



## Board Chairman

### *Jet skis: pleasure or plague?*

By Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff

Over the years, many New Yorkers have grown increasingly upset at the use of jet skis on our waters, be they lakes, streams or rivers. There have been many incidents involving the inappropriate use of these machines, including chasing waterfowl, disrupting nests, buzzing swimmers and playing chicken. Injuries due to the improper use of these vehicles have been increasing, and the noise, pollution and overall effects on the state's waterways have been very detrimental.

National Audubon Society of New York State has led the way in solving, at least part of this problem. Working with Senator Carl Marcellino and Assemblymen Tom DiNapoli and with a lot of help from Senator Ron Stafford, a resolution of this issue has now been reached. Both the assembly and the senate have passed a Jet Ski Home Rule Bill and Governor Pataki has signed it into law. This law allows local governments to regulate, restrict and even prohibit the use of jet skis and other specialty prop craft on the local waterways, provided that they do not block access to navigable waterways of the United States. Working together, local communities can regulate the use of these vehicles, and begin to attack the problem. However, they must follow the procedures laid down in the law.

If the local municipalities want to encourage the use of these machines, they can, but at the same time, and for the first time, municipalities can just say "NO" to the noise, the pollution and the destruction that frequently accompany these machines.

Anyone that has a residence on the Hudson River, as I do, can attest to the pestilential noise and pollution



caused by the unfettered use of these noisy polluting machines.

In addition, existing laws governing the speed of pleasure vessels, and the noise pollution created by pleasure vessels, have been singularly unenforced over the years. Now that we have gotten the jet ski law passed, it is time to sensitize law enforcement agencies patrolling our rivers, lakes and streams to these issues so that they can begin to enforce and regulate speed, noise and other types of pollution of all vessels. Let us all work together so that the images of our waterways are scenic vistas with birds and wildlife instead of speeding jet skis.

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## Council Chairman

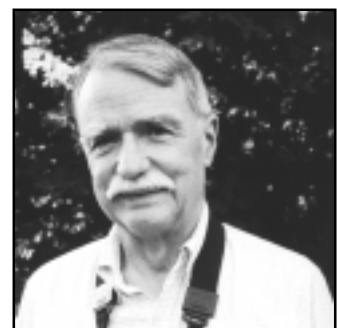
### *NASNY successes highlighted*

By Geoffrey Cobb Ryan

Our fall Audubon Council of New York State meeting in Niagara Falls was a great success, thanks to the efforts of the Buffalo and Jamestown chapters, National Audubon Society of New York State (NASNY) staffers, chapter delegates and leaders who came from across the state, plus the dramatic falls, a full moon and wonderful weather. We were pleased that Connie Eristoff could join us, and honored to have commissioners of two New York state departments — Bernadette Castro of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Nathan Rudgers of Agriculture and Markets. Both conveyed a remarkable interest in environmental issues and a forward-looking enthusiasm for steps their departments can take to protect open spaces, water bodies and habitat.

An article by Commissioner Rudgers in this edition of the *Advocate* outlines some problems faced by farmers in New York and programs designed to help resolve them. For Auduboners, the preservation of farmland, managed in environmentally sensitive ways, is of vital concern for many reasons, not least of which is the role farmland plays in providing habitat for grassland birds.

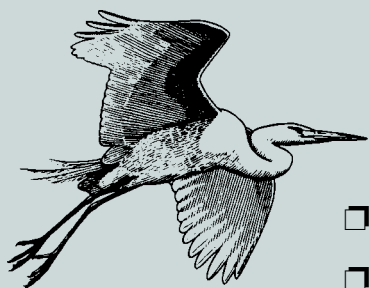
Another highlight of our meeting was David Miller's report on legislative achievements in 2000. As many of you know, the Audubon Council of New York State, representing 31 chapters in the state, approves a packet of legislative resolutions every spring. The resulting book of resolutions provides direction to NASNY and chapters on the issues that are of most concern to Auduboners. The resolutions lend powerful support to NASNY staff and chapter members as they advocate a course of action with government officials at all levels of government or when drumming up support for a cause with other civic



groups. An article in this *Advocate* outlines those achievements, but one can serve as a model of how NASNY and chapters can work together to make things happen.

For many years, Auduboners in New York City have been distressed by the use of Avitrol, a bird poison that drives off pigeons. How, you may ask, does a poison drive off birds rather than killing them? Corn kernels or other grains are thrown about for the birds' delectation; some are laced with Avitrol. The poisoned grain causes convulsive behavior and death of those pigeons unlucky enough to eat it. The remaining members of the flock, on observing this behavior, remove themselves from the premises and stay away until their collective memories fail. Of course, new flocks, not privy to previous use of Avitrol at the site, show up and the cycle is repeated.

For several years, NASNY and New York City Audubon have been working together to get Avitrol banned. This year, a ban on use of Avitrol in New York City was signed by Governor Pataki, thanks to the coordinated advocacy of NASNY's David Miller and Bill Cooke in Albany and New York City Auduboners, most notably Mary Kelly and Sean Andrews. Thanks to all for their efforts and for demonstrating that coordination and focussing on efforts are key to accomplishing our legislative goals.



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