Larry is a Senior Attorney for National Resources Defense Council's (NRDC) Water Program where he specializes in water quality. He's justly proud of one of NRDC's recent achievements: a commitment from New York City to significantly reduce nitrogen pollution in Jamaica Bay, among the most nitrogen-polluted water bodies in the world—and further, to allocate funds for large-scale marsh restoration. These efforts couldn't be more in sync with the goals of NYC Audubon. A Florida native and graduate of Tulane University and Yale Law School, Larry's early environmental memories include adopting a whale for Greenpeace in grade school and working on behalf of Everglades conservation in high school. He's very excited about this new opportunity to contribute.

To Brenda we should really say, "Welcome back," as she has previously served on the Board. She currently works for El Puente, a community human rights organization, where she coordinates a sustainability initiative for the south side of Williamsburg in Brooklyn, known as Los Sures. This historically Latino neighborhood is a perfect fit for Brenda, who was raised in Puerto Rico. The initiative's projects range from creating a demonstration green roof and community garden to training residents in retrofitting their buildings for energy efficiency. Educated at the University of Puerto Rico, Yale University, and Stanford University, she hopes to introduce her two young children to the world of birds. She's happy to be back on the Board.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO PHOTOGRAPHERS

JOIN THE NEW NYC AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB!

Wednesday, September 14, 6:30-8:30pm

Wednesday, October 12, 6:30-8:30pm

Wednesday, November 9, 6:30-8:30pm

We are happy to announce the revival of a long-standing tradition here at NYC Audubon: Photography Club! Skilled bird and nature photographers David Speiser and Lloyd Spitalnik have an exciting series of fall meetings planned for both beginning and more experienced photographers. Our first meeting, "I've Taken Photos... Now what do I do?" will allow us to get to know one another, share our work, and discuss file transfer and management. Later meetings will address equipment and technique, shorebirds, plumages of fall migrants, and more. Registration required. Please contact Tod Winston at 212-691-7483 or twinston@nycaudubon.org for more information. \$6 per meeting, or \$45 for the year (\$35 members)

StarrTrips

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY,
AND SATURDAY

MORNINGS IN CENTRAL PARK

Saturday, August 20-Saturday, October 29

Mondays and Wednesdays: Meet at 7:30am sharp at 81st & Central Park West (SE corner)

Tuesdays: Meet at 9am sharp at 103rd & Central Park West (parkside).

Saturdays: Meet at 7:30am sharp at 103rd & Central Park West (parkside).

Join Starr Saphir for bird-watching in Central Park. All StarrTrips are non-smoking. No registration necessary. For more information, call Starr at 917-306-3808. \$8 (\$4 for full-time students)

PRALL'S ISLAND REDUX

Suzanne Charlé

If Alexander Summers has his way, in coming years herons and egrets will once again nest on Prall's Island. Summers, who is project manager in charge of restoration of the habitat on Prall's Island for the Natural Resources Group of New York City Parks and Recreation, has been working on the island, in Arthur Kill between New Jersey's "Chemical Coast" and Staten Island's Saw Mill Creek Marsh, since 1999.

He explains that the island—88 acres of marshes, meadows, grasslands, and upland forest—once attracted wading birds: ibis, black-crowned and yellow-crowned night-herons, and egrets. In 1980, longshoreman and Staten Island resident Scotty Jenkins notified NYC Audubon that egrets were nesting on the island. And in 1985, Mayor Ed Koch signed an agreement making Prall's Island the first urban wildlife refuge in Audubon history, and NYC Audubon's scientific monitoring project, the Harbor Herons program, was launched. By 1989, 800 pairs of herons were nesting on the island—so many that *National Geographic* magazine ran a story on the island. But in 1990-91, an Exxon oil pipeline burst in the Arthur Kill, and the population started to decline: 200 adult pairs in 1996 to about 27 in 2000. No herons have been recorded as nesting on the island since 2005.

No one knows for certain why the herons left, but there are a number of theories. One is that pollution contaminated the herons' food supply. Another is that after the garbage dump at the Fresh Kills Landfill was closed, predators looking elsewhere for food started poaching the herons' nests. Yet another has to do with vegetation

dynamics: herons tend to prefer short, dense, twiggy trees over the tall, open trees (exotic invasives all) that dominate the highland part of the island. Or it could be all of the above, or the natural movements of heron colonies.

Whatever the reasons, Summers and his crew are attempting to recreate an environment that will be attractive to the harbor herons. To that end, they took GPS surveys in 2000/01 and 2010 of every tree, bush, and nest, in addition to mapping terrain and soil. In August 2011 they began removing exotic species that are unsuitable as heron nesting habitat.

