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In this issue...

- **Urgent: Volunteers Needed this Fall for Lake Ontario Stopover Habitat Project**
- **Highbridge Park is *For the Birds!***
- **New Web Page Guides users to "Watchable Wildlife"**
- **New State Open Space Plan Continues Conservation Legacy, Focuses Goals**
- **Audubon NY releases habitat management recommendations and decision making tool**
- **North Fork Audubon Society's Piping Plover-Least Tern stewardship efforts highlighted**
- **Saw Mill River Audubon Plants "Trees for Tribs" To Improve Watershed at Brinton Brook Sanctuary**
- **Great South Bay Audubon Society Updates**
- ***For the Birds!* Takes Off in Niagara County**
- **Prospect Park Audubon Center Fundraiser a Success!**
- **Announcement: 13th Annual Montezuma Muckrace September 11 and 12, 2009**
- **News Clips of the Month**

Urgent: Volunteers Needed this Fall for Lake Ontario Stopover Habitat Project

By [Laura McCarthy](#), Grassroots Coordinator and [Michael Burger](#), Director of Conservation & Science, [Audubon New York](#)

Audubon New York and The Nature Conservancy of Central & Western New York have partnered on a project to identify and protect critical stopover habitats in the Lake Ontario basin of New York, as well as to improve our understanding of why birds choose to stop in certain places. This past Spring we launched the pilot study, and this fall we need volunteers to help us with the expanded fall season of this important project!

Recent studies indicate that migration is the period of highest mortality for neotropical migrant birds, and the conservation of migratory birds requires protecting a network of stopover sites, particularly in the highly-altered Lake Ontario watershed. However, there is only anecdotal information about important stopover sites, and no tool to predict where they occur. In this

project, Audubon New York, TNC and other partners are developing a predictive model of stopover habitat for the NY portion of Lake Ontario's watershed, based on habitat and landscape characteristics and proximity to the lakeshore. This model is now being validated by a volunteer-based field study of migratory bird abundance and diversity.

We are seeking very experienced volunteer birders in the Lake Ontario Watershed who would be available to monitor sites this fall. Money is available to cover volunteer travel expenses associated with this study. For more information or if you know folks who might be interested, please contact Mike Burger or Laura McCarthy.

Highbridge Park is For the Birds!

By [Pam Musk](#), Director of Centers and Education, [Audubon New York](#)

Audubon New York and the New York Restoration Project teamed up on a Together Green grant to connect kids to nature in Highbridge Park in Manhattan. Students participated in Audubon's highly successful *For the Birds!* program over 8 weeks this past school year. They also pulled invasive species, planted native species and learned to identify the birds found in the Park. Check out this video of the kids in action!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JySxyd7mJI>

New Web Page Guides users to "Watchable Wildlife" Initiative Promotes Wildlife Viewing Opportunities and Eco-Tourism

By [Sean Mahar](#), Director of Government Relations [Audubon New York](#)

Nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts seeking tips on where to spot beloved bird and wildlife species can click on a new web page, dubbed "Watchable Wildlife," launched by the DEC. the Watchable Wildlife site can be found at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/55423.html and will provide a user-friendly way to look up the best locales and settings to view wildlife – it will also help promote eco-tourism opportunities in the state. New York State has long been one of the nation's premier, year-round destinations for wildlife viewing. A national survey estimated that there are nearly four million people that participate in wildlife watching in New York annually, contributing greatly to local economies.

Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York said, "As bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor recreational activity in America, it should be no surprise that it contributes more than \$1.6 billion to the state economy each year. By ensuring better promotion of the areas and opportunities to watch birds and other wildlife, this important initiative will help municipalities across the state capitalize on this significant tourism revenue. We applaud the DEC, OPRHP and all partners for helping to launch this campaign which will foster a greater appreciation for the state's bird and wildlife species and the need to protect them."

Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/55423.html for more details on this new website

New State Open Space Plan Continues Conservation Legacy, Focuses Goals

By [Sean Mahar](#) Director of Government Relations [Audubon New York](#)

6/17/09 – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Pete Grannis and State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Commissioner Carol Ash today announced the release of the state's [2009 Open Space Conservation Plan](#), which provides a comprehensive blueprint for focusing and achieving the state's conservation goals.

