

The Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Vol. 34, No. 3
January/February 2007



From the President

June Summers

Conservation Quandary, Part 2

In the May/June 2004 Meadowlark Part 1 of the Conservation Quandary was published. Conservation Quandary, Part 2 asks the same question, "Every energy source has a socio-economic cost. How high a price are we willing to pay?" Wind farm proposals are being submitted to county industrial management boards and town boards across Western New York. Power from wind turbines emits no pollution byproducts and uses a renewable resource. What on earth could be wrong with building lots of them? The number of bird and bat mortalities they might cause.

Alternative Energy/Selling the Wind, in the September-October, 2006 Audubon Magazine points out how little we know about where birds migrate. In a 2005 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report to Congress summarizing the research on wind farms and wildlife impacts, the author describes significant gaps in the literature that make it difficult for scientists to draw conclusions about wind power's impact on wildlife in general. We don't know how large scale wind turbine farms will affect nocturnal migration of neotropical migratory birds.

What we do know about bird migration in Western New York surpasses what little is known in many other areas of the country. We know from the Braddock Bay Raptor Research (BBRR) annual spring count that the south shore of Lake Ontario is a raptor corridor. We also know from banding data collected by Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) that the south lakeshore is also used by neotropical migratory passerines in large numbers in the spring and



fall. Large numbers of shore birds, Common and Red-throated Loons, and waterfowl have been counted just off shore during fall migration at Hamlin Beach State Park, a BBRR project. We know that the ridge tops in the Southern Tier are used by nocturnal migratory birds, from individual records and acoustic research done in the late 1980's and early 1990's. From the large flocks of geese and other waterfowl in the spring we can conclude that the Iroquois and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuges are both on migratory pathways.

Wind speed is important when considering wind turbine placement. Maps created by AWS Truewind using Meso Map system and historical weather data show that at 70 meters (229.7 ft) above ground level wind speeds reach 15.7-17.9 miles per hour (mph) just off shore along the south shore of Lake Ontario and at higher elevations in the Southern Tier. Maps created by AWS Truewind show that at 100 meters (328 ft) above ground wind speeds reach 15.7-17.9 mph over most of the land from Buffalo to Rt. 390, from southern Livingston County north to the shore of Lake Ontario, 5-10 miles south of the lake shore from Rochester to the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the higher elevation in the

Finger Lakes. Winds of 15 mph should be enough for a modern wind turbine to make a few megawatts.

Problem areas of overlap between where best to put wind turbines and where we know birds migrate become clear; they are: all of the south lake shore, the hills in the Southern Tier, and the areas to the south of the two National Wildlife Refuges. We also know that some night migrants fly between 200-300 ft. above ground level, depending on weather conditions.

The Breeding Bird Survey and other census programs have been in place since 1966 to monitor bird populations. Despite the 40 years of data we only have a small glimpse of the general patterns shown by bird populations. Reproductive success of bird populations is affected by a number of factors: food and water supply, atmospheric precipitation (baby birds can die of hypothermia if they get wet), quality and amount of nesting habitat, are a few. Take into account that nearly half of all migrant birds die each year even under good conditions. It takes only a few years of reduced reproductive success to bring about a general population decline.

So how do we generate the electricity we need to continue living our comfortable life styles and keep emissions from power plants at current or reduced levels with minimal bird and bat mortality at current and future wind turbine farms? To answer this question I turned to the National Wind Coordinating Committee. Their paper, "Wind Turbine Interactions with Birds and Bats: A Summary of Research Results and Re-

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January Program

Wednesday, January 24, 2007 7:30 pm
Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room

2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

John James Audubon was Here

The artist, historian, naturalist, musician, romantic, a man, John James Audubon has captured the imaginations of many. He recorded the birds of North America, many for the first time. Comfortable on the frontier and in the parlors of England and France, why did this famous figure die penniless? Today the name of Audubon brings to mind green spaces and environmental protection. But who was the man behind the myth and what is his Rochester connection? This PowerPoint presentation will be given by Loretta Morrell, volunteer and member of GVAS for five years.

February Program

Wednesday, February 28, 2007 7:30 pm
Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room

2300 Elmwood Avenue, Brighton

India

India, a mysterious far away land in Asia with tigers and elephants; want to learn more? Ravi Sampath, a native of India and member of GVAS, will share photos of Rajasthan state, Chennai (Madras), Darjeeling, Sikkim and New Delhi to enlighten us. As citizens of the USA we have not had to endure invasions as many countries in Europe and Asia have. The impact of various invasions from the west played a large part in the development of India: Mugol Empire to British Empire. At the end of the presentation one should have a flavor of life in these parts of India, its culture, its flora and fauna

Thank you!

To Alan and Suzanne Robinson and to Mr. R. Stuart Burbott, II, for their sponsorship of Audubon Adventures. Thanks to their generosity, several classrooms of elementary students have the opportunity to learn more about nature.

