

Audubon New York Centers & Education Update

By Richard Haley

AUDUBON NEW YORK'S Centers and Education programs continue to grow and reach over 200,000 people each year. The past year has seen new programs around the state, with more coming up in 2005.

The Montezuma Audubon Center, in partnership with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, is moving along toward an expected opening in April 2006. Building plans are being finalized, with construction to begin in the summer of 2005. In order for Audubon New York to be fiscally ready to run the center, a kickoff fundraising event, in partnership with the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) and Ducks Unlimited, will be held on April 22 at the Sherwood Inn in Skaneateles. Several of the chairs and co-chairs of this event include Dr. Cornelius Murphy of SUNY-ESF, Bill Edwards of Niagara Mohawk, Bob Moses of Syracuse and Bill Eberhardt of the Sherwood Inn. This center will be Audubon's first Center in central New York, serving people from Syracuse to Rochester to Ithaca, as well as visitors to the Finger Lakes region. Audubon supporters from across the state are invited to this event and to enjoy the beauty of the Finger Lakes.

In 2004, for the first time, Audubon New York had a tent at the New York State Fair in Syracuse, by invitation from the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places. Thousands of people came through to see live birds of prey from our Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center, see the bluebird house exhibit, take our birds of prey quiz, and try free samples of Audubon's certified organic shade grown coffee.

The Theodore Roosevelt Audubon Sanctuary and Center, in Oyster Bay, continues to serve tens of thousands of program participants each year. Offerings include another very popular summer day camp, a new set of public programs for families, and the first participation of a Long Island School in *For The Birds!* The live birds of prey exhibits now feature a new addition, a non-releasable black vulture. TR's annual Gala is coming up on April 30th. One of this year's honorees is local resident Dr James Watson, co-discov-



Governor George E. Pataki at the New York State Fair with the Theodore Roosevelt Audubon Center and Sanctuary's Great Horned Owl looking on.

erer of the structure of DNA and a strong advocate of sound science education.

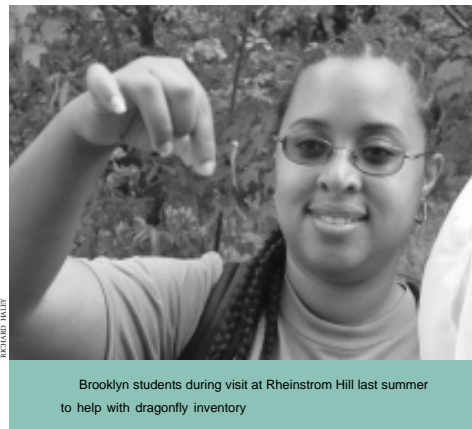
Also on Long Island, our seasonal Kaler's Pond Audubon Center, in Center Moriches, held its first ever Wildlife Festival in the summer of 2004, with live birds of prey, amphibians and reptiles, along with games, dragonfly catching and bluebird house building. The Kaler's Pond Center, which joined the Audubon Centers Network just a year ago, has now formed a new Advisory Board and is ready to grow its profile in the community.

The Prospect Park Audubon Center in Brooklyn won a prestigious Feinstone Award from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 2004. New exhibits at the Center over the past year have included Birds in Baseball, Dragonflies, and Flight. Students from the Brooklyn Academy for Science and the Environment have been learning science through investigations in and around the Center, and will be soon be starting independent projects.

At the Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary in Cold Spring, new outreach programs about eagles have started, and the *For The Birds!* program has been piloted with a local

school—marking the first time that program has taken place in the Hudson Valley. The Marsh's participation in research continues, with bird banding, marsh bird surveys, investigation of biodiversity in local streams, and the start of an invasive phragmites grass control study in the Marsh and in nearby Foundry Cove.

Our three upper valley sites, Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Center, Buttercup Farm Sanctuary, and the RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary, all had new programs in 2004. A group of students from Brooklyn camped out at Rheinstrom Hill last summer and helped with dragonfly inventory at all three sites. An Advisory Board for Buttercup Farm will be formed in 2005. New interpretive signs have been designed for RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary, in partnership with Scenic Hudson, co-owners of the Sanctuary. The interpretive sign project is funded by NYSDEC Estuary Program and the



Brooklyn students during visit at Rheinstrom Hill last summer to help with dragonfly inventory

Hudson River Foundation. The signs will be installed early in 2005. Expansion of the Canoe/Kayak Program at RamsHorn to include school groups is being planned.

The Audubon Center at Knox Farm State Park, in East Aurora, now has a display of bluebird houses and the nests found in them, interpretive panels on grassland birds, and a touch table for families to explore together. Programs have continued to be held at the site with the help of the Buffalo Audubon Society. The second annual Audubon Nature Festival will be taking place this year on Saturday, May 21, featuring live animals, bird banding demonstrations, bluebird house building and more.

For more information on the programs at our Audubon Centers, please visit us on the web at <http://ny.audubon.org>.



High school students from New York City exploring Ramshorn Creek