Once the invasives (glossy buckthorn and over 1,400 ailanthus) have been cleared, Summers will reintroduce trees that will be suitable to herons' nesting habits (most herons nests were found in trees ranging from 7 to 12 meters high, according to Summers' 2000/001 study.) This will include two species of hybrid oaks, *Quercus prinoides* and *Quercus marilandica* purchased from a Staten Island native plant center.

Will the herons return? It's anyone's guess, but NYC Audubon's Director of Conservation and Science Susan Elbin is hopeful: "Great egrets were recently sighted foraging near Prall's. That could mean they're checking out the island."

Even if the herons don't immediately return, the restoration will help other species: Migratory warblers have been seen on the island, as well as American woodcocks and cedar waxwings, and secretive marsh birds like the clapper rail.

2011 LECTURE SERIES

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

IN THE PINK: FLAMINGO CONSERVATION IN THE AMERICAS

By Felicity Arengo, American Museum of Natural History

Wednesday, September 21, 6pm

Of six flamingo species worldwide, three live in high, remote wetlands of the Andes Mountains. For over ten years, Felicity Arengo has been studying two of these species, Andean and James' flamingos. Through satellite telemetry research, she has made unexpected discoveries about the seasonal movements and habitat use of these elusive, beautiful birds. She will share tales of her adventures high in the Andes and reveal how her data can help preserve habitat crucial to the flamingos' future survival.

ON THE SHORES OF JAMAICA BAY: WHAT HAVE THREE YEARS OF MONITORING SHOWN US?

By John Rowden, NYC Audubon

Wednesday, November 16, 6pm

Each spring, tens of thousands of horseshoe crabs repeat an ancient ritual on New York City's beaches by coming ashore to spawn. Many shorebird species depend on horseshoe crab eggs to fuel their long migration north, and since 2009 NYC Audubon has been monitoring crab and shorebird populations in Jamaica Bay. Rowden will share what has been learned about these species' use of the bay and what those data reveal about the importance of Jamaica Bay to humans and wildlife.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM FORAGING WADERS

by Susan Elbin

Wednesday, January 18, 2012, 6pm

AMERICAN BIRDING TODAY

by Jeff Gordon

Wednesday, March 14, 2012, 6pm

CLOUD FORESTS

by Rob Cahill

Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 6pm

NIGHT-MIGRATING BIRDS

by J. Alan Clark

Wednesday, June 13, 2012, 6pm

EVENTS AND ADVENTURES

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

- **VAN CORTLANDT BIRD WALKS, THE BRONX**
Saturdays, September 3 – November 26, 8-9:30am

Guide: **Andrew Baksh or Urban Park Rangers (first Saturday of the month) With the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy and NYC Department of Parks & Recreation**

Meet at Van Cortlandt Nature Center. Influential birders such as Roger Tory Peterson and Allan D. Cruickshank learned their craft in Van Cortlandt Park and these walks carry on the tradition. Participants will look for resident and migrant species and discuss a wide range of topics. For more information, please call 718-548-0912. No registration necessary. No limit. Free

- **FALL WARBLERS**
Wednesday, September 7, 6:30-8:30pm (class);
Sunday, September 11, 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 with expert Joe Giunta, and then enjoy a second session in the “classroom” of Central Park. Limited to 12. \$40

- **FALL BIRDING AT WAVE HILL, THE BRONX**
Sundays, September 11; October 9; November 13; 9:30-11:30am
Guide: **Gabriel Willow With Wave Hill**

Meet at the Perkins Visitor Center. Wave Hill’s setting overlooking the Hudson River flyway provides the perfect habitat for observing resident and migrating birds. Ages 10 and up welcome with an adult. Reservations recommended, online at www.wavehill.org, by calling 718-549-3200 x245 or at the Perkins Visitor Center. Severe weather cancels; for weather-related updates call 718-549-3200 x245 by 8am the day of the walk. Limited to 20. \$10 for Wave Hill or NYC Audubon members/\$18 non-members

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Members-only
BIRDS AND BOTANY WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

Tuesday, September 13, 7:30-9am

During fall migration, insectivorous songbirds switch to feeding on fruit in order to fuel their long journey south. Join NYC Audubon Executive Director Glenn Phillips in Central Park to look for fall migrants and the plants they depend on. Please call 212-691-7483 to register. Limited to 20. Free for NYC Audubon Members at the Student/Senior level and up

- **MORNING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK**
Wednesdays, September 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12, 19, 7:30-10:30am
Guide: **Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC**

