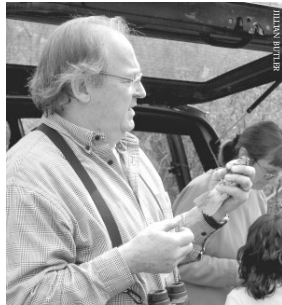


Birds as Catalysts for Conservation

By Jillian Liner

DID YOU REALIZE that some of the most monumental events in the history of the conservation movement came about because of birds? The late 19th and early 20th centuries were pivotal times in conservation as concern over the environment grew following events like the horrific extinction of the Passenger Pigeon. Audubon and the American Ornithologists' Union were formed in the late 19th century, amidst the controversial use of bird plumages for ladies' hats. The Great Egret emerged appropriately as Audubon's symbol, and Audubon wardens risked



Jim Utter, of Friends of the Great Swamp and the Bedford Audubon Society, holding a Wood Thrush at the bird banding demonstration at this year's Great Swamp IMBD celebration.

their lives to save these precious birds at sanctuaries and refuges.

In the early 20th century, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed. Around the same time, a massive movement to conserve wetlands was initiated because of concern over shorebirds as well as waterfowl, which led to the creation of the first National Wildlife Refuge on Pelican Island, Florida. Drastic declines in raptors and other birds at the top of the food chain in the 1960s and 1970s alerted us to the dangers associated with pesticides and eventually led to the ban of DDT.

This year's theme for International Migratory Bird Day—Birds: Catalysts for Conservation—reflects the critical role birds have played in bringing about a greater awareness and sense of responsibility for birds and our environment. Birds are beautiful, observable wildlife; they connect us to nature and serve as indicators of change. International Migratory Bird Day is a day to educate, inspire, and engage people to take action to promote and protect birds and their habitats.

International Migratory Bird Day is the premier outreach event for Partners in Flight and is under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. International Migratory Bird Day takes place annually on the second Saturday of May.

On May 10th of this year, thousands of events were held around the country to celebrate birds, their incredible journey northward from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds, and the vital role they have played in conservation. Some of New York's International Migratory Bird Day celebrations were hosted and sponsored by Audubon Chapters and Centers. Among the events were those held at the Prospect

Park, Constitution Marsh, Great Swamp, Braddock Bay, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, and Cobbs Hill Park, all of which have been recognized as Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

"Thanks to birds, and the individuals and organizations that worked for their conservation, we have made great progress in conserving wildlife and other natural resources in this country," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams. To learn more about International Migratory Bird Day, visit www.birdday.org/imbd.htm.

Inside this issue

Saw Mill River Audubon Turns 50!

Members celebrate 50 years of service to the environment. (See story on page 6)

Birdathons, Birdathons, Birdathons!

Audubon New York's Birdathons take flight across the state. (See story and photo spread on page 7)



Another Bully! Gala

TR Sanctuary and Audubon Center celebrates its 5th Annual Gala. (See story on page 8)



Pesticide Education Campaign Goes Backyard

(See how to get involved on page 13)

Editor's Note: Audubon New York's Executive Director, David J. Miller, was presented with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director's Conservation Award at the 59th Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference held in April in Newport, Rhode Island, by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Director Steven Williams and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North East Regional Director Dr. Mamie Parker.



Audubon New York
200 Trillium Lane, Albany, NY 12203

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