

The Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Vol. 34, No. 4
March/April 2007



GVAS, Kodak, and Falcon Migrations

By Jim Pisello

Ten years ago when Eastman Kodak's Brad Carney and Kenn Martinez stuck an old security camera on the steeple of the Kodak office building in downtown Rochester and connected it to the internet, they could hardly have imagined they were creating a phenomenon that would attract a worldwide following. The stars of the website were a pair of peregrine falcons that had made their home in a nest box atop Kodak's world headquarters. To honor their legacy as masters of the air, the falcons were given wind-themed names by the Kodak Birdcam team. Mariah, an unbanded female, was doubly named—after Kodak founder George Eastman's mother, and the 1951 Lerner and Lowe song "They Call The Wind Maria." Sirocco, a banded male (tiercel), was named for a dry desert wind. Later Kodak learned that he'd been born in Toronto to the famous falcons Victoria and Pounce-Kingsley. Hatched in 1997, he was named Cabot by the folks at the Canadian Peregrine Foundation in honor of the French explorer of the same name. When Kodak learned his true identity, he was re-christened Cabot-Sirocco.

The intervening years brought many changes to the Kodak Birdcam. In 1999 they installed 3 more cameras—two inside the nest box—allowing comprehensive views of falcon life to be transmitted across the globe. In 2001 Kodak added an on-line discussion forum so that falcon fans everywhere could share not only their thoughts, but pictures as well. In 2002 a new male joined Mariah when Cabot-Sirocco failed to return in the spring. A high resolution Kodak digital camera, installed only weeks before, showed that this new tiercel wore no identifica-

tion bands on his legs, unlike Cabot-Sirocco.

True to Kodak's role as the World's Imaging Leader, the Birdcam became the premiere website for viewing peregrine falcons, providing images with unmatched clarity. In 2005 Kodak upgraded the original security camera with a state-of-the-art moveable surveillance model. For the first time, fans of the Kodak Birdcam had an opportunity to see the falcons as they began to explore the world beyond the nest box.

From its earliest days, Kodak and the Genesee Valley Audubon Society (GVAS) worked together to make the Birdcam a success. Sponsored by GVAS, the annual Falcon Watch has provided a cadre of dedicated volunteers to monitor and report on the young falcons as they leave the safety of the nest box and take their first wobbly flights. Our Falcon Watch participants have documented the early lives of fledgling falcons in words and pictures on an unprecedented scale, and their diligence has paid off more than once. Over the years the GVAS Falcon Watch has rescued at least four of Mariah's fledglings. We've also partnered with the Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the Migration Research Foundation to expand our knowledge of the dispersal patterns of urban-raised peregrines.

Now as the tenth falcon nesting season begins, Kodak is reaching out to GVAS once more. Recognizing our long commitment to the Birdcam program and our many conservation efforts, the company has agreed to assign primary responsibility for the Birdcam program to the Genesee Valley Audubon Society. We're honored by Kodak's

decision and delighted to bring the adventure of Rochester's own peregrine falcons to the rest of the world. From courtship to egg-laying, hatching, maturation and fledging, the GVAS Rochester Falconcam will document the drama and dynamism of the peregrine falcon family minute by minute. Renaming the site the Rochester Falconcam is intended to tie the community to the falcons more closely and to help bring attention to this wonderful natural asset. The brand new website will showcase the high quality images for which the Kodak Birdcam became famous, and play host to new features that will make following the falcons' story even more rewarding. Look for the new Rochester Falconcam website to start around the middle of March; check out <http://www.kodak.com/go/birdcam/> for direction to our new site.

Rochester International Migratory Bird Day Festival (IMBD)

This year the IMBD Festival will be two days, May 12-13—yes, on Mother's Day. On Mother's Day a feature attraction will be a nature hike for families (bring Mom!) and a presentation on the Rochester Peregrine Falcons. Bob Marcotte will be speaking on both May 12 and 13 on the changes in the Rochester bird populations over time. Ron Walker will be with us with Friends with Feathers, and displays on bird banding and other topics will be provided. Kids will be able to make a Mother's Day card for Mom. Watch for the schedule in the May/June Meadowlark.

