

# The Meadowlark



The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Vol. XXX, No. 4  
March/April 2003

## From the President

June Summers

Have you ever wondered how much it cost us as a society to lose a plant or animal species or to lose an ecosystem? I have. The answer for the loss of a species is, immeasurable. It is very difficult to access the dollar value of a piece of biodiversity.

The cost of recovering an endangered or extirpated species can be calculated. From the mid 1970's well into the 1980's the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) carried out a program to reinstate the North American Bald Eagle. The DEC flew 196 young eagles from Alaska to New York. These birds were raised in hacking cages at Montezuma and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuges and released. Today there are over 60 bald eagle nests in New York State, up from only one nest in the 1970's. The NYSDEC bald eagle recovery project total cost was \$500,000.

In 1995 the New York River Otter Project started releasing North American River Otters in streams, wetlands and lakes throughout Central and Western New York State to reintroduce this extirpated species. When the release phase of the project was finished in the year 2000, 279 river otters had been released at a cost of over \$300,000.

In the late 1970's the Peregrine Falcon had been extirpated

from the East Coast of Canada and the USA because of the pesticide DDT. Recovery programs were started in the US and Canada. Thousands of hours of labor and probably a million dollars or more went into these recovery programs. Today they thrive at the top of skyscrapers in cities and are found nesting in the wild on the East Coast of North America.

"What does it cost to lose an ecosystem?" was a more is a more difficult question to answer. I found the answer to this question on page 15 of the December Audubon Magazine. "Green Makes Cents," an article on economics reviews a new study and a new book. The new study was conducted by Dan Janzen, an ecologist with the University of Pennsylvania and Robert Costanza, an ecological economist at the University of Vermont. They looked at hundreds of case studies from four continents, crunched the numbers, and found that preserving wild areas worldwide would save 100 times what those areas cost to maintain. Financial economists gauge economic activity in terms of gross national product, ignoring ecosystem services such as clean air, clean water, and flood control which we all benefit from. Take a look at the article and find out more about this study.

The new book mentioned in the article is *The New Economy of Nature* by Gretchen Daily, ecologist at Stanford University, and journalist Katherine Ellison. One example mentioned in their book is the effort made to stop pollution-causing development in a 2,000 square mile watershed that supplies New York City's drinking water. New York City officials invested \$1.5 billion to stop the development as opposed to the \$6 million to build a filtration plant and on-going funds to operate it.

We need more of these studies. Politicians listen when you talk about the economics of a situation.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous bird feeder and bird food donations from Nancy Strong, and Wayside Nursery for our Great Backyard Bird Count classroom project.

Thank you to Patricia Nash and Terry Kozakiewicz and for their artistic contributions for the plaque presented to Marcel Gahbauer along with the nest box on behalf of Canadian Peregrine Foundation back in October.

# Programs

## MARCH

7:30 pm Wed., March 26, 2003  
Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs  
Meeting Room  
2300 Elmwood Ave., Brighton

## PENGUIN RESCUE!

As we look forward to the beginning of spring, thoughts of penguins, which successfully thrive in a habitat of ice, snow, and frigid waters, are probably the last thing on our minds. However, various species of penguins do live in places other than the Antarctic region...places such as New Zealand, Australia, the Galapagos Islands, and South Africa. Penguins in South Africa were threatened by a large oil spill a couple years ago and volunteers from around the globe rushed to their rescue in efforts to help preserve the species.

Mr. Chris Ruedin, who works at the Seneca Park Zoo, was one of the people who volunteered to go to South Africa to help with the rescue efforts. He has captured the excitement of that project in a slide presentation. This heart touching story is one that will warm each and every one of us regardless of the outside temperature that evening.