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Birders of all levels can enjoy this series of six fun and educational walks, observing the diverse and ever-changing waves of migrants that stop over Central Park during fall migration. Limited to 15. \$110

- **EXPLORE THE BRONX RIVER BY ROWBOAT**
Saturday, September 17, 2-4pm
Guide: **Chrissy Word With Rocking the Boat**

Launch from Hunts Point Riverside Park and explore the Bronx River aboard a hand-built wooden boat, led by experienced rowers. The Bronx River is the city’s only true river and hosts herons, egrets, osprey, and belted kingfishers. Visit restoration sites and learn about the Bronx River’s ecosystem and history. Rowing optional! Limited to 20. \$35 for adults, \$25 for ages 18 and under

- **HOOK MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH, NY**
Sunday, September 18, 9am-4pm
Guide: **Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC**

Part of the Palisades Interstate Park system, Hook Mountain has commanding views of local

mountain ridges and the Hudson River. We hope to see migrating raptors, including broad-winged and red-shouldered hawks, bald eagles, accipiters, and falcons. Bring binoculars, lunch, and water. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 30. \$80

- **EVENING FALL MIGRATION WALKS IN CENTRAL PARK**
Tuesdays: September 20, 27; October 4, 11, 18; 5-6:30pm
Guide: **Gabriel Willow**

Meet at Central Park West and 72nd Street. Witness the spectacle of autumn migration on this five-walk series. Look for tanagers, warblers, and other migrants in the wilds of Central Park. Limited to 15. \$80

- **EXPLORE THE BIRDING GEMS OF STATEN ISLAND**
Sunday, September 25, 8am-3pm
Guide: **Cliff Hagen**

Visit some of the beautiful, bird-rich spots on Staten Island. We’ll look for migrating warblers and flycatchers along the streamside trail of Clove Lakes Park and then search for shorebirds and wading birds in Great Kills Park. Depending on time, we may make a third stop at Mount Loretto State Preserve. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 11. \$75

- **FALL BIRDING AT THE HUDSON RIVER MUSEUM, YONKERS**
Sunday, September 25, 9:30-11:30am

Guide: **Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC With Wave Hill**

Meet at the Hudson River Museum. This weekend, Wave Hill’s fall birding series migrates “upstate.” Join us on this family-friendly walk to observe hawks, falcons and more. Perfect for budding naturalists and birders ages 8 and up. Reservations recommended, online at www.wavehill.org, or by calling 718-549-3200 x245 or at the Perkins Visitor Center. Severe weather cancels. For weather-related updates call 718-549-3200 x245 by 8am the day of the walk. Limited to 20. \$10 for Wave Hill, NYC Audubon, and Hudson River Museum members/\$18 non-members

- **JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE**
Sunday, September 25, 4-7pm
Guides: **Don Riepe, Mickey Cohen With American Littoral Society**

Meet at Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. Enjoy a cruise aboard the 100-foot boat “Golden Sunshine.” Visit backwater marshes to see peregrine falcons, osprey, egrets, shorebirds, and more. Includes refreshments. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriepen@gmail.com. Limited to 140. \$45

- **BIRDING TOURS OF BRYANT PARK, MANHATTAN**
Wednesdays, September 28-October 26, 8-9am



Connecticut Warbler

©David Speiser

©David Speiser



Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at the Birding Tour Sign at the 42nd Street & 6th Avenue entrance to the park. Discover the surprising variety of birds that stop in Bryant Park during migration. No registration necessary. No Limit. Free

● **FALL MIGRANTS OF WOODLAWN CEMETERY, THE BRONX**

Saturday, October 1, 7-8:30am
Guides: Peter Joost, Joseph McManus

With Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery

Meet at the Jerome Avenue Entrance of Woodlawn Cemetery. Join us for a morning birdwalk on the lovely wooded grounds of Woodlawn Cemetery, home to one of the largest urban collections of trees in the U.S. Limited to 15. \$20

● **CANOE TRIP TO CONSTITUTION MARSH, NY**

Saturday, October 1, 11am-6pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Explore Constitution Marsh Audubon Sanctuary, a spectacular 271-acre tidal marsh outside Cold Spring, NY. Observe migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors up-close by canoe and enjoy a picnic lunch. Bring binoculars, water, lunch (plus clothes and shoes you don't mind getting wet). Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$90

● **FALL MIGRATION ON RANDALL'S ISLAND**

Sunday, October 2, 9am-12pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at the NW corner of 102nd Street and FDR Drive and walk across the foot bridge to Randall's Island, a prime spot during fall migration due to its location in the East River. As we bird, we'll explore recent restoration sites. Two miles of walking and some modest climbs. Limited to 20. \$20