March Program

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room

2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

Great Lawns, Great Lakes

Save money, time, and water quality this coming summer by learning organic lawn care. You don't have to live next to Lake Ontario or the Genesee River to affect their water quality. Intense rain or excessive watering create runoff that can carry fertilizer, pesticides, soil, leaves and grass cuttings into our local lakes, ponds, rivers and streams



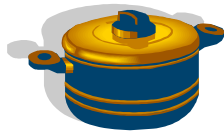
April Program

Wednesday, April 25, 2007 6:30 pm

Carmen Clark Lodge, Brighton Town Park
777 Westfall Road, Brighton

Members and Friends Night

Our annual potluck supper



First Sunday Hikes in 2007 Black Creek Park

Starting in January we will be hiking in Black Creek Park in southwest Monroe County. GVAS has a long history of involvement with in this park. In 1975 GVAS was formed to keep this area from becoming a landfill. In the early 1990's we performed a vegetation survey. In 2007 we plan to hike and do some work in the mitigation wetland and model airplane flying field otherwise known as the Bobo-link field. When the weather will allow we will stay after the hike and remove invasive alien plants. Much of Black Creek Park is a hard wood wetland, so always wear boots and dress for the weather. To get to Black Creek Park take Rt. 490 west to the Rt.259/Union St. exit (exit 4). Turn left, heading south, cross Chili Ave., over Black Creek. The entrance will be on your right. In the park at the first stop sign turn right, stay on this road to the Sunnyside Lodge parking lot.

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

Remember to Return a Gift to Wildlife

Return A Gift To Wildlife (RAGTW) was established by the legislature in 1982 to help provide additional funds to enhance DEC's fish and wildlife program. This law established a voluntary contribution line on the state income tax form to provide every taxpayer with an easy, simple way to support fish and wildlife conservation.



More than 250 projects have been totally or partially funded through RAGTW since inception, and many of these projects would not have been possible without the generous contributions of our citizens. RAGTW has helped the loons of the Adirondacks; whales, seals and sea turtles on Long Island; endangered species such as bald eagles and peregrine falcons throughout the state; and has helped implement comprehensive surveys and inventories of many species and their habitats. Major publications from these surveys, also funded by RAGTW, include *Bull's Birds of New York State*, *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*, and *The Inland Fishes of New York State*, in addition to hundreds of research reports and educational pamphlets.

RAGTW receives over \$500,000 annually from tax returns, which has helped to fund the following projects:

- **Master Habitat Databank**, a computerized information system that contains enormous amounts of data on fish and wildlife habitats.
- **New York Natural Heritage Program**, a network of information on the location of rare and endangered fish, wildlife and plant species and ecological communities throughout the state.
- **Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Stranding Program**, which responds to strandings of whales, seals, dolphins and sea turtles on the shores of Long Island and the New York City Harbor.
- **Project Wild**, a program providing instruction to elementary and secondary school teachers about incorporating wildlife education in school curricula.
- **Atlas of Reptiles and Amphibians**, a survey of the state's distribution and density of snakes, lizards, turtles, salamanders, frogs and toads.
- **Atlas of Breeding Birds**, a remake of this landmark study of the 1980's in order to determine changes and shifts in New York breeding bird distribution.
- **Delaware River Eagle Study**, the project will use field observations and satellite telemetry to identify critical habitats used by breeding and wintering eagles to help guide management and development of the upper Delaware River corridor to ensure its continued importance to this species.

New Yorkers can continue to support these important fish and wildlife programs by filling in a whole dollar amount to contribute to RAGTW on their New York State tax return.

Look for the contribution line on your **New York State Income Tax Form**, or tell your tax preparer that you wish to make a contribution.

Call for Volunteers

By Joni Dubner

The mission of Genesee Valley Audubon Society (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. We have a great resource in our environment and we would like to grow. However, we cannot do so without more active members and volunteers (i.e.: YOU). On behalf of our community and our outdoor habitat, please consider lending us some of your talents or your time. If you are not sure, I encourage you to attend some of the events that we provide and chat with the members. We welcome you to attend our 1st Sunday Hikes in Black Creek Park, Mendon Chickadee Hikes, or one of our Information meetings as noted in this Meadowlark.

During the several years I have been involved with GVAS, I have taken pride in being the secretary for the organization. It is amazing how many environmental projects, activities and events are happening around here. I love learning more about the wonderful world we have, contributing to my community and helping the environment at the same time. I've even graduated to leading our winter Mendon hikes to feed the chickadees! (If you haven't done this yet, you should experience it and bring along the family too!)

Here are a few ways that you can help us in our efforts to continue our mission.