## APRIL

7:30 pm Wed., April 23, 2003  
Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs  
Meeting Room  
2300 Elmwood Ave., Brighton

## AMPHIBIANS

As the warm spring weather continues to wake the earth's plants and animals and spring peepers sing their choral tune, a lesson in local amphibian identification seems appropriate. Professor Martha Zettel from the University of Rochester, who spoke to us a number of years ago on the topic of bats, has agreed to share her knowledge of local amphibians with us. Professor Zettel has made many long-term observations of salamanders and frogs that live in the vernal ponds on her property. Her talk will be limited to about 10 local species out of the more than 3000 species of amphibians in the world today. Please join us to learn more about these creatures that help keep down the insect population, provide food for herons and some of our other feathered friends, and contrast the life style changes of the insect phylum with their own form of metamorphosis in appearance and locomotion.

## Birdathon 2003

Here is one of the easiest ways that you can help Genesee Valley Audubon continue its mission of education and conservation. Please consider becoming a Birdathon participant and sponsor. If you are currently participating in Birdathon on the national level, won't you please reconsider, and redirect your money to the local level. National Audubon has acknowledged that Birdathon is the number one way its local chapters raise funds; the regional chapters can keep all funds raised to use for their own programming. In the case of GVAS, 50% of the money is used locally, mostly to fund Audubon Adventures in over fifty classrooms. The remaining 50% is passed along to New York Audubon to be used on conservation efforts that benefit all New Yorkers.

This year Birdathon is being held on Saturday, May 17th. Prior to the date we ask participants to ask friends, family members, neighbors or coworkers to sponsor them. Sponsorship can be based on a flat donation or per species. Between midnight May 17<sup>th</sup> and May 18<sup>th</sup> teams or individuals are to go out and spot as many different species as they can. You can bird as many hours or as few minutes as you can spare. You can bird in the woods, in your neighborhood or even in your own backyard. If you are interested but unavailable that Saturday, then pick another day. The only rule is that the birding has to be done within a twenty-four hour period. After May 17<sup>th</sup> collect from your sponsors. It's that simple. T-shirts will be awarded to the individual and the team with the highest total raised.

For more information, pledge cards, sponsor sheets or a field list, or if you would like to make a pledge or join a team, please call Loretta Morrell at 338-3683 or Marilyn Marino at 235-3560.

## Bluebird Trails—Cleaning and Preparations

### Black Creek Park

Saturday, March 1, 2003, 10 AM

Union Street entrance/ turn right and park near new lodge.

Wear warm "work" clothing; bring work gloves, screw drivers (Phillips and flat)

Maybe we'll even see a bluebird or two!!!

Call Carolyn Emerson for information (585)

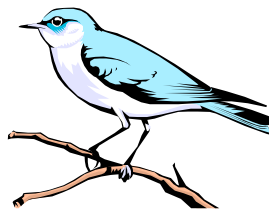
889-1887

### Northampton Park

Saturday, March 1, 2003, 12 noon

Meet at the Hubbell Rd. parking lot by the ski slope, on the west side. Wear warm clothing.

Call Pat Rauber for information (585) 589-0071.



# Field Trips

## Two Nature Walks

Join GVAS for a nature walk and a chance to hand-feed Chickadees and possibly Nuthatches and Tufted Titmice at Mendon Ponds Park. GVAS will be a part of the Nordic Winter Fest on Sunday February 16th at 11:00 am to Noon. The second hike is Saturday, March 8th from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

We meet at the Nature Center parking lot located on Pond Road off Clover Street. For more information or directions, contact Loretta Morrell at 338-3683 (5:00 pm -9:00 pm). Wear warm layers and winter boots. Free. Donations welcome.

## Mendon Ponds Nature Hike

By Loretta Morrell

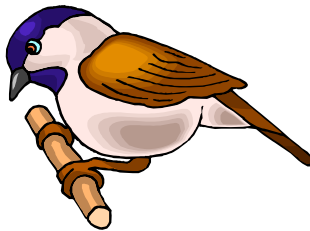
The forecast for our morning of feeding Chickadees was grim. The weathermen were talking bitter wind chill factors. When the hike began at 9:00 am I was amazed to see that 11 adults, some with children, had ventured out to join us. I knew that the frigid temperatures would mean very hungry birds.

