

# The Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Vol. 35, No. 3  
January/February 2008



## What Makes the Great Lakes Great – Part II

By Loretta Morrell

In the last issue of the Meadowlark I presented the threats to the Great Lakes of habitat destruction and poor water quality. This time I will be finishing up this three-part series with a discussion on invasive species and water diversion.

Invasive species threaten biodiversity, ecosystem function, natural resources, and human health. Forty-two percent of threatened and endangered species in the US are at risk mainly because of invasive species. Already over 160 different aquatic nuisance species have been identified in the Great Lakes (most notably the Zebra Mussel, Quaga Mussel, and Sea Lamprey). It is estimated that a new species is introduced every eight months. Aquatic Invasive species enter lakes by way of maritime commerce (i.e. ship ballast), aquaculture, canals and waterways, recreational activities, and the trade and use of live organisms. The cost to control invasive species and the damages they inflict is estimated to be \$120 million annually.

The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act would stop the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species by enacting a comprehensive national program. It would prevent the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes by authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to maintain and operate the dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and prohibit the importation and sale of Asian carp. The National Aquatic Invasive Species Act has been introduced with strong bipartisan support to combat the threat of these invasive species. The bill will do a great job in deterring and slowing the invasion of non-native species in America's

waters from the ballast discharges from ocean-going vessels by requiring the enforcement of effective regulations by 2011. This bill also has provisions that address rapid response, education, and ensuring that species are pre-screened for invasiveness before importation is allowed. If you are interested checking out the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation strategy, I invite you to go out on the internet to visit: <http://www.glrc.us>.

This past summer we watched as states to the south and west of us suffered from agonizing drought. Although seemingly abundant, less than one percent of the water contained in the Great Lakes is renewed annually, making the Lakes highly vulnerable to depletion. Global warming is adding additional strains to this renewable resource as weather patterns change. If left unchecked, increasing withdrawals of water out of the basin can pose serious environmental harm to the entire Great Lakes ecosystem. Lowering water levels could result in an increase in shoreline and stream erosion and make the Great Lakes more susceptible to invasive species and contamination from pollution.

With increasing threats of exports and diversions of water from the Great Lakes and increased withdrawals in the basin, the eight Great Lakes states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania) and the two Canadian Provinces (Ontario and Quebec) that border the lakes decided that action was needed to protect the Lake's water resources. In 2001, the States and Provinces signed an agreement, known as "Annex 2001,"

to protect, conserve, restore, improve, and effectively manage the waters and water dependent natural resources of the Great Lakes basin by preventing or minimizing water loss, preventing harm to the water quality and quantity, and improving the health of the ecosystem. This agreement has now resulted in a framework of binding agreements among the Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces for managing the Great Lakes water resources, known as the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. In December 2005, Governor George Pataki and the other Great Lakes Governors and Canadian Premiers unveiled the Compact and called for its passage.

This new Compact would impose restrictions on the depletion of water from the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River ecosystem. It would protect the Great Lakes from harm by implementing a strong and effective water management plan, including strong protections against water diversions out of the basin and unwise water use within the basin. Most importantly, the Compact would allow the Great Lakes region to maintain control over Great Lakes water in the face of growing demand from across the nation and the world.

In order to take effect, the Compact must now be ratified in each of the eight Great Lakes States and by the U.S. Congress. To date only two states have ratified the compact. Minnesota (February '07) and Illinois (August '07). In New York bills have passed both the Assembly (A7266 – April 23<sup>rd</sup>) and the Senate (S4324-July 16<sup>th</sup>), but they have yet to be signed into law by Governor Spitzer.

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## January Program

Wednesday, January 23, 2008 7:30 p.m.  
Brighton Town Hall Downstairs Meeting Room  
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

### Auburn Trail Presentation

Bruce and Mary Ann Cady will share their knowledge of the diversity of habitat – plants and animals - in a short stretch of trail between Fishers Road and Railroad Mills Road, Victor. A coalition for “The Railroad Mills Special Environmental Area” is working to conserve this small section of a proposed “Rails to Trails” extension by the Town of Victor. The presentation will also detail the efforts of the coalition working with the Town of Victor to meet the goals of both groups.