As habitat loss is the leading threat to many of our most beloved bird species, we commend the DEC and OPRHP for developing this important blueprint to guide land preservation efforts throughout the state and ensure that resources provided through the Environmental Protection Fund, and other state and federal sources, are spent wisely," said Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York. "In addition to providing habitat and migratory stopover sites for birds and other wildlife, protecting open space in New York plays an important role in the state's economic recovery through providing destinations for ecotourism, protecting clean water resources, and buffering against the most severe impacts of climate change. We look forward to working with the state to ensure the successful implementation of this important plan."

The 2009 State Open Space Plan can be accessed on the Internet at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html or by contacting the regional offices of DEC and OPRHP.

Audubon NY releases habitat management recommendations and decision making tool

By, [Jillian Liner](#), Director of Bird Conservation, [Audubon New York](#)

Audubon NY is pleased to unveil a new component to their website to guide bird conservation efforts in the Hudson Valley. The webpages contain species specific management guidelines as well as a decision tree tool that will guide land owners and managers on what management is most appropriate for their property. The information and tool are useful to land owners, but also planners and advocates to prioritize areas for protection. Although the work is specific to the Hudson Valley, a number of the species and habitats are priorities state-wide. This project was funded by the Hudson River Estuary Program.

To view the new webpages, go to http://ny.audubon.org/BirdSci_HudsonRiverValleyConservation.html

North Fork Audubon Society's Piping Plover and Least Tern stewardship efforts recognized

http://www2.timesreview.com/ST/Stories/T061109_Plover_ES

North Fork Audubon Society's Endangered Species Program monitor, Rae Obbi, and long-time volunteer, Bev Prentice, are interviewed in the following story about their beach-nesting bird conservation efforts on the north fork of Long Island.

For more information:

Contact Diana Van Buren (northforkaudubon@mac.com) or visit <http://www.northforkaudubon.org>

Saw Mill River Audubon Plants "Trees for Tribs" To Improve Watershed at Brinton Brook Sanctuary

By [Ellen Heidelberger](#), [Saw Mill River Audubon Society](#)

May 31 was planting day at Brinton Brook Sanctuary in Croton-on-Hudson. Saw Mill River Audubon (SMRA) and the New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) planted native trees and shrubs to improve streamside habitats in the sanctuary. The restoration is part of the DEC's "Trees for Tribs" program along tributaries to the Hudson River.

Brinton Brook, a 156-acre sanctuary, offers three miles of hiking trails through a wide variety of habitats, including red maple swamp, a large pond, vernal pools, upland deciduous forest, and open meadow. For the planting, SMRA board members Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, and Michael Madias selected a location with severe water runoff and serious stream bank erosion and 13 volunteers brought their shovels and pitched in. The new buffer planting added 100 native shrubs and trees, provided by the DEC, to create a denser native understory, supporting greater diversity of wildlife and mitigating erosion. The 40 trees and 60 shrubs represent 13 species, including witchhazel, American cranberry bush viburnum, red maple, and sassafras.

SMRA will monitor and maintain the new plantings, watering them during droughts in the first season, and removing tree tubes and bird nets as needed.

About New York State's "Trees for Tribes" program

The purpose of the New York State DEC's "Trees for Tribes" program is to replant the streams of the Hudson Valley. Riparian buffers of trees, shrubs, and grasses reduce pollution entering waterways by slowing down and filtering runoff, thus extending water retention time. They are a major factor in maintaining healthy streams and water. Buffers also help to reduce flooding and erosion by stabilizing shorelines and absorbing high velocity flows. In addition, they serve as a shoreline transition zone and travel corridor for wildlife, increasing overall biodiversity and improving the health of the stream ecosystem. The program includes streams within the Hudson River Estuary. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov/lands/43668.html

Great South Bay Audubon Society Updates

Submitted by [Alice Heller](#), President, [Great South Bay Audubon Society](#)

On Monday, May 4, 2009, at Great South Bay Audubon Society's ("GSBAS") Annual Dinner held at Captain Bill's in BayShore, NY with 145 +/- members, guests, family and friends attending, together with its scheduled Program Presentation: "*Long Island's Beach Nesters*", by James Galletto of *Jimmy G's Nature Photography*, GSBAS presented its three (3) annual Chapter Awards as follows: 1. Fran File Award to Peter Murphy; 2. 2009 Bob Laskowski Conservation Award to Alice Heller; and 3. President's Award to Judy and Warren Davis.