● **MIGRATION ALONG THE BARRIER ISLANDS, LI**

Tuesday, October 4, 8am-4pm
Guide: Peter Mott

Look for migrating raptors and

songbirds as they stop to rest along Long Island's barrier islands. Long-time birder and naturalist Peter Mott will take us to some of the best spots in the vicinity of Jones Beach to find what surprises the north winds have brought us. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$40

Members-only FALL MIGRATION WALK IN PROSPECT PARK

Saturday, October 8, 8-10am

Brooklyn's Prospect Park provides vital stopover habitat for migrating birds. Join Steve Nanz to search for sparrows, raptors, and early winter species. Please call 212-691-7483 to register. Limited to 20. Free for NYC Audubon Members at the Student/Senior level and up

● **WINE TASTING AND BIRDING: VINEYARD TOUR ON THE NORTH SHORE, LONG ISLAND**

Saturday, October 8, 8am-5pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Combine two of life's greatest pleasures, wine and birding. First enjoy a morning hike along the pristine beaches and maritime forest of Orient Beach State Park, looking for migratory passerines and shorebirds. Then continue on to a vineyard tour and wine-tasting at Shinn Estate Vineyards, where you'll learn how sustainable viticulture can benefit birds. Bring binoculars and lunch. Must be 21 and over. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$110

● **RAPTOR MIGRATION AT JAMAICA BAY, QUEENS**

Sunday, October 9, 10am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society
 Meet at 10am at Building 11 in Fort Tilden. We'll hike to the hawk watch site to view falcons, hawks, ospreys, and other raptors and then along the dunes to look for song- and shorebirds. For more information, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriepe@gmail.com. No limit. Free

● **WAVE HILL RAPTOR DAY, THE BRONX**

Monday, October 10, 9:30am-4pm

Guides: John Rowden, Gabriel Willow, and others
With Wave Hill

Wave Hill takes flight as we celebrate birds of prey! Enjoy live raptor shows, bird walks, owl pellet dissections and more. Overlooking the Hudson River, Wave Hill is the perfect place to spot hawks, eagles, and falcons. See the full schedule of events at www.wavehill.org. No limit. Free



Merlin

● **ORNITHOLOGY 101: How Much Do You Really Know About Birds?**

Thursdays October 13, 20, 27, and November 3, 17, 6:30-8:30pm (classes);
Saturdays October 15, November 19 (trips)

Instructors: Susan Elbin, John Rowden

Join Director of Conservation Susan Elbin and Associate Director of Citizen Science John Rowden for this fantastic opportunity to study the flying marvels we call birds, in depth and in a small-class setting. Adapted from a university course, Ornithology 101 will provide a fascinating survey of bird evolution, biology, and behavior. Includes trips to Central Park and the Winter Waterfowl Workshop at Jamaica Bay. Limited

to 12. \$150 for course of 5 classes, 2 field trips, and transport to Jamaica Bay.

● **BIKING & BIRDING: G.W. BRIDGE/PALISADES PARK**

Saturday, October 15, 9am-4pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Meet at the Columbus Circle entrance to Central Park at 59th Street for birding and biking. We'll ride the west side bike route to the George Washington Bridge, and then cross into Palisades Park to look for hawks and other birds. The route will cover over 20 miles; riders have the option of taking public transport home from Washington Heights. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Limited to 15. \$36

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

Sunday, October 16, 9:15am-3pm

(Extreme inclement weather date: Sunday, October 23)

Guide: Gabriel Willow
With NYC Parks and the Greenbelt Conservancy

Meet at the Manhattan terminal of the S.I. Ferry and join us as we journey to Moses Mountain, which provides a panoramic view of Staten Island and points beyond. Atop Moses Mountain and along the way, we'll look for migrating hawks, warblers, and other songbirds. Includes refreshments at the Greenbelt Nature Center and transportation on Staten Island. Limited to 18. \$35

● **HAWK MOUNTAIN, PA**

Saturday, October 22, 8am-6pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow

Mid-October is the perfect time to visit Hawk Mountain, one of the premier hawk-watching spots in the East. Many raptors may be seen, including golden eagles, hawks, and falcons. The path to the hawk watch site is a 3/4-mile hike through lovely mountainous woodland. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Admission and transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$90

...continued on page 8

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

CAPE MAY FALL WEEKEND, NJ
Saturday, October 1, 9am - Sunday, October 2, 7pm
Guide: Joe Giunta, Happy Warblers LLC.

