

International Leader in Bird Conservation Visits New York

By Jillian Butler



Frank Gill announces Audubon's international Important Bird Area initiative and recognizes several Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of national and global significance in New York State.

ON NOVEMBER 29, 2001, Michael Rands, CEO of BirdLife International, Audubon's international Important Bird Area partner, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to Central Park in New York City to help kickoff National Audubon Society's new initiative to identify Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of national and global significance. Frank Gill, National Audubon Society's vice president of Science; Henry Stern, Central Park Commissioner; Mary Ellen Kris, NYC Regional Director for New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, as well as many others joined Rands in celebrating this new IBA designation.

"IBA designation is a good thing for the world, the country, and for your community," said Rands. "Proximity to an IBA tells visitors that you live in a great place."

To date, Audubon New York has identified 127 IBAs that meet state-level criteria. Some of the New York

IBAs that are likely to be designated as global IBAs include Jamaica Bay, the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Niagara River Corridor, the Adirondack High Peaks, and Great Gull Island. These sites and possibility other sites in New York along with others from around the county will be reviewed by a national technical committee to see if they meet the global criteria established by National Audubon Society and BirdLife International. New York's global IBAs link local communities to a worldwide network of globally important sites for birds and other wildlife.

"Birds are something all Americans, indeed all people, have in common," said Frank Gill. "Migrating birds do not recognize borders; they are the ultimate goodwill ambassadors. The Important Bird Areas Program is a way to join people and communities to protect these irreplaceable national treasures."



Attendees remained dry under the cover at the Belvedere Castle in Central Park.

Beaverkill/Willowemoc Mapping Moves Ahead

By Graham Cox

USING THE LATEST Geographic Information System (GIS) information available, Audubon New York staff, with considerable help from two interning SUNY (State University of New York) Albany graduate students, have prepared maps and analyses for key areas in the Beaverkill/Willowemoc watersheds.

Working with a community advisory group and Open Space Institute, and with GIS information received from The Catskill Center, Trout Unlimited and the State Environmental Conservation Department, the computer overlays mapped key areas including flood plains, wetlands, point-sources of pollution, and crucial trout spawning streams. The mapping work will continue using GIS data from the state Office of Real Property Services and from county real property tax assessors to identify owners of some key properties.

The study covers 11 towns in three counties in the south and west Catskill region. Territory covered consists of parts of the area within the Catskill Park and the watershed for the New York City metro area.

6 A list of potential areas will be compiled and proposed to

be included in future revisions of the state open space conservation plan that will help conserve crucial fish, bird and other wildlife habitats. The trout streams are part of the natural history of the region, famous for more than a century as the home of fly-fishing in the United States. Trout fishing, wildlife viewing of the bald eagles and ospreys that populate the reservoir sites nearby and active recreation are the mainstays of the tourism-based economy of the area.

As a result of this open space conservation project Audubon New York is also participating in other Catskill region GIS mapping and analysis. Leaders in this larger mapping are The Nature Conservancy and The Catskill Center. Biological survey and inventory work is also being spearheaded by members of the Olive Natural Heritage Society, based in the Ashokan area of the Catskills.

Audubon New York hopes this model project will not only protect the critical habitats and character of the Catskills, but also help us establish similar initiatives in other parts of the state.

Please Join Us for our 5th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

The 5th Great Backyard Bird Count is coming soon. Join us for the count, Feb 15 - 18, 2002.

Over the last 5 years volunteers have submitted hundreds of thousands of checklists from across the continent. The real power of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is engaging the tens of thousands of volunteers and documenting their local stories. The count can also be a wonderful way to introduce these volunteers to their local chapter.

National Audubon offers free GBBC brochures and posters to help promote the count. A new "GBBC Chapter Challenge" contest has been established to encourage Audubon Chapters to experiment with using the GBBC to help recruit new members. As an added incentive, the three chapters that recruit the most new members during the "GBBC Chapter Challenge" will win one of three prize packages. For more information on how to get your chapter involved, please email Kristen Totaro at ktotaro@audubon.org.

Please join us! For more info go to <http://www.birdsource.org>.