On June 18, 2009 Sue Krause, Sweet Briar Nature Center (and Pres. of Four Harbors Audubon), braved a very rainy Thursday to present at GSBAS's Annual June Outdoor Program, *Birds of Prey*. And the show did go on by moving the program presentation indoors at Brookside! At GSBAS's Brookside Preserve at 59 Brook Street, Sayville, NY about 26 rain soaked attendees got to see: an Eastern Screech Owl; an American kestrel; a Red-tailed hawk; and a Barred owl, who was experiencing a bad hair day. Sue also presented a "*mystery bird*:" a Peregrine Falcon. All present were educated by Sue as to some of the rehab history behind each of these birds of preys' injuries and the fact that some of these birds found a home at Sweet Briar Nature Center from other states, i.e. one from the state of Alaska, who arrived via airplane of course!

For the Birds! Takes Off in Niagara County

By [Robin Foster](#), *For the Birds, Niagara County*

Audubon New York's *For the Birds!* program recently completed a very successful pilot run in Niagara County, with seven third grade classes at the Lewiston-Porter Intermediate Education Center participating. The program was very well-received, and several additional schools have already joined Lewiston-Porter on our list of fall participants. The Niagara County program is the result of a partnership between Audubon NY, the Buffalo Audubon Society, and NYS Parks. Thanks to a grant from the Niagara County Environmental Fund, *For the Birds!* is available at no cost to elementary schools throughout the county.

For more information on the Niagara County *For the Birds!* Program, contact [Robin Foster](#)

Prospect Park Audubon Center Fundraiser a Success!

By [Jessica Wells](#), Assistant of Director Development, [Audubon New York](#)



More than one hundred supporters, including New York City Council Member Bill de Blasio, joined Audubon New York for "An Evening of Discovery" at the Prospect Park Audubon Center on Wednesday, June 24. Thanks in large part to the Center's newly-formed Advisory Board, led by Alex Zagoreos, the evening was an incredible success!

Thanks to the generosity of our guests and contributors, this first annual fundraiser raised nearly \$15,000 for the Center's education and conservation programs. In addition, a generous challenge grant from the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust will match that money, generating approximately \$40,000 for the Center's endowment!

The evening of fun and surprises featured scenic boat rides on the Lullwater, guided nature walks, and two special guests—a Red-tailed Hawk and a Screech Owl, birds of prey visiting from the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center on Long Island. For more information or photos from the event, contact Jessica Wells at jwells@audubon.org or 212-979-3034.

Announcement: 13th Annual Montezuma Muckrace - September 11 and 12, 2009

By [Jillian Liner](#) Director of Bird Conservation, [Audubon New York](#)

Get your binoculars and caffeine ready for the thirteenth annual Montezuma Muckrace, to be held on September 11 and 12, 2009. This 24-hour birding competition raises funds to support conservation projects within the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, and is hosted by Audubon New York and Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex announce.

This year our goal is to raise \$13,000 to fund a reforestation project for 57 acres of cropland on the National Wildlife Refuge and to purchase a Purple Martin house for the Montezuma Audubon Center. Money is raised through pledges sought by participants, registration fees, and sponsorships. Prizes are awarded to the team that raises the most money and to those teams that record the highest number of species. Again this year, Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex will match money raised by the top three-fundraising teams. New this year will be the opportunity for teams to raise money online.

To access complete information about the Muckrace, including the newsletter, "Muckrace Musings," visit the Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex website (http://friendsofmontezuma.org/muck_race.html) or the Audubon NY website (http://ny.audubon.org/GetInvolved_MontezumaMuckrace.html).

The registration deadline is August 25.

News Clips of the Month

["State releases Open Space Plan including Rome Sand Plains, Oriskany Battlefield"](#)

June 24th Rome Sentinel

["Half of Chaumont farm's land paying off for owners, birds"](#)

July 1 – Watertown Daily Times

["Wayne's World: Grasslands birds facing housing shortage"](#)

June 28th – Times Herald Record

["Bobolinks 'making a last stand' in N. Salem"](#)

July 7th – Journal News

The Audubon New York Newswire helps to more closely connect Audubon New York's staff, Board, Stewardship Council and the state's 27 Audubon chapters. Send any updates, press stories or links to Daphne Lumpkin at dlumpkin@audubon.org