Cape May is one of the best birding venues in the United States, especially during fall migration. Visit the Cape May Hawk Watch twice to get a good variety of hawks. Also visit birding hotspots Higbee Beach, Cape May Point, Jake's Landing, and Nummy Island. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 10. \$300 (\$50 single supplement)

ASSATEAGUE/CHINCOTEAGUE WEEKEND, VA

Thursday, November 3, 9am - Sunday, November 6, 6pm
Guide: Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society
 A great wildlife weekend along the Virginia Coast. Includes three nights at the Refuge Inn, guided hikes, a bus tour of backwater flats, plus an "all-you-can-eat" seafood buffet. See wild ponies, sika deer, bald eagles, and many other species of wildlife. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 30. \$375 (\$150 single supplement)

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND: SEALS, SEA BIRDS AND SANDY BEACHES, LONG ISLAND, NY
Friday, January 6, 3pm - Sunday, January 8, 4pm

Guides: Mike Bottini, Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe

With American Littoral Society
 Visit Montauk during peak sea bird season and hike the beautiful "Walking Dunes," Hither Woods, Oyster Pond, and "Seal Haul-out" site. Includes lodging at the luxurious Manor House, most meals, evening programs, a star watch, and pickup at the LIRR station in Montauk. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 60. \$375 (\$120 single supplement)



Green Violet-ear Hummingbird

SPEND NEW YEAR'S EVE IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO!

Friday, December 30 - Sunday, January 8

Workshops: Mondays, December 12 and 19, 6:30-8:30pm

Guide: Gabriel Willow

Bring in the New Year in Trinidad & Tobago, the ultimate tropical birding destination! Spend a week at the world-renowned Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge, a 200-acre wildlife sanctuary in Trinidad's rain-forested Northern range, and at the charming Blue Waters Inn in Tobago. Travel with expert local guides to visit unique natural areas, including spectacular beaches, rainforests, and wetlands. See parrots and macaws, dozens of species of hummingbirds, toucans, trogons, kingfishers, and other exotic species such as the rare cave-dwelling oilbird and scarlet ibis. Two pre-trip workshops will prepare you to take full advantage of the trip. Includes double-occupancy lodging, meals, guided walks, and transportation within Trinidad. Limited to 15. \$2,995 (\$795 single room supplement). Please contact the office to learn more.

COSTA RICA: CARIBBEAN LOWLANDS AND CORDILLERA DE TALAMANCA

Saturday, January 21 - Saturday, January 28

Workshops: Tuesdays, January 10 and 17, 6:30-8:30pm

Guides: Glenn Phillips and Richard Garrigues

Join Executive Director Glenn

Phillips and Richard Garrigues, author of *Birds of Costa Rica*, for a tour of some of the most diverse regions of this birders' paradise. Our 2012 tour begins in the Caribbean Lowlands at world-class tropical rainforest research station La Selva—one of the areas of Costa Rica richest in endemic Birds, and home to the snowy cotinga, red-footed plumeleteer, and great potoo. We'll then wind our way up through the Talamanca Foothills, visiting the "hummingbird pools" of Turrialba, and spend our last days in lovely San Gerardo de Dota—home of the resplendent quetzal. Along the way, other likely sightings include scarlet macaw as well as trogons, toucans, aracarís, antshrikes, and much more. Includes two pre-trip workshops, lodging, local transportation, local guide, all meals, and all park fees. Please contact the office to learn more. Limited to 12. \$2,495 (\$350 single room supplement)

BELIZE: RUINS, REEFS AND RAINFOREST

[FEB-MAR DATES TK]

Guides: Carol Borneman, Don Riepe, Fermin Tzib

Belize is a small, English-speaking country with a great diversity of habitats and birdlife. Our trip will include visits to the Crooked Tree Swamp, Lamanai Ruins, Macal River rainforest, Jaguar Preserve and offshore islands. Our local guide, Fermin Tzib, is a Mayan Indian with great birding and wildlife skills. We'll travel by Toyota Coaster bus and expect to see over 250 species of birds including toucans, aracarís, laughing falcon, great potoo, spectacled owl and king vulture. Includes airfare, lodging, all meals, transportation, park fees, local guides, and three boat tours. For more information contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 15. \$3,595 (\$TKTK) single room supplement)

EVENTS AND

● **SPARROW ID WORKSHOP**
Wednesday, October 26, 6:30-8pm (class); Saturday, October 29, 9am-1pm (trip)

Instructor: Gabriel Willow

Sparrows are one of the most challenging groups of birds to identify, yet fascinating once they can be distinguished. Learn to identify those LBJs (little brown jobs) by learning behavior, field marks, and songs. Seven sparrow species were seen on last year's field trip, including field, swamp, savannah, white-crowned, and Lincoln's. Limited to 13. \$45

