



Audubon New York produced plaques from three informational posters created by Amy Rumack, Jim Ryan and Kaoru Takasaki. The permanent signs will be displayed near the visitor center at Edith Read Sanctuary.

## Edith Read Citizen Science Projects Successful

By Regan Clover

This summer, Audubon New York programs continued at Westchester County Park's Edith Read Sanctuary. One day a week, for six weeks, bird-related activities and projects occurred at the sanctuary's Coastal Ecology summer camp. With assistance from AmeriCorps volunteer Ruth Sherman, I taught basic bird identification, bird courtship behavior, and other shore-bird related topics. Campers participated in two citizen science projects—performing breeding bird atlas surveys and erecting a bird garden.

Last year, campers created posters to inform the public about conserving the sanctuary and its wildlife. Judges from local Audubon chapters, Edith Read and Westchester County Parks chose three winners from 60 entries. After painstaking deliberation contestants Amy

Rumack, Jim Ryan and Kaoru Takasaki emerged victoriously. Audubon New York produced permanent signage from the winning posters that will be mounted near the visitor center.

Another improvement to the Read center included a camper created bird garden fashioned to help attract our feathered friends. It was inspiring to see the youngsters as they prepared the soil and planted plants in front of the seasoned "green thumbs" of the Read center. Campers spent 90 degree summer days gardening, helped design the garden, researched when and how the plants benefited birds, and created a sign to educate the public with their research results. Although the garden was planted specifically for the birds, it is hoped that everyone will benefit from its existence.



(Left to right) Volunteers Ruth Sherman, Lianna Weissblum and Kiersten Baecher construct a garden that appeals to birds.

## Harlem's P.S. 36 Wins Local Science Fair With *For the Birds!*

By Lynn Tiede

Public School 36 in Harlem, New York City, triumphed this year with its entry to the district's science fair. Ms. Kathy Aleman and her second grade class won their grade level's first place award at the Community School District #5 Science Fair with their project entitled *Psst! A Little Bird Told Me*. With the guidance of their teacher, students studied and discovered birds in their neighborhood through information learned from books, computer research, literature, poetry, games, neighborhood walks, and participation in Audubon New York's *For the Birds!* program.

The students' research project centered on answers to the following question: Are there a diversity of bird species in New York City? Students utilized data they gathered on bird walks with Audubon New York educator Regan Clover and volunteer teacher, Wendy Paulson. They hiked near the school and in the adjacent Morningside Park, as well as Central Park.

The field trips, the other *For the Birds!* activities and lessons, and the enthusiasm of Clover and Paulson, provided the inspiration needed for Ms. Aleman to design her winning project. "Since participating in this wonderful program my students' interest in science soared," stated Aleman. "They looked forward to Ms. Wendy's and Ms. Clover's visits." The students voracious appetite for information about birds drove them to write creative stories and research papers about birds. "As a

teacher, having my students eagerly participate in each academic area was truly satisfying," added Aleman.

The P.S. 36 administrative staff, science coordinator, three teachers, and classes participating in *For the Birds!* made Audubon's work easy because of their eagerness to involve themselves in all aspects of the curriculum. Audubon New York celebrates this example of *For the Birds!* at its best—collaborative, standards based, multidisciplinary, inquiry driven, and fun environmental education.

**For the Birds!** is a New York school based program that teaches students about science, nature and the environment through the study of birds. For further information about the program contact Lynn Tiede at (212) 979-3073.



Pictured above are research papers, artwork and a *For the Birds!* checklist prepared by class 2-451.

## DO YOU KNOW...?

By Jane E. S. Sokolow

...How the alligator got its name? When the Spanish explorers came to the New World, they had never seen an alligator. They thought it looked like a very large lizard and called it *el largato*, Spanish for "lizard." Later when the English settlers heard *el largato* spoken fast, they spelled what they thought they heard as "alligator."

...How the aardvark got its name? Aardvarks are found in South Africa. In the Afrikaans language, *aard* means "earth" and *vark* means pig. Aardvark is the perfect name for this pig-like animal that digs in the ground or earth for ants and termites.

...How the octopus got its name? The Greeks named the octopus, *oktopous* meaning "the creature with eight feet." If they had named it properly, "the creature with eight arms," it would have been called *ocktobrach*.

...How the porcupine got its name? Because porcupines look like tiny pigs with spikes, they were named for the Latin *porcus* meaning "pig," and *spina*, meaning "thorn." Pork, the meat from a pig comes from same word: *porcus*.

...How the walrus got its name? Early explorers and hunters often used familiar words to name new and unusual animals that they came across. Walrus comes from two Dutch words: *walvis* meaning "whale," and *ros* meaning "horse." In Old English the animal was called a "horsewhale."

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