

Hawk Banding The Ultimate Fishing Experience

By Patricia Pelkowski

THIS FALL staff from the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center teamed up with Robert Moses State Park for one of the Sanctuary's most exciting research projects—hawk banding.

During the fall from September until early November hawk migration occurs along the barrier islands of Long Island's south shore. The northeastern coastline aids the birds in navigation, and by following this coast the birds avoid prolonged flights over water.

These coastally traveling raptors, which include American kestrels, merlins, peregrine falcons, sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's Hawks, feed primarily on songbirds that favor the same migratory route. This coincidence enables the hawks to conveniently grab a meal "on the go." As part of this year's banding effort at

Robert Moses State Park, data was collected that may shed light on the fueling strategies and behaviors of coastally migrating hawks and falcons. Little is known about the travel routes and conservation needs of these birds, many of which are declining in number.

From early morning to late afternoon research staff and volunteers huddled inside a bird blind kept constant vigil for a hawk or falcon to appear over the eastern horizon. Once spotted, the hungry and travel weary raptor, tricked into thinking it was getting a free meal,

is lured into a mist net. Carefully avoiding the sharp beak and talons the bird is quickly extracted from the net so the necessary data can be collected. Data such as age, sex, species, quantity of fat, and crop dimensions is recorded and then the bird is banded with a uniquely numbered aluminum band before being released.

The data collected is sent to the Bird Banding Laboratory in Patuxent, Maryland where a nationwide database is located. If the bird is captured by another bander, or is recovered, the numbers found on the individual band can be submitted to the banding lab and may provide information about a particular bird or species that was not previously known.

Hawk banding is likened to "ultimate fishing." It requires a little skill, imagination and patience but most importantly, the ability to boast about the size of the one that got away.



Research director Patricia Pelkowski bands a Merlin (*Falco columbaris*.)

Planning for Future Generations of Auduboners

Staff Report

Jan Hesbon was appointed planned giving officer for Audubon New York on August 13. Since 1987, Hesbon has helped people make planned gifts to many environmental/conservation organizations including the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy of New York, and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

Hesbon will work with the staff and volunteers of the state office and the Audubon Centers in New York to increase revenue through planned giving. Gifts made from estate plans can be specifically designated to assure that Audubon's natural science education and other programs are available for future generations.

Recently Hesbon made his first visit to the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and having viewed onsite birds remarked, "I have been a birdwatcher since I was a boy. I remember when all the redtail hawks circling above my family's rural home in upstate New York were called chicken hawks. When I saw peregrines in flight outside of my office window in downtown Manhattan last spring, I knew I needed to work for Audubon."

If you are interested in making a planned gift to benefit an Audubon Center call (518) 869-9731 or email him at jhesbon@audubon.org.

DiNapoli Appointed to Chair Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee

Staff Report

ASSEMBLYMAN Thomas P. DiNapoli, (D-Great Neck), has been named chairman of the Assembly Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Committee, replacing Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky (D-Westchester) who has moved on to chair the committee on corporations, authorities and commissions.

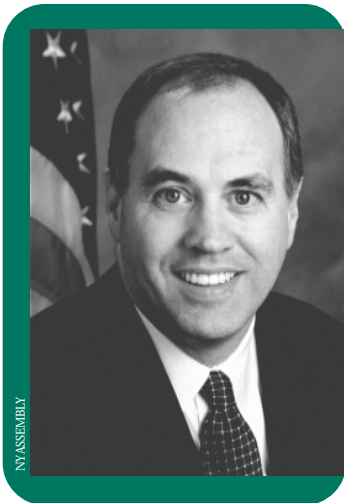
Announcing the appointment, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said, "Tom DiNapoli has earned a reputation as one of the state's leading voices on environmental issues. His strong environmental ethic and working relationship with members from both political parties have enabled him to make important, long lasting contributions to the people of Long Island and New York State."

DiNapoli, first elected to the New York State Assembly in 1986 and a member of the EnCon committee since 1987, said in a brief interview with the *Audubon Advocate* that so many important issues come to the EnCon committee "it is difficult to put one ahead of the other," but he listed habitat and wildlife conservation issues, groundwater protection, environmental funding and state budget as well as superfund, brownfields, and Smart Growth programs.

"There are just so many issues important to the people of this state. I look forward to working with groups like Audubon New York, as we have, for example, on Long Island Sound. I appreciate the professional intelligence of the advocacy groups and hope we can

continue this partnership." DiNapoli said that he looks forward to working with fellow Long Islander State Senator Carl Marcellino, who chairs the Senate environmental conservation committee.

"Tom DiNapoli is a great conservation advocate," said Audubon New York's executive director, David J. Miller. "He reminds me of Congressman Maurice Hinchey (Assembly EnCon chair from early 1980's to 1992) with the integrity and skill to bring politics together for real environmental solution." Audubon New York plans to interview Assemblyman DiNapoli in a future issue of the *Audubon Advocate*.



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ASSEMBLYMAN THOMAS P. DINAPOLI



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