## February Program

Wednesday, February 27, 2008, 7:30 p.m.  
Brighton Town Hall Downstairs Meeting Room  
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

### Hemlock and Canadice Lakes, What is Their Fate?

Jim Howe, Executive Director of the Nature Conservancy Central and Western New York Chapter, will update us on the efforts to conserve these two important lakes and the area around them.

## Burroughs-Audubon Field Trips

Saturday, February 2, 10:00 am

### Durand Eastman Park

#### ANIMAL TRACKING

Winter is a great time to look for animal tracks and the stories they tell. Richard and Marcia Kramer, who studied at Tom Brown’s School of Tracking, will help us find and interpret the tracks of animals and birds. Meet in Durand Eastman Park at the parking lot for the golf clubhouse and restaurant at 10:00 am.

Leaders: Richard and Marcia Kramer, 225-0414.

## Teachers, Flying Wild Workshop

Is an educational program offered by the same folks that brought you Project Wild. Flying Wild focuses on birds and their conservation. Workshops will be scheduled for this fall and winter. If you are a teacher and interested in hearing more about this program, call David Semple, (585) 223-8369.

To see the GVAS budget, go to  
[www.gvaudubon.org](http://www.gvaudubon.org).



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## First Sunday Hikes 2008

### Ellison Park, Blossom Road

Genesee Valley Audubon will meet in the parking lot off Blossom Rd. marked Orchard Grove and Creekside Lodges. We will meet in the corner of the parking lot near the road away from the parking lot entrance. This park the Irondequoit Creek bottom land; therefore it is wet and hilly.

**Please Wear Boots. WARNING: This is a very DOGGY park**, if you don’t like dogs this is not the park for you. Call June Summers at (585) 865-6047 before the hike if you have questions, you might not be able to reach her the day of the hike.

Jan. 6 - 3:00 p.m.	July 6 - 8:00 a.m.
Feb. 3 - 3:00 p.m.	Aug. 3 - 8:00 a.m.
March 2 - 3:00 p.m.	Sept. 7 - 3:00 p.m.
April 6 - 3:00 p.m.	Oct. 5 - 3:00 p.m.
May 4 - 8:00 a.m.	Nov. 2 - 3:00 p.m.
June 1 - 8:00 a.m.	Dec. 7 - 3:00 p.m.

## Fall / Winter Field Trips

### Save the Dates

Joni Dubner will be leading winter hikes (no more than 2 hours) in Mendon Ponds Park. Come out, walk a trail and feed the chickadees, tufted titmice & nuthatches



while enjoying nature.



Fun for the whole family!! All are welcome to participate in this outdoor adventure on selected Saturdays. We will meet at 9 am in the Nature Center Parking lot on Pond Rd off of Clover St (the southernmost of the 3 park entrances off Clover) Bring sunflower seeds and dress for the weather (wear boots, warm clothes, etc.) Seed will be provided with a donation.

Dates: Saturday, January 19, 2008  
Saturday, February 16, 2008  
Saturday, March 15, 2008

## Upland & Wetland Bird Habitat

### ~ Education & Appreciation Day ~

### Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at Gander Mtn.

300 Jay Scutti Blvd., Rochester, NY 14623

Seminars from 10:00 am – 5:30 pm, free of charge. For details, please contact Gander Mtn. Outdoor Education Coordinator Jim Fehrman at {585} 424~4100.

Day-long **shopping discounts** will be offered to members of groups including Audubon Society. Discounts will be 15% off most merchandise except for firearms which will be 5%, ATVs 5%, Power Boats 5%, and Fishing Electronics 10%}. **Proof of membership required to qualify for discounts!**

## A New Year, a New Dance

By June Summers, President

As I stated in the President's Annual Campaign letter in the Nov-Dec 2007 Meadowlark, Genesee Valley Audubon Society reached a number of milestones which reflect how much we have grown: we need a new dance for the new music that is playing. We have gone from a small organization to one that needs a contractor to make sure our programs occur.