● **BEGINNING BIRDING**

Mondays, Nov. 7 and 14, 6:30-8:30pm (classes), and Saturdays, Nov. 12 and 19 (trips)

Instructor: Starr Saphir

Even if you've never picked up a pair of binoculars, you'll soon be identifying warblers, waterfowl, and more. Classes adapted to the interests of students; field trips visit Jamaica Bay and Central Park. Limited to 13. \$85

● **SNOW GEESE AND TUNDRA SWANS OF BRIGANTINE, NJ**
Sunday, November 13, 9:30am-4:30pm

Guide: Joe Giunta

Brigantine is one of the east coast's premier sites for waterbirds, offering a diversity of species and panoramic views. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Limited to 12. \$85

Members-only
NOVEMBER MEMBER WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

Sunday, November 13, 8-10am
 NYC Audubon Board President Harry Maas will lead us through Central Park searching for waterfowl and other surprises. Please call 212-691-7483 to register. Limited to 20. Free for NYC Audubon Members at the Student/Senior level and up

ADVENTURES (CONTINUED)

© David Spiser



Savannah Sparrow

- **WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP AT JAMAICA BAY**
Saturday, November 19, 10am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe
With Gateway National Recreation Area

Meet at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center for a slide ID program and walk to look for wintering waterfowl. Learn about their behavior, biology, and identification. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 25. Free.

- **VAN TRIP TO THE WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP AT JAMAICA BAY (SEE ABOVE)**
Saturday, November 19, 9am
Register for our van trip to the Winter Waterfowl Workshop, and get to Jamaica Bay the easy way! Transport by passenger van. Limited to 12. \$20

- **DUCKS AND RAPTORS AT PELHAM BAY PARK, THE BRONX**
Saturday, December 3, 9am-3pm
Guide: Gabriel Willow
Come explore the lovely coves and rocky outcroppings of Pelham Bay Park, looking for the wintering ducks, migrating raptors, and more. Bring lunch, water, and binoculars. Transport by passenger van included. Limited to 12. \$75

- **WINTER BIRDS & SURVIVAL AT JAMAICA BAY**
Sunday, December 11, 10am-1pm
Guide: Don Riepe
With Gateway National Recreation Area
Meet at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and hike around the West Pond, gardens, and woods. Learn how plants and animals adapt to winter, and look for waterfowl, owls, and more. To register, contact Don Riepe at 718-318-9344 or donriep@gmail.com. Limited to 25. Free

- **PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: WINTER WATERFOWL, LI**
Sunday, December 18, 8am-12pm
Instructor: Lloyd Spitalnik
Meet at Mill Pond in Bellmore, Long Island. Photographer Lloyd Spitalnik will teach you how to think like a professional, as he takes you to his favorite spots to photograph ducks, loons, grebes, and eider. Learn how shutter speed, aperture and ISO all work in conjunction to get proper exposure. All skill levels welcome. Limited to 8. \$70

- **TO REGISTER FOR ALL NYC AUDUBON EVENTS and for more information, visit www.nyc Audubon.org or call 212-691-7483 unless otherwise specified.**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Classes meet at 71 West 23rd Street, Suite 1523.**
- **Contributing Members (Student/Senior level and up) receive a 10% discount on most local trips and classes. See membership form on page 11.**
- **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.**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Matthew Rymkiewicz

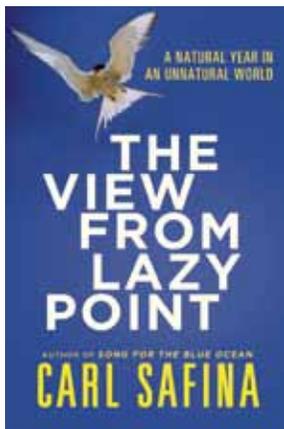
When I began birding, and had yet to acquaint myself with the finer points of gull identification, distinguishing between the dozens of herring and ring-billed gulls on the Central Park Reservoir was difficult, especially from a distance. And those distances were very long indeed with my beginner's bargain-basement binoculars. But in their midst, yet slightly set apart, I could usually find an adult great black-backed gull. This was a gull even I could ID with ease and add to the day's list. Given the bird's massive size (it's the largest gull in the world, bigger than the herring and dwarfing the ring-billed) and structure (erect and ponderous) it stood apart. And then there's the black back, or mantle. It was the perfect beginner's bird: guilelessly named, easy to spot, and unique.