Unfortunately, the cold and the lack of immediate response proved too much for the children, and after less than an hour their parents were forced to retreat. I hope that on their way out they gave it one more shot, and were rewarded with success. Those of us who stuck it out were granted a rich morning of winter birds. Yes, the chickadees finally arrived, and thrilled those who were hand-feeding them. With the Black-capped Chickadees were many other species. All in all, before the end of the two-hour hike we encountered a Red-bellied Woodpecker, Slate-colored Juncos, Northern Cardinals,

## Woodcock Walk

Thursday, May 1 at 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm.

Not only is the Woodcock an unusual looking bird, it also has a very interesting courtship display. This courtship display includes the male spiraling up to a considerable height, circling, and then plummeting back to earth, calling as he descends. We will meet in the Greece Olympia High School parking lot at 1139 Maiden Lane, and stroll through the woods on our way to the field where the woodcock's courtship, the timberdoodle dance, has been previously observed. Please wear long pants and sturdy walking shoes. Conditions may be wet. Free. Donations appreciated.



White Breasted Nuthatch, American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Blue Jays, Canada Geese and Golden-crowned Kinglets. The thrill of the morning for several of us was that four Tufted Titmice decided that we were friendly and hand-fed. After having the nearly weightless Black-capped Chickadees perch on my hand, a Tufted Titmouse felt like a behemoth. Besides the variety of birds there were several deer sightings as well as many interesting tracks in the snow to be studied and deciphered. We saw evidence of fox, rabbits, squirrel, crows, and deer just in their footprints.

I must say I was grateful for my

## First Sunday Hikes

Come join other outdoor (and bird) enthusiasts as we explore two Important Bird Areas (IBA's) within the Rochester city limits. An IBA is a site that is essential for sustaining naturally occurring populations of bird species as designated by National Audubon Society with a goal to protect and manage those sites. Highland and Cobb's Hill are the parks that we have decided to explore for 2003. The hikes are slow-paced but moderately strenuous due to hills and will last about 2 hours. Wear boots and dress for the weather. For the Highland hikes, we will meet at the Conservatory by the reservoir. For the Cobb's Hill hikes, we will meet in the parking lot near the intersection of Culver Road and Norris Drive. For more information, call June Summers at (585) 865-6047 weekdays 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

1 <sup>st</sup> Sundays	Time	Park
February 3	3 p.m.	Cobb's Hill
March 3	3 p.m.	Highland
April 7	7 a.m.	Cobb's Hill
May 5	7 a.m.	Highland

four layers of clothes, warm boots, and three pairs of socks, but I was remembering the days not too many winters ago when I would never have considered venturing outside other than to clean off my car. I am very grateful that a friend of mine and I decided we were going to learn to enjoy winter. I learned over that four-year period how important it is to invest in good outdoor gear. Now, I can tolerate pretty much of what upstate New York weather can throw our way. Thank you, Joni, for teaching me that there is a fourth season.

## *Have you heard....*

About the Nature Center at Mt. Morris Dam near Letchworth State Park?

Recently, Genesee Valley Audubon Society was given a tremendous opportunity. Working with Buffalo Audubon Society (BAS) and the Army Corp of Engineers, we are in the process of creating a Nature Center near the existing Mt. Morris Visitor's Center. *Your assistance with this project is not only requested, but required for its success.*

Preparation of the existing house for the nature center will be completed by the Army Corp of Engineers. In the future, they are also interested in creating a wetlands area behind the building.

Various startup and maintenance costs will need to be covered by both Audubon societies. Some items that we will need to cover include building utilities, phone service with answering machine, exhibits, education programs and salaries.

It is for this reason that we are asking for your financial donation at this time.

This area has great potential for successful growth. While the Visitor's Center attracts over 10,000 people annually, this area also offers nearby places for birding. In addition, educational opportunities for programs concerning the environment can take place directly in the environment or in the nature center itself.

