

The Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Vol. 33, No. 3
January/February 2006



From the President

June Summers

Black Creek Park's Bobolink Field

In the mid 1970's the area that is now Black Creek Park was slated to become a landfill. A small group of people united to urge officials to find another location for the landfill. That small group of people became Genesee West Audubon Society, which is now Genesee Valley Audubon Society (GVAS).

Monroe County had a wetlands taking at the airport a while back. As mitigation for this taking, Monroe County Parks (Parks) is constructing a wetland next to an existing wetland, on top of a Bobolink nesting area. While Parks has constructed a field adjacent to the previous field, the new field is only 4.1 acres, which is smaller than the 5-acre minimum needed for Bobolinks to nest. There is more shrub/scrub area that can be removed to expand the field to be more suitable for Bobolinks.

Finding a funding source for the expansion of this field is a priority for GVAS.

Phase Two of the GVAS plan will be to work with Parks to apply for a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant through the USDA to insure funds to maintain the proper mowing schedule for the Bobolinks. We will also work with Parks to apply for a WHIP grant to open 100 to 200 acres of another nearby park for grassland birds.

Phase Three of our plan will be to partner with other environmental

groups and garden clubs to recruit caring experienced volunteers to plant thousands of plants in the wetlands and to foster stewardship among this group of volunteers to remove alien invasive plants in the future. While this is not the most ideal situation for the wetland or the Bobolinks, with our help both can become high quality habitats.

We will need all the help we can get, so save us a few days this spring to spend at Black Creek Park.

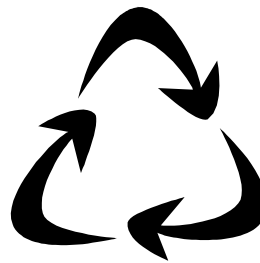
News Years Resolutions? Recycle!

Are you renewing your commitment to the environment this New Years? The following is a list of items and where to recycle them.

- Rochester Computer Recycling, 395 Central Ave., takes old computers and tries to sell them or break them down for scrap. Maven Technologies, 1144 Lexington Ave., (585) 458-2460, also accept computers for recycling. Both companies charge a recycling fee. Micrecycle accepts donated computers for education. Check their web site, www.micrecycle.org, to see if they will accept your computer or call Gerald Frith at (585)224-4040.
- Rechargeable batteries from cell phones, computers, etc. can

be dropped off at Home Depot or Radio Shack locations near you.

- Used books can be dropped off at local libraries or sent to New York Prisoner Reading Encouragement program, www.prisonreader.org, (212)349-6741.
- Athletic shoes, rubbers soled shoes, can be recycled into surfaces for tennis and basketball courts and playground surfaces. Nike Sportswear lists the Monroe County Department of Environmental Services, 444 E. Henrietta Rd., Bldg 15, (585) 760-7526. There are fiber barrels located near the public access door.
- If you have useable items you no longer need, consider freecycling. This is an internet-based movement that offers items to those who need them, with no money changing hands. There are restrictions, like no live animals, no firearms, no illegal substances, etc. Otherwise, the goal is to keep things out of landfills and have items go to a place where they are needed. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freecyclerochesterny/> for more information.
- Don't forget to use your blue bin and buy recycled products.



January Program

7:30 PM Wed., Jan. 25, 2006
Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs
Meeting Room
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

WHERE THE WHITE DEER ROAM

After completing a long career as an environmental engineer with Rochester Gas & Electric and initiating several additional environmental projects outside of work, such as the Peregrine Falcon Restoration Program and the River Otter Restoration Program, Mr. Dennis Money is working on another important preservation project here in western New York. Although his current duties as executive director of the Rochester-based Genesee Waterways fill the normal work week, Mr. Money spends his evenings and weekends promoting the concept of the former Seneca Army Depot becoming a world class eco-tourism center for nature lovers. The former army base is home to the world's largest herd and only known breeding population of white deer. These deer are not pink-eyed albinos but actually have a unique gene that is responsible for their white color. There are roughly 300 of them living today along with about 300 other deer on the 10,600 acre site which is surrounded by a 7-foot-tall 24 mile chain-link fence.

Mr. Money and others have formed a conservation group known as Seneca White Deer, Inc. and have initiated a campaign take positive action to preserve this unique eco-system. He will educate us on the details of this project and discuss how various environmental groups can work together to turn this eco-tourism vision into reality.

February Program

7:30 PM Wed., Feb. 22, 2006
Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs
Meeting Room
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

FOSSILS

Today's birds, mammals, and other species hold our attention by their beauty, their unique abilities, and their relationship to each other and to humankind. Yesterday's species are equally as fascinating and sometimes even more so as we continue to uncover the evolutionary trail that lies buried in our rocks and substructures. Mr. Dan Krisher, who lives in Churchville, New York, has studied fossils as a hobby for years and recently turned his avocation into a full-time occupation by changing careers and landing a job in the fossil section of Ward Scientific in Henrietta, New York. He has been and continues to be deeply involved with fossils through the Rochester Academy of Science and has served on that organization's board of directors. He has his own personal fossil collection and has made numerous presentations throughout the Rochester area to schools, scout groups, and other interested audiences. He has led various fossil digs, primarily in western New York, and delighted participants with their self-found souvenirs. Mr. Krisher has offered to show his collection and share his knowledge of fossils at our February meeting. This small glimpse into ancient history should help us to further appreciate the evolutionary timeline and put a proper perspective on the evolutionary path forward which we labor on today to preserve and protect.