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 this park. In 1975 GVAS was formed to keep this area from becoming a landfill. In the early 1990's we carried out 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 Bobolink 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 Rte. 490 west to the Rte. 259/Union St. exit (exit 4). Turn left, heading south, cross Chili Ave., go over Black Creek. The entrance to the park will be on your right (the west side of the road). In the park at the first stop sign turn right, stay on this road to the lodge parking lot. See you there.

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



Getting Ready for Bluebirds



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

On Saturday, March 3, 2007, 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 3, just call as well. Help us continue to raise the numbers of our beautiful state bird.

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maining Questions, Fact Sheet: Second Edition” has some good suggestions. “As indicated by experiences at more recent projects, a pre-development site evaluation conducted at a potential wind site can help determine whether wind power development at this site is likely to cause avian and bat impacts at levels of concern. Such evaluations with respect to the site can include assessments of relevant existing information, physical inspections, and direct observational and technological methodologies designed to document levels of bird and bat use and behavior.” This information should be used to design a less-impacting project. “Research using this type of radar methodology (weather radar, horizontal and vertical marine radar units in tandem) and other technologies, for example acoustics, in the eastern U.S and ongoing fatality monitoring data at existing sites will improve our understanding of the effect of topography on bird migration and our ability to assess the risk to nocturnal migrants from existing and proposed wind plants on mountain ridges.”

Three years of radar and acoustic monitoring data should be included in the draft environmental impact statement before prospective wind turbine sites should be approved. Three years of monitoring data should also be collected after site approval, will to give us enough information to gain an understanding of the impact of wind turbines on bird and bat populations at that site. Morning site inspections and body counts should also be carried out. The company that proposes the project should pay for the studies. Not only should individual sites be monitored but the cumulative effects of clusters of wind turbines farms

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 & 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.

Dates:

Sat. January 20, 2007
Sat. February 10, 2007
Sat. March 17, 2007

November/December 2006

Protecting the Great Lakes

On Dec. 2, 2006, the *Restoring the Gateway to the Great Lakes Conference* was held at the Seneca Park Zoo by the New York State Healing Our Waters Coalition (NY-HOW). The Coalition is composed of Audubon New York (www.ny.audubon.org), Environmental Advocates of New York (www.eany.org), Citizens Campaign for the Environment, and Great Lakes United (www.GLU.org). This coalition is a subset of the Healing Our Waters, Great Lakes Coalition, composed of 80 groups in the Great Lakes basin. Fifty people representing different organizations concerned about protecting the Great Lakes attended.

Improving the current conditions of the Great Lakes is a very complex issue, we learned at the conference. Speakers from each of the NY-HOW member organizations spoke on issues of concern: water quality, water level, invasive species, and water removal from the Great Lakes basin.

Each of the above issues has a piece of national or state legislation or proposed legislation to address the issue and most of the issues are controlled by national or international committees, ex. International Joint Commission, Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, Council of Great Lakes Governors, and the Great Lakes Charter. Confused yet?

To learn more about each of these issues go to www.restorethelakes.org. To learn more about what you can do go to Great Lakes United (www.glu.org), Environmental Advocates of NY (www.eany.org) or sign up to receive Audubon NY's electronic newsletter at audubonaction@audubon.org. If you want to form or join a group of people working on these issues call me, June Summers, (585) 865-6047, or contact Sean Mahar at Audubon NY, smahar@audubon.org, (518) 869-9731.

10th annual

Great Backyard Bird Count February 16-19, 2007

Discover more about the birds around you! Track results in real time on-line. Count anywhere—in your backyard, on your balcony, schoolyard, park, refuge. Count on one day or on all four days of the count.

All ages and skills welcome. No registration or fee required.

Join thousands of other birdwatchers in a survey of where the birds are this winter.

Before you begin, go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc for easy-to-follow instructions and local checklists.

Then report your results on-line by filling in the checklist and following the easy instructions.

You will be able to see maps and lists on-line, continually updated throughout the count. You will see how you and your town fit into the big picture of where the birds are this winter.

Meadowlark

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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.

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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.

Genesee Land Trust Completes Purchase of Kaiser Manitou Beach Properties

By Roger Cass

On Sept 22 The Genesee Land Trust (GLT) closed with Bill Kaiser on the third of his Manitou Beach properties, the 7.9-acre northwest parcel, a valuable grassland habitat on the corner of Manitou Beach Road and Braddock's Avenue. The property has long been used by Braddock Bay Bird Observatory for the banding of migratory birds. This northwest parcel together with the 5.2-acre southeastern parcel that GLT had purchased in 2004 with the help of RBA, and Bill Kaiser's original donation to GLT in 1999 of the 2-acre wooded parcel including the banding station completes the preservation of this extremely valuable and beautiful habitat as forever wild. These properties add critical habitat to adjacent DEC property and the Braddock Bay Fish and Wildlife Management area.

The story actually begins with Allan Klonick and a group of concerned birders many years ago. The Ontario Beach Parkway was originally planned to go along the shore of Lake Ontario. Klonick and the birders convinced the State of New York to move the Parkway south, preserving the wetlands adjacent to Braddock Bay, Cranberry Pond, Long Pond, and Buck Pond, and Round Pond and creating what is now known as the Braddock Bay Fish and Wildlife Management Area.