**We look forward to seeing you soon at this Nature Center – Your Nature Center.**

### **Donation form – Nature Center at Mt. Morris Dam**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the *Nature Center at Mt. Morris Dam.*

Please make checks payable to: Genesee Valley Audubon Society

-----  
Please mail this donation form along  
with your check to the GVAS treasurer



Your receipt of donation to Genesee Valley Audubon Society: Check # _____ Amount \$ _____ Date Sent: _____	GENESEE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY C/O WILLIAM GRUENBAUM 1 TULLY LANE ROCHESTER NY 14626
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## International Migratory Bird Day

Genesee Valley Audubon Society has tried to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) since the inception of it in 1993. For the past two years we have celebrated IMBD with the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) at the Kaiser-Manitou Banding Station. This year BBBO is leading the way and we're "figgering on biggering," to quote the Once-ler in Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*. David Semple and Ed McCrea of BBBO have organized a coalition of groups called the Bird Coalition of Rochester or BirdCOR. Members of this group of course include BBBO and GVAS, other members include but are not limited to the following: Braddock Bay Raptor Research, Genesee Land Trust, Genesee Ornithological Society, Iroquois and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuges, New York Sea Grant, and the Seneca Park Zoo. We could use your help. We need monetary donations to print brochures and other information. We also need bodies, volunteers to man the GVAS booth, conduct birding field trips, and many other tasks.

This year the IMBD theme is "Catalysts for Conservation." Since the late 1800's small groups of people have acted to change the social norm to protect birds. Wild birds were sold for

food in restaurants and markets. They were harvested for their skin and feathers to supply the millinery (hat making) trade. In 1886, American Museum of Natural History ornithologist Frank Chapman surveyed ladies' hats during two walks in New York City and discovered the bodies or body parts of wild birds on 542 out of 700 hats. That same year the National Audubon Society was formed. Since that time a number of laws have been passed to protect birds, including the 1903 designation of Pelican Island, Florida, as the first National Wildlife Refuge by President Theodore Roosevelt and the banning of the use of the pesticide DDT in 1972.

BirdCOR is putting together a bang-up festival for your enjoyment. On May 10th at Braddock Bay Park BirdCOR is organizing, birding walks, talks, banding demonstrations and more. We will have booths for artists, woodcarvers, and bird-related merchandise. You will find information on what to plant to attract birds and how to care for your lawn in an environmentally friendly way.

Mark your calendar for IMBD, May 10<sup>th</sup>, and call me if you would like to volunteer or donate: June Summers (585) 865-6047.

## Audubon Camp

Have you considered a camp adventure for your teenager that will help him or her to learn how to appreciate the natural world? Audubon Camp at Hog Island—Maine has several great programs to offer. These programs offer both educational and recreational opportunities. Genesee Valley Audubon Society has one partial scholarship to offer. Interested? Contact June Summers at 865-6047 between 8:00am – 6pm. There are adult and family programs also available. Check it out on their website, <http://maineaudubon.org/programs/camps/hogisle.html>

### Girl Scouts for Teens

(July 13-19) This week-long Girl Scout program is for registered Scouts age 14 or older. Experience the thrill of adventure in an ocean environment, island hopping, kayaking, and birding. Audubon staff will guide you through this extraordinary week of activities, exploration and fun. Cost: \$700

### Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens aged 14 to 17

(June 29-July 5) This popular session advised by Kenn Kaufman is designed to provide a small group with opportunities to experience Audubon's bird fieldwork. Work alongside Maine Audubon biologists as they monitor endangered Piping Plovers on their breeding grounds. Venture out to a seabird island with Project Puffin to learn more about their conservation and restoration methods. Learn field identification tips, birdsong recognition, conservation practices, and more from nationally known ornitholo-

*(Continued on page 6)*

---

## Bird of Prey Week April 11-19, 2003



Celebrate the spring raptor migration at Braddock Bay Park in Greece, off the Lake Ontario State Pkwy. Live bird programs, hawk watch, nature walks, bird-related crafts for children, and much more. No admission

charge for any event. See a detailed schedule at [www.bbrr.org](http://www.bbrr.org).