We have grown to an organization that is administering an EPA grant for Christine Sevilla's book *Guide to Public Access Wetlands in and Near Monroe County* and the tutorial on how to create the same type of book else where. The purpose of the grant and the book are to increase public awareness of the value of wetlands.

We have added BirdCOR, the Bird Coalition of Rochester, as a wing of our organization. BirdCOR brought with it the City Partnership for *Flying Wild*, an environmental education program based on birds, and the Rochester International Migratory Bird Day Festival. The Flying Wild City Partnership means that we give workshops to introduce teachers and other educators to the activities and resources in the book; the other part of the partnership is that we provide them with resources to help them incorporate Flying Wild into their classrooms and outdoors. Part of the Flying Wild philosophy is to get the students out of the

classroom to do service learning projects, planting trees, picking up trash or maybe even digging out invasive plant and planting new ground cover. We need volunteers to help us make that happen. Think about how much you know about birds and how much you could share with students of all ages. We could use some help with International Migratory Bird Day and the Rubber Duck Race, which raises funds to make both of these enterprises happen.

GVAS has also taken on The Rochester Falconcam, previously the Kodak Birdcam. We accepted the huge responsibility because we believe in the value of this site as an environmental education and awareness tool. We also believe that the new name will help to bring increased recognition to the Rochester area as a bird-watching destination. Plans are underway to increase the public awareness of [www.rfalconcam.com](http://www.rfalconcam.com) and fundraise to keep the cameras and our [www.rfalconcam.com](http://www.rfalconcam.com) webmaster working.

We need more members on the GVAS Board of Directors to help us dance this new dance, to help keep us on track and make the connections that make fund raising possible.

If you're interested in volunteering to help a Flying Wild classroom or being on the GVAS Board call June Summers at (585) 865-6047.

currently large chunks of that money are going overseas. Therefore, we must be very vocal in our demands for what we want done with the money that has been earmarked for the environment, and even louder in our demands for additional monies to be appropriated for environmental issues.

What can you do as an individual to help our lakes? Number one is vote responsibly. By accepting a public office our elected officials are called upon to be stewards of our land and resources. Make them accountable for their actions! Let them know that squandering will not be tolerated. To obtain more information on the Great Lakes please

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Michigan also has passed bills in both houses. Ohio and Wisconsin have yet to introduce legislation. For details visit: [www.cgic.org](http://www.cgic.org).

Sometimes it all seems insurmountable, but if we look back at just how bad Lake Ontario looked and smelled in the late sixties and early seventies we know that all the kicking and scream done by environmentalists is paying off. Now suddenly we are finding ourselves at a moment in time when it is cool to be environmentally responsible but all these bills cost a great deal of money. Our legislators only have so much money to allocate, and we all know

## Thank You!

Thank you to all GVAS Annual Campaign 2007 donors. We know that each and every gift was from your heart.

### Donation Levels

\$500 +

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bookmark these websites and visit them from time to time for updates: [www.healthylakes.org](http://www.healthylakes.org), [www.healingourwaters.org](http://www.healingourwaters.org), <http://ny.audubon.org>. Better yet sign up for Audubon alerts at <http://audubonaction.org>. If you want to know what Asian Carp are I invite you to go to the You Tube website and search on "Asian Carp Invasion."

# 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](http://www.gvaudubon.org)

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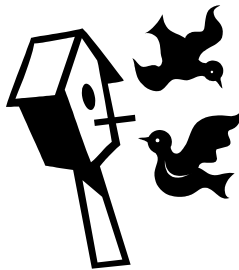
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*The Meadowlark* is published the 1st of September, November, January, March, and April. Articles for the Meadowlark should be submitted four weeks prior to the date of publication. Send articles to Joanne Mitchell, 169 Black Walnut Dr., Rochester, NY 14615, or at [GJMitch@localnet.com](mailto:GJMitch@localnet.com).

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

## Getting Ready for Bluebirds



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

On Saturday, March 1, 2008, 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. (The "snow date" is March 8.)

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 1, call as well. Help us continue to raise the numbers of our beautiful state bird.