Exhibits: We are always looking for volunteers to help us with the many exhibits we take to different events throughout the county to make people aware of the environment, birds and GVAS. The only skill you need to have is the ability to share your enthusiasm for our local natural resources. Two-hour shifts are suggested, but we are willing to work with your schedule. Some events that we participated in the past include: Mendon Ponds Winter Fest, Hawkout at Braddock Bay, International Migratory Bird Day and Earth Day at the Seneca Park Zoo, just to name a few. We hope to continue with these venues plus add many more, but to grow we need you.

Share your nature knowledge with others: Your knowledge does not need to be birds. Your expertise in wildflowers, butterflies, trees, fungus or other nature topics should be shared with others. We are interested in hearing from you. Perhaps you could assist with a first Sunday Hike or even lead one on your own, or how about taking your knowledge into a classroom or nursing home? At the very least share your passion with your children, grandchildren, or neighborhood. Make it a point to introduce someone to the wonderful outdoors this week!

Monitoring Bluebird nest boxes, the Falcon Watch, helping with our Butterfly Garden in Black Creek Park, and the Wetland Project at Black Creek Park are all activities that require volunteers to be successful. Be on the lookout for more details in this and future Meadowlarks.

We still need an accountant who is familiar with non-profit fundraising law and income filing. If you are someone who can help us, or you are aware of someone who can help us, please let us know.

I hope that some of these opportunities have sparked your interest. We look forward to hearing from you soon or seeing at an event in the near future. We're ready to grow, please come grow with us. Contact June Summers (585) 865-6047 or summers@frontiernet.net or Joni Dubner at bajacool@earthlink.net.

Specific Volunteer Needs: Falcon Watch

This winter some of the GVAS Falcon Watchers have been downtown watching the coming and goings of the falcons. There were four falcons downtown during December, 2006; three were unbanded and one banded, possibly one of the young birds from the 2006 nesting on top of Kodak. During January one falcon has shown interest in the nest box on top of the Kodak office building. This is different and interesting because this falcon is not Mariah, the matriarch who has inhabited the box for the last 10 years. To learn more about the current goings on downtown you will have to come to the GVAS meetings listed in the Meadowlark, to volunteer for the Falcon Watch, which will start in June call, or write June Summers, (585) 865-6047 or summers@frontiernet.net.

IMBD

The International Migratory Bird Day Festival is coming up on May 12-13 at Braddock Bay Park. GVAS needs volunteers to sell Rubber Duck Race tickets, to oversee the sales of coffee, snacks and pizza. Call June Summers, (585) 865-6047, to volunteer.

Rubber Duck Race

The Rubber Duck Race is coming up on June 9 in Fairport. This fundraiser supports our Flying Wild teacher workshops. GVAS needs volunteers to sell tickets before and during the event, run games for kids, and kayakers to retrieve the ducks. Call David Semple, (585) 223-8369 to volunteer or buy a ticket.

Woodcarvers Show April 21

The Genesee Valley Woodcarvers would like to invite members of the Audubon Society to attend their 23rd Annual Show, Competition, and Sale. Categories include waterfowl, seabirds and shorebirds, songbirds, birds of prey, and working decoys. Most club members are avid birders and would be delighted to share their avian carvings with other appreciative bird lovers.

Genesee Valley Woodcarvers Show
Rochester Museum and Science Center, Eisenhower Auditorium
657 East Avenue, Rochester, New York
Saturday, April 21, 2007
10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Free Admission

The Meadowlark

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

GVAS: A chapter of the National Audubon Society

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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

Board of Directors

Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Inc.,

Officers: *President*, June Summers; *Vice President*, vacant; *Secretary*, Joni Dubner; *Treasurer*, William Gruenbaum.

Committee Chairpersons: *Field Trips*, vacant; *Fundraising*, vacant; *Publications*, Joanne Mitchell; *Programs*, vacant; *Publicity*, Marcia Lyman; *Conservation*, June Summers; *Membership*, vacant; *Education*, vacant; *Hospitality*, vacant; *Directors-at-Large*, Jon Dubner, Karen Folts, Lisa McKeown, Ravi Sampath, and Nancy Strong; *Webmaster*, Chad Stewart, *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.

Winter Field Trip

March 17

Save the Date!

Joni Dubner will be leading the last of the season winter hike on **Saturday, March 17, 2007** in Mendon Ponds Park.

Come out, walk a trail and feed the chickadees & nuthatches while enjoying nature. The entire family is 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.



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. A workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, March 3, 2007 at Brockport High School. If you are a teacher and interested in hearing more about this program, call David Semple, (585) 223-8369.