Also at the same web site, see a schedule for the Saturday morning Hawk Walks and the Sunday morning Owl Prowls that continue every weekend throughout the spring migration.

# **GVAS-Sponsored Spring Birding Course: Masters of the Air**

Instructor: Brett M. Ewald, Lakeshore Nature Tours

One evening class and one field trip.

**The class**, held at the Greece Town Hall:  
Monday, April 14th (7:00-9:00 p.m.)

## **The field trip:**

Saturday, April 19th (9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.)



Western New York hosts an amazing raptor migration every spring along the southern shore of Lake Ontario. Braddock Bay, just to the northwest of Rochester, is the premier spot to observe this phenomenon in the Eastern United States. An average of over 50,000 hawks, eagles, falcons, vultures, harriers, and ospreys, involving over 15 species, are noted each year passing on their way to northern breeding grounds. Depending on weather, daily flights of over 1,000 raptors are not an uncommon occurrence. This class will help you identify, appreciate, and understand this amazing natural spectacle.

The evening class will focus on identification skills, seasonal occurrence, migration dynamics (such as weather and topography), and hawkwatching hotspots. The field trip will provide an opportunity witness raptor migration and behavior, while learning the finer points of telling the species apart. It is timed to capture a diversity of species, from early season species like Red-shouldered Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, to late season migrants like Broad-winged Hawk and Ospreys. Possibilities also include Bald Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, and more!!

Your instructor is a naturalist and biologist with over 20 years of birding experience, much of it in Western New York. He has been involved in numerous research and educational projects, specializing in bird migration and distribution patterns. He has conducted raptor migration counts from the mountains of New Mexico to the beaches of New Jersey. He recently co-authored a publication on waterbird movements on Lake Ontario.

To register for Masters of the Air, use the registration form on the opposite page.

---

*(Continued from page 5)*

gists. An array of field trips to various habitats is combined with slide presentations, mini-workshops, discussions and use of the camp's study skins, audio and videotapes, and reference library. Limited to 13 individuals. Cost: \$825.

## **Coastal Kayaking Adventure for Teens aged 14 to 17**

(Session I July 6-12) (Session II July 22-28) This adventure combines sea kayaking, backcountry camping, and investigation of the natural world along the mid-Maine coast. Based from a tenting site on a remote cove of Hog

Island, participants will learn skills associated with low-impact backcountry camping, navigation, cooperative living and nature observation and study. Take part in half- and full-day paddle trips to explore nearby islands, coves and marshes. Gain wildlife observation skills. Learn how to read the landscape. This program is open to all skill levels, with Level 1 kayak training provided. The trips are lead by a Maine certified sea kayak guide and an Audubon Camp naturalist. Wet suit, sea kayak, tents and cooking gear provided. Limited to 10 individuals per session. Cost: \$895.

## **Youth Camp, ages 10-13**

(Session I July 23-August 1) (Session II August 4-13) The Audubon Youth Camp was developed to instill an appreciation, respect, and sense of stewardship for the natural world. Leaders are dedicated science and environmental educators and naturalists with strong background working with middle school-aged youth. The camper instructor ratio is 6 to 1, with 50 campers per session. The wide ranging curriculum includes marine science, geology, forest ecology, ornithology and field and pond studies. Cost: \$995

# **GVAS-Sponsored Spring Birding Course: The Basics of Birding**

Instructor: Brett M. Ewald, Lakeshore Nature Tours

Three evening classes and two field trips.  
**The classes**, held at the Greece Town Hall:  
Thursday, March 20th (7:00-9:00 p.m.)  
Tuesday, April 8th (7:00-9:00 p.m.)  
Tuesday, April 29th 2nd (7:00-9:00 p.m.)

**The field trips:**  
Saturday, April 12th (8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)  
Saturday, May 3rd (6:30-11:00 a.m.).

