

Spring Audubon Council of New York State Meeting Held In Saratoga Springs: Conservation Commissioner Erin Crotty Appears As Keynote Speaker

By Kimberley L. Ray

NEW YORK STATE Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Erin Crotty addressed the Audubon Council of New York State during the Spring 2002 Council Meeting held at the Gideon Putnam in beautiful Saratoga Springs, New York.



(Left to right) Audubon leaders Alice DelBosco, Gladys Goldman, Ginny Fields, David J. Miller, Margot Ernst, Geoffrey Cobb Ryan standing with Commissioner Erin Crotty (third from right).

The Audubon Council of New York State, Audubon New York staff and Capital Region officials listened to Commissioner Crotty's strong support for bird conservation and environmental education programs of Audubon. The Commissioner was presented with a beautiful Baltimore Oriole Audubon print in recognition of her commitment to conservation.

Nearly 70 delegates from National Audubon Society chapters in New York State participated in workshops, planning sessions and conservation policy issue discussions. They voted on Audubon's priority conservation resolutions during the weekend. Audubon's 2002 Conservation Policy Resolutions that were adopted at the meeting were published and distributed to state and federal officials in April.

"It was wonderful to have so many Audubon chapter leaders working on

the effort," exclaimed Geoffrey Cobb Ryan, chair of the Audubon Council of New York State. "The Council worked very hard and finalized 38 resolutions this year."

The resolutions are the basis for Audubon New York's conservation policy program. Critical issues were discussed ranging from the Lead Sinker legislation, which was recently signed into law, to the protection of the Keyspan site on Long Island Sound. State and federal budget issues are always high on Audubon's priority list as well as site-specific bird conservation issues. To receive a copy of Audubon's policy resolution booklet, visit <http://ny.audubon.org> or contact the state office at (518) 869-9731.

Peter Lehner, deputy attorney general, spoke during the Friday evening program and thanked Audubon for presenting the 2002 William Hoyt

Environment Award to Eliot Spitzer, New York State Attorney General. Lehner addressed the many partnerships his office has maintained with Audubon, on issues ranging from Long Island Sound cleanup to acid rain issues.

The weekend also included several birding trips in the Saratoga Springs area. In Saratoga State Park, birders "morphed" into arborists as they searched for old growth trees under the tutelage of Auduboner Bruce Kershner, award-winning naturalist, ecologist and author of eight books, including *Secret Places of Western New York and Southern Ontario*.

The next Audubon Council of New York State meeting will be held September 27-29 at Kutsher's Country Club in Monticello, New York. For further details contact Audubon New York at (518) 869-9731.

Audubon Celebrates Victory on Lead Sinker Legislation

By William Cooke

AUDUBON NEW YORK led the coalition of environmental and conservation groups working to pass legislation that will phase out the sale of split shot lead sinkers weighing a half ounce or less.

This legislation was sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino and Assembly member Steve Englebright. Governor George E. Pataki signed this bill into law on May 8, 2002.

Waterfowl consume small pebbles that are necessary to grind up food thereby aiding in their digestive

process. Small lead sinkers are frequently ingested by loons, ducks, and other waterfowl that mistake these sinkers for the pebbles they need. This mistake is a fatal one. The injection of one split shot sinker may kill a loon within a week according to Ward Stone, New York State Wildlife Pathologist. Nearly 20 percent of all loons reported dead in New York State died from ingesting lead.

Exposure to lead through oral ingestion or through the skin represents a health risk especially for children. Lead is known to cause birth defects, reproductive complications

and diminished intelligence levels. There are alternatives to lead sinkers, which are readily available.

In addition to the passage of this legislation, Audubon New York is engaged in a public education effort that assists the fishing community on opportunities to use safe substitutes. A year's supply of alternative sinkers only cost a few pennies more than traditional lead sinkers.

Audubon would like to commend the Governor and the legislature for their commitment to this critical conservation issue.

Get the lead out!

Do your part by properly disposing of all lead sinkers you may have, and switching your supply to non-lead alternatives. Such an easy transition will save the lives of many loons to come.



Common Loon



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