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Albany Office

200 Trillium Lane, Albany, NY 12203
(518) 869-9731 / <http://ny.audubon.org>
Debra Balliet, *Capital Campaigns Director*
Robert Budliger, *Breeding Bird Atlas Consultant*
William Cooke, *Pesticide Program Coordinator*
Graham Cox, *Open Space Coordinator*
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Daphne Lumpkin, *Office Manager*
Andrew Mackie, *Education Manager*
Sean Mahar, *Grassroots Advocacy Coordinator*
Aimee Tweedie, *Administrative Assistant*

New York City Office (212) 979-3000

Nina Cabot, *Major Gifts Officer*
Regan Clover, *Education Manager*
Heather Hanson, *Major Gifts Officer*
Haley Main, *Environmental Educator*

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Jillian Limer, *IBA Coordinator* (607) 254-2437
Mitschka Hartley, Ph.D., *Forest Ecologist* (607) 254-2487
Julie Hart, *Bird Conservation Intern*

Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary
PO Box 174, Cold Spring, NY 10516 (845) 265-2601

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95 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn, NY 11215 (718) 287-3400
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134 Cove Rd., Oyster Bay, NY 11771 (516) 922-3200
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Audubon Centers and Sanctuaries
PO Box 1, Craryville, NY 12521 (518) 325-5203
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Larry Federman, *Assistant Warden/Educator*

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CREATING A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION



David J. Miller
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

NEW YORK STATE is blessed with a great diversity of natural wonders, from the shores of the Great Lakes to the mountains of the Adirondacks, from the streams of the Catskills to the wetlands of Long Island Sound. Whether you are on the Hudson River or standing in an urban park, birds and wildlife experiences are abundant.

Audubon New York is investing in connecting people to these magical places through our 2020 vision and the creation of Audubon Centers. Audubon Centers will feature unique habitat-based education programs that will link people with nature through hands-on science-based experiences, designed to guide participants along the continuum from appreciation, to understanding, to stewardship. Whether in Brooklyn's Prospect Park or Montezuma's wetland complex, Audubon Centers are being created to connect people to nature.

The State of New York has made major investments in conservation over the past eight years, protecting 400,000 acres of land for future generations. These open spaces are not only critical to the state's biodiversity, but also in helping to create a culture of conservation and a conservation experience for all New Yorkers.

These achievements have been made through significant dollars from the State of New York, including the full appropriation of the \$1.75 billion Environmental Bond Act, which was adopted by voters in 1996. Our challenge today is to maintain and build upon these conservation successes, even with current state budget deficits and a slow economy.

This spring, Audubon New York testified before the State Legislature and met with governmental leaders urging full funding of the State Environmental

Protection Fund and a bold new Bond Act for conservation. Our message in these troubled budgetary times is simple. Conservation is a critical investment in good and bad economic times. Conservation funds provide for future state parks and natural areas for generations yet to enjoy, as well as a stimulus to today's economy. Audubon's proposed Bond Act has as its focus Smart Growth and Quality Community principles so that critical lands and habitats can be set aside as an investment for tomorrow.

Audubon notes that California passed a Bond issue for Parks last fall even though it was suffering with greater deficits than those in New York State. The rationale for this action is sound, for the bulk of the payments to re-pay the Bonds come due in the future during better economic times but are secured at today's low interest rates. In addition, with the 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act fully committed as outlined above, the need is even greater now.

Audubon New York looks forward to working with Governor George E. Pataki and the Legislature on this Bond Act proposal. We believe it makes good economic and environmental sense. With an emphasis on open space, Audubon Centers and environmental quality, it will be a winner that pays dividends for present and future generations.

Join us and become an Audubon Advocate for this important initiative.

In Conservation,

David J. Miller

CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

July 2003

3-12 The Great Hudson River Paddle 2003
Thursday, July 3 to Saturday, July 12, 2003. For more info visit <http://www.hrwa.org/ghrp/index.html>.

August 2003

9-10 2003 Nature Art Festival sponsored by the Jamestown Audubon Society. For more info call 1-800-758-6841 or <http://www.natureartfest.org>.

September 2003

6 The 7th annual Montezuma Muckrace at the Montezuma Wetlands Complex in central New York. For more info contact Jillian Limer at 607-254-2437 or jlimer@audubon.org.

27-28 Hawk Weekend

12:00 - 5:00 P.M. Prospect Park Boathouse, 95 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn, NY 11215, 718-287-3400.

October 2003

17-19 The Audubon Council of New York State meeting at the Ramada Inn, Kingston, New York. For more info contact Daphne Lumpkin at 518-869-9731 or dlumpkin@audubon.org.

18 Naturally Nocturnal Program

At Constitution Marsh. For more info contact Connie Mayer at 845-265-2601 or cmayer@audubon.org.

November 2003

13 The Thomas W. Keesee Award Luncheon at the Yale Club in New York City. This year's honoree is Audubon New York Board Member and conservation leader, Samuel J. Pryor III.