



Mountain Birdwatch:

Monitoring threatened birds in the Northeast's high country

Audubon New York and Vermont Institute of Natural Science Staff Report

The Northeast's high-elevation forests face increasing risks from the effects of climate change, recreational development, telecommunications tower construction and acid rain.

Audubon New York, in partnership with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS), seeks your help monitoring some of the avian species that call these montane forests home.

At greatest risk is Bicknell's Thrush, the only bird species endemic to the Northeast and adjacent portions of Canada. The Bicknell's Thrush breeds only in montane forests of New York and northern New England and spruce-fir highlands of Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A large proportion is believed to nest in the Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness Area and the Catskill Peaks Important Bird Areas. Its wintering range is even more restrictive, consisting largely of disappearing, broadleaf forests of the Dominican Republic. To provide information that will guide conservation of this vulnerable population and improve stewardship of its breeding and wintering habitats, the Vermont Institute of Natural Science launched Mountain Birdwatch in June of 2000.

Mountain Birdwatch is a long-term monitoring program for Bicknell's Thrush and four other montane forest songbirds: Blackpoll Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, White-throated Sparrow and Winter Wren. Volunteers from New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine are trained to survey this suite of species along some of the region's most spectacular mountain trails. Counts are conducted between 4:30 and 6:30 a.m. on one or two mornings each June. While some participants camp overnight near their one-kilometer survey routes, others watch the sun rise during an early morning ascent. Don't miss this opportunity to experience nature in a new way and contribute to the conservation of mountain ecosystems. Previous experience with bird identification is not required. To adopt a mountain near you or to learn more about the project, please visit <http://www.vinsweb.org/conservation/>



Bicknell's Thrush

Dan Busby/Cornell Lab of Ornithology

[citizenscience/mtnbirdwatch.html](http://www.vinsweb.org/citizenscience/mtnbirdwatch.html) or contact Dan Lambert at (802) 457-2779 or dlambert@vinsweb.org.

Greater access to Albany County IBA in the works

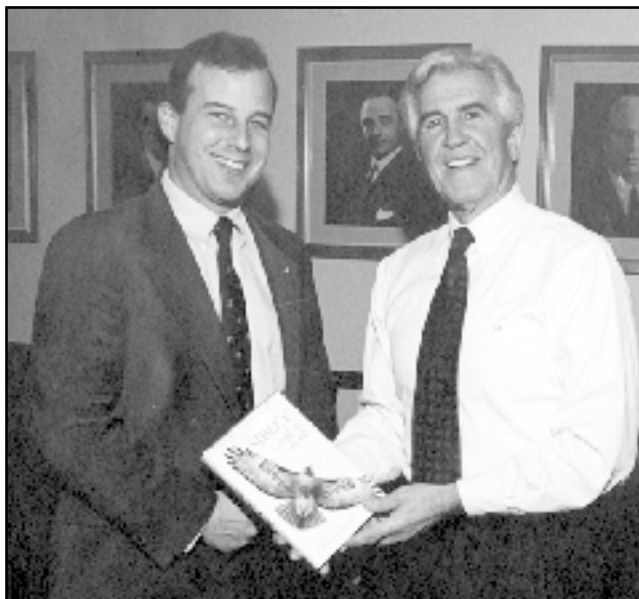
By Graham Cox

In the fall, the *Advocate* reported on the state DEC's progress in purchasing an additional 70 acres on the eastern end of Black Creek Marsh in Albany County, haven for birds and birders for many years. It has been identified as an Important Bird Area in our 1998 publication.

DEC is now making plans to provide off-street parking and access trails on this newly acquired property near the Voorheesville Library. DEC continues to be active in looking for other opportunities to expand and protect the marsh property.

The Region 4 open space committee has now included it among its top regional priorities, boosting it to number two on the list so it is likely to be included on the statewide priority list. When the joint DEC/Parks public meetings to discuss the latest revisions to the open space conservation plan come around this spring, chapter members should be ready to support the DEC in boosting the marsh as a priority on their protection list for Region 4 and in boosting acquisition funding. Watch DEC's web site for details on the open space plan and the public meeting schedule, at www.dec.state.ny.us.

Hot off the press



Executive Office

New York state Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno receives his copy of the Sibley guide from Audubon New York's Executive Director David J. Miller.

AUDUBON BIRDATHON



Kimberley L. Ray

- Join thousands of birders (and non-birders) across the nation to help raise funds for Audubon.
- Pick a day (usually during Spring migration)
- Rally the troops to help you identify as many species as you can in 24 hours
- Start to get pledges (or outright gifts)
- Spend up to 24 hours in search of as many different species as you can find
- Report to your sponsors on your overwhelming success and start to bring in that money.

For more information about Birdathon call Audubon New York at (518) 869-9731, Audubon's Birdathon Office at (212) 979-3047 or see our website at <http://ny.audubon.org>.