Western New York is one of the top regions in the country for birdwatching, hosting an incredible diversity of breeding and migrant species. This in-depth class will help you identify and appreciate the many species of birds, through the use of slides, hands-on equipment, and field trips.

The three evening classes will focus on many aspects of birding, including identification skills, seasonal occurrence, and regional hotspots. We will also discuss backyard birdwatching through the use of feeders and birdhouses, and compare some of the tools of the trade—binoculars, spotting scopes, and field guides—and how to take care of them.

The two morning field trips will provide an opportunity to observe and learn about a wide variety of species at local habitats. They are timed to capture peak diversity in the spring migration. The first trip will focus on waterfowl and raptors, while the second will highlight an array of songbirds and other passerines (warblers, vireos, thrushes, flycatchers, sparrows, woodpeckers, and more).

Your instructor is a naturalist and biologist with over 20 years of birding experience, much of it in Western New York. He has been involved in numerous research and educational projects, specializing in bird migration and distribution patterns. He recently co-authored a publication on waterbird movements on Lake Ontario.



---

## **Registration Form**

### **The Basics of Birding Course and Masters of the Air Course**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Basics of Birding Course**

Number of students (GVAS members) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students (non-GVAS members) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$30 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Masters of the Air Course**

Number of students (GVAS members) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students (non-GVAS members) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check out to GVAS (Genesee Valley Audubon Society)  
Mail check to June Summers, 208 Rhea Crescent, Rochester, NY 14615  
Questions? Call June Summers, 585-865-6047.

### **Board of Directors**

**Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Inc.**

#### **Officers:**

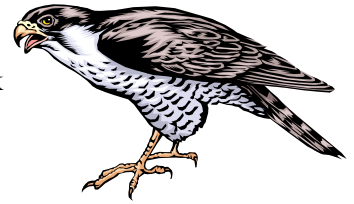
*President*, June Summers; *Vice President*, vacant; *Secretary*, Joni VanDelinder; *Treasurer*, William Gruenbaum.

**Committee Chairpersons:** *Field Trips*, vacant; *Fundraising*, vacant; *Publications*, Joanne Mitchell; *Programs*, George Zakielarz; *Publicity*, Loretta Morrell; *Conservation*, June Summers; *Membership*, Doug Smith; *Education*, vacant; *Hospitality*, vacant; *Directors-at-Large*, Carolyn Emerson and Marilyn Marino; *Webmaster*, Sid Gear, *Staff Biologist*, Brett Ewald. *The Meadowlark* is published the 1st of September, November, January, March, and April. Articles for the Meadowlark should be submitted four weeks prior to the date of publication. Send articles to Joanne Mitchell, 169 Black Walnut Dr., Rochester, NY 14615, or at GJMitch@localnet.com.

**Meadowlark staff:** *Editor & Layout*, Joanne Mitchell; *Business Editor*, vacant; *Printing*, Community News; *Distribution*, vacant.

## **Falcon Update**

Mariah has not left Rochester this winter. She seems to be guarding her territory. Kodak has funded the falcon camera web site for the summer. Assuming that everything goes well GVAS will need falcon watchers this summer.



One of our volunteer programs that is highly successful, but could always use more volunteers, is our Operation Fledgling Watch. This activity begins in earnest in mid-June. The commitment involves a weekly shift of three to four hours once a week for three weeks. Warning: fledgling watching is highly addictive. On weekend mornings you will often find several watchers beside the individual or team assigned to that time. To become a fledgling watcher you need binoculars and access to a computer. No prior birding experience is necessary. Watch for notification of the informational meeting in the May/June newsletter. Contact June Summers at (585) 865-6047 for details.

## ***The Meadowlark***

P.O. Box 886, Adams Basin, NY 14410-0886

GVAS: A chapter of the National Audubon Society

The mission of GVAS is to promote conservation of the environment through education and to advocate for its protection, focusing on birds and other wildlife in western New York.

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
ADAMS BASIN, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1