In the years since, while adding the great black-backed gull to many more day lists, I've learned there's something else which makes this bird special. Like other gulls common to the region, the great black-backed is an opportunistic feeder, taking advantage of the bounty of human refuse New York City offers. And also like them, a large part of its diet is composed of fish, shellfish, and insects. But the great black-backed also has quite an appetite for avian or terrestrial prey smaller than itself. Lacking a raptor's tools, it employs its size and brute strength to great effectiveness. Several times I have witnessed one subduing then feasting on an insufficiently wary ruddy duck. Or American coot. Or a Canada gosling.

So now, when I see a great black-backed gull standing or swimming by itself, I understand why the other birds around give a wide berth. Me, I quickly check it off and look elsewhere in hopes of avoiding an unpleasant scene.

© Abby McBride





The View from Lazy Point
By Carl Safina
(Henry Holt & Co., 2011)

For Carl Safina, being depressed about the state of the world is a luxury.

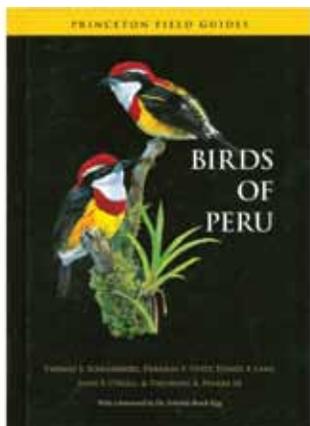
In *The View From Lazy Point*, a book that is part meditation on the collision between

Western philosophy and nature and part prescription for a new way of thought about our place on this planet, he takes us through a calendar year spent discovering the resilience of the natural world and perils that loom both near and far. Safina travels the globe, regularly circling back to his cottage on Lazy Point in Amagansett, Long Island. Lazy Point is the hub of the story, and a device through which, along with a reappearing ruddy turnstone, he illustrates the interconnectedness of nature.

And as with nature, so too with the human world. Safina argues that human rights and environmental rights are intertwined and that there is no duality between how we treat our surroundings and how we progress as a society. We cannot work to preserve our planet and ignore social justice. By elevating human dignity we create a better world for all. In his words, an “expanding circle of compassion” is what will preserve a viable planet for our civilization.

The author, originally a scientist by trade, concludes that the scientific discoveries of the past 150 years have led us to a point where we can forecast with certainty the outcome of unchecked consumption, corporate rapacity, and population growth. And while he is not the first to posit that an enlightened human mindset will change the world, Safina’s perspective places humankind in a larger context, inside of the natural world, from which it must divine solutions for sustainability and survival.

Safina is well-versed in all the subjects he dives into, but it is his prose that makes the book special. He conveys a sober hopefulness, delivered in a relaxed, often playful manner that becomes occasionally pointed but never polemical. Safina keeps you turning pages as he delivers bad news, yes, but he does so in a way that makes you want to join him in believing there can be better things ahead. MR



Birds of Peru
Revised and Updated Edition
By Thomas Schulenberg, Douglas F. Stotz, Daniel F. Lane, John P. O’Neill, and Theodore A. Parker III
(Princeton University Press, 2010)

In 2008, I made a much-anticipated trip to Peru, toting a newly acquired guide, *Birds of Peru*. On the two-week trip, six of us were accompanied by two seasoned guides, one a local. I saw, not including a number of imperfectly glimpsed birds I didn’t count, some 534 species, too many to absorb in such a short period. Really, there was often not time to look anything up; we needed our two experts. Indeed, the guides found three species either one or the other had never seen. (A highlight: observing the face of one guide, the local, as the other, a tall, exuberant Frenchman to whom he had just shown a new bird, planted a kiss on the top of his head.) That’s what it can be like birding in Peru, a country with more birds than any other, one-fifth of all the world’s species.

Only later, with more time, did I come

to appreciate this beautifully produced book, a huge step in making Peru’s birds accessible. First, it’s sensibly arranged—the plates (which include subspecies and morphs) are set on the page opposite descriptions and range maps. The plates are handsome, exceptional—some of the finest by New York’s own Dale Dyer, one of the principal artists. The contributors include several leading neotropical ornithologists, including the late, legendary Ted Parker. I can’t say it’s easy to carry around, but it’s certainly no worse than some U.S. guides, only heavier. Today, the Revised and Updated Edition of 2010, which soon followed the 2007 edition I used, has three new plates, with twenty-five additional species, making a total of 1817. For birding Peru, this is essential equipment. PJ

News & Notes

BIRD-SAFE GLASS

Every year, all over the world billions of birds die in collisions with building glass. So it is with great anticipation that Eckelt Glass, in collaboration with ornithologists and the Vienna Environmental Agency, launched "4Bird," the latest innovation in bird-safe glass. Since 1998 Eckelt has been working to achieve bird safety where other methods have failed. 4Bird complies with 2010 Austrian legislation that requires 90% of birds to avoid the glass in tunnel testing. 4bird imprints permanent markings on fully tempered safety glass, so it may be used in any construction application and is up to 94% transparent. For more information please visit: <http://www.eckelt.at/en/produkte/sicherheit/4bird/index.aspx>.