2006 First Sunday Hikes

GVAS will host our First Sunday Hikes at the South end of Irondequoit Bay in 2006. We will explore Bay Park East, Bay Park West, and county-owned wetlands to the south of the bay. Always dress or bring clothes and boots for the windy cool environment along Irondequoit Bay. We will meet in the back corner of the parking lot of Froggy's Restaurant, 1129 Empire Blvd. We will caravan or car pool from there. Have a question? Call June at (585) 865-6047.

January 1	3:00 p.m.
February 5	3:00 p.m.
March 5	3:00 p.m.
April 2	3:00 p.m.
May 7	8:00 a.m.
June 4	8:00 a.m.
July 2	8:00 a.m.
August 6	8:00 a.m.
September 3	3:00 p.m.
October 1	3:00 p.m.
November 5	3:00 p.m.
December	3:00 p.m.

Chickadee Walks

Joni Van Delinder will be leading winter hikes (no more than 2 hours) in Mendon Ponds Park. Come out, walk a trail, and feed the chickadees while enjoying nature. The entire family is welcome to participate in this outdoor adventure. **We will meet at 9 am in the Nature Center Parking lot on Pond Rd off of Clover St** (the southernmost of the three park entrances off Clover). Black oil sunflower seed will be provided with a donation or bring your own. Dress for the weather (wear boots, warm clothes, etc.)

Saturday, **January 21, 2006**
Saturday, **February 18, 2006**
Saturday, **March 18, 2006**

Winter Nature Walks in Letchworth Park

Come explore the wintry outdoors and cure your cabin fever! GVAS is offering three winter nature walks out at the William B. Hoyt II Visitor Center and Recreation Area and the Mount Morris Dam. Walks will be on fairly level ground and about an hour in duration. We'll even warm you up afterwards with a hot beverage (for donations, please). Dress for the weather. Binoculars will enhance your enjoyment. If you own snowshoes or cross country skis, why not bring them along? The trails are nice and wide. Walks are free and open to the public of all ages.

Saturday, **February 11**, 9:30 am – 10:30 am
(Snowshoe Trek or Walk).

Saturday, **March 4**, 9:30 am – 10:30 am (Snowshoe Trek or Walk)

Saturday, **April 1**, 9:00 am – 10:00 am Nature Walk

Directions to the Genesee Valley Audubon Center in Mt Morris

From the North: Take 390 to Exit 7 Mt. Morris and Letchworth State Park. Turn left on to 408S. In town 408S will turn left followed by a very quick right. Follow 408S for 1.9 miles. Turn right at the William B Hoyt II Visitor Center and Recreation Area at the Mount Morris Dam. The parking lot is 1.7 miles.

From the South: Take 390N to Exit 6 Sonyea. Take Route 36 North for seven miles. Turn Left on to Route 408S and travel for 1.9 miles. Turn right at the William B. Hoyt II Visitor Center and Recreation Area at the Mount Morris Dam. The visitor center parking lot is 1.7 miles.

For further information regarding the walk contact Loretta Morrell at (585) 338-3683. For further directions contact the William B. Hoyt II Visitor Center at (585) 658-4790

Getting Ready for Bluebirds

Attracting bluebirds to our area is our mission. Would you like to help?

On Saturday, March 4, 2006, several hearty nature lovers will meet at Black Creek Park to help ready the bluebird trail for the new season. We'll clean out the nest boxes and may even relocate several boxes to improved habitat.

Your hands are needed! Dress warmly with boots, hats and gloves—and bring your binoculars. Some bluebirds winter over and might be spotted during our work session.

We'll meet at 10 a.m. in the Sunnyside Lodge parking lot (toward the creek). If you have any questions or wish directions, please call Carolyn Emerson at (585) 889-1887.

Weekly monitoring will begin in April. If you are interested in helping with this task but cannot join us on March 4, just call as well. Help us continue to raise the numbers of our beautiful state bird.

Count Birds in America's Great Backyard: Feb 17-20, 2006

Please join us for the ninth annual Great Backyard Bird Count, February 17-20, 2006.

- No Fee or registration required
- All ages and skill levels welcome
- Track results in real time online
- Count in your backyard, balcony, schoolyard, park, wildlife refuge

Join with thousand of others across North America to find out how many birds are being seen in your area and across the continent this winter. By participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count, you help document where birds are, and track changes in their numbers compared to previous years, helping scientists paint a picture of the state of birds

this winter. For more information, or to get started, go to

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

This website also has much information on a variety of topics, for example the housefinch eye disease, West Nile virus, and winter bird irruptions. There is a section on tricky bird indentifications, like how to tell a Sharp-shinned Hawk from a Cooper's Hawk. You can download printable tally sheets to familiarize yourself with the birds in your area, then fill them out when the event begins. Send your data online starting February 18. You can count birds on just one day or every day of the GBBC.

This is a great family or classroom activity!

Top 10 most commonly reported species in GBBC 2005:

1. Northern Cardinal
2. Mourning Dove
3. Dark-eyed Junco
4. American Goldfinch
5. Downy Woodpecker
6. Blue Jay
7. House Finch
8. Tufted Titmouse
9. American Crow
10. Black-capped chickadee

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.

Keep up-to-date with our NEW web site, www.gvaudubon.org

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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.

Did You Know?

Niger seed is a favorite food of Goldfinches. It resembles small grains of wild rice and has a high fat and protein content. Tube type feeders with small openings are used as niger feeders. Niger is also known as thistle. In fact, niger is not a thistle at all. It's the seed of the niger plant native to Ethiopia.

Many people think they will be growing thistle weeds in their yard if they offer this seed. However, the niger seed sold as birdseed is heated to prevent it from germinating.