GREAT URBAN PARK

The Blue Ribbon Panel for Floyd Bennett Field has released a report of its recommendations for this vast open space in Brooklyn. Floyd Bennett Field consists of 1440 acres and is part of Gateway National Recreation Area; together, the two areas may very well become an urban national park. Ecological restoration, particularly of grasslands, is one of the five main priorities identified by the panel. However, some plans, such as expanding the campground, may encroach on these areas. NYC Audubon will continue to advocate for bird-friendly native habitat at Floyd Bennett Field and will keep you informed as plans develop.

POUCH CAMP UPDATE

In 2009, the Greater New York Council Boy Scouts of America (GNYC) announced intentions to sell a portion of the 143-acre William H. Pouch Scout Camp to developers. Since that time, NYC Audubon has been supportive of local efforts to preserve this open space in the Staten Island Greenbelt. Good news came on July 06, 2011 with the involvement of The Trust for Public Land (TPL). TPL announced a two-phase plan to raise \$17.5 million and place a total 91 acres under conservation easement. "The permanent preservation of Pouch Camp as described in the agreement is contingent upon achieving the conservation funding," according to the press release. We remain optimistic. Ellen Pratt, a member of the Committee to Save Pouch Camp and the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, called the deal "a triumph for Staten Island and for New York City."

NYC AUDUBON BOARD SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

NYC Audubon is seeking nominations to its Board of Directors for two-year terms beginning in January 2012. If you are a member of NYC Audubon at the Student/Senior level and up, you are eligible to submit a nomination. Please submit your suggestions to David Speiser, chair of the Nominating Committee, at nominations@nycaudubon.org.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bequests of any size can help ensure that NYC Audubon will protect wild birds and habitat in the five boroughs of New York City for generations to come. Your generosity can live on through a bequest by will.

NYC Audubon is honored to receive gifts from the following Estates in 2011:

- The Estate of Hazel Roy
- The Estate of Esther Morse
- The Estate of Mary Brown
- The Estate of James Edward Jacobs

A bequest 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."

For more information about including NYC Audubon in your estate plans, please complete and mail this reply form to New York City Audubon or call Executive Director Glenn Phillips at 212-691-7483.

I would like to know more about how I can include New York City Audubon, Inc. in my will and estate plans. Please send me information about:

- How to include New York City Audubon in my will.
- I would like you to know that I have already provided for New York City Audubon Society, Inc. in my will.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mail to: New York City Audubon
71 W. 23rd Street, Suite 1523
New York, NY 10010

THE FALL ROOST BENEFIT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2011, 6-9PM
CENTRAL PARK BOATHOUSE



Join NYC Audubon to celebrate more than 30 years of successful environmental conservation work at the seventh annual **Fall Roost**. This year NYC Audubon will honor three conservationists for their outstanding contributions on behalf of the city's birds: **George J. Mullen, Jr., Peter Joost, and Maria Torres**.

Mr. Mullen, Senior Consultant, Trust Marketing, at Fiduciary Trust Company International and a long-time advisor of NYC Audubon, is a founding member of the Bird-Safe Glass Foundation, former President of New Jersey Audubon and a current board member, Life Trustee of Manomet Center for Conservation, and regular Central Park birder. **Mr. Joost**, educator at New York's St. Bernard's School and NYC Audubon board member for two decades, has worked tirelessly to protect birds and the environment in New York City as well as in

Ecuador by engaging birders of all ages through his writing and teaching. **Ms. Torres**, President and Chief Operations Officer, as well as founder of The Point Community Development Corporation, a non-profit organization dedicated to youth development and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx, was instrumental in securing the acquisition of South Brother Island, site of one of the city's largest heron nesting colonies, and recently acquired as a sanctuary for birds.

Proceeds from the Fall Roost support NYC Audubon's work in environmental education, conservation and advocacy. The evening will begin with a cocktail reception and silent auction, followed by a seated dinner. Tickets start at \$350. For tickets or more information, please contact Aileen Ruddy at 212-717-9423 or aruddy@nycaudubon.org.

DATED MATERIAL: Fall 2011 Newsletter

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