



SUMMER/FALL 2019

Volume LXXV, Issue 3

From the Presidents Perch

THE LOSS OF A BACKYARD OAK TREE COULD DEVASTATE LOCAL WILDLIFE

A tree is cut down in the backyard, a common occurrence in suburbia, hardly anyone notices. Maybe the sound of the saw, the trucks hauling away the discarded wood earns a quick glance and then life goes on. Unfortunately, life may not go on so well for the vast numbers of backyard wildlife that depend on the oak tree for their survival. I am sure you are all familiar with acorns. We get annoyed when they fall on our driveway and are just raked up when they get on our patio but what most people are not aware of is how important they are to our local wildlife. Gray squirrels, chipmunks, wild turkeys, crows, flying squirrels, rabbits, opossums, blue jays, woodpeckers, raccoons, wood ducks and yes deer need acorns to survive. At least 100 species rely on acorns; they have evolved with them throughout time. In autumn and winter the acorn is one of the most valuable food resources available for wildlife survival. And yet as important as the acorn is, the most vital benefit of the Oak tree to wildlife may go completely unnoticed and ignored.

In the book "*Bringing Nature Home*" Douglas Tallamy documented that Oaks support 517 species of Lepidoptera, that means 517 species of butterflies and moths that need it to survive. Beautiful butterflies such as the Red-Spotted Purple, Red Banded Hairstreak and Horace's Duskywing need Oaks to lay their eggs; not to mention many more but no less beautiful moth species that can only endure if they have an Oak tree available to bring forth their next generation. In turn those diverse species of insects provide food to millions of migratory and nesting birds each year. The Warblers, Orioles, Vireos and yes even your beloved backyard Cardinals and Chickadees need those insects to feed their young. And just in case you think all is good because we have a few non-native trees in the backyard - think again. While the Oak tree attracts 517 species of valuable insect species, something like the lowly Bradford pear tree might attract maybe one or two species at best. This means that even though your backyard is lush and green and lovely to the eye, without native plants like the Oaks your yard becomes a wasteland for wildlife.

If you are an experienced birder you are well aware of the value of the Oak tree. Most likely you have heard of something called the magic tree. Simply put the "magic tree" is a tree where you always seem to find the best birds when visiting the area and most of the time your enchanted tree winds up to be a species of Oak, why? Because it provides exactly what the birds need precisely at the time our birds need them the most. And then of course there is the housing shortage here in the Garden State, not only for us humans but for wildlife also. The Oak tree makes great nesting places for Owls, Hawks, Woodpeckers, and Nuthatches just to name a few. The next time you have a Woodpecker trying to make home on your home, keeping up your Oak trees may be something to think about.

The great conservationist John Muir once said "*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.*" When it comes to our Oak trees we now know how much many of the creatures that we love and cherish depend on these wonderful trees. So save an Oak when you can, plant new ones whenever and wherever you can and tell your neighbors and friends that we need our backyard Oaks to assure we continue to live among thriving life forms essential to life as we know it. Trees are as alive as any bird, butterfly or human for that matter. We just need to remind ourselves that our backyards are an integral part of a complex ecosystem which is no less important than any nature center or state forest. We must take the wildlife that now depend on us into consideration when caring for our backyard wildlife habitats.

DON TORINO

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**GREAT DIVERSITY OF BIRDLIFE DISCOVERED
DURING 2019 SPRING COUNT**

147 species, 4765 total birds

This year's 26th annual BCAS Spring Bird Count was timed to coincide with International Migratory Bird Day. Although our spring weather had been fickle at best, on the appointed Saturday in early May we lucked out in all respects. The weather was quite nice, our many volunteers were eager to get outside, and the birds somehow arrived "just in time". Birding had seemed slow at times this year, but by spreading across the whole area, we found an impressive list of birds and good numbers for many of them.

Although the warblers (my personal favorites) were not seen in record numbers, their diversity was gratifying (24 species). Garret Mountain was the best place for warblers, but many of our forested County parks also held excellent arrays of birds. Open spaces in the Meadowlands drew lots of ducks and sandpipers, plus Clapper Rail, Sora, and even a Saltmarsh Sparrow! Surely one of the highlight birds of the day was a Summer Tanager found near Oradell Reservoir.

We are very grateful to the efforts of ALL our volunteers, and that virtually every group managed to contribute something special. I am particularly grateful to the group by Chris Takacs. They devoted the whole 24 hours to the effort, and in advance they did much scouting. As a result, they knew where to find a pair of Barred Owls near the Meadows, even in total darkness.

Mother Nature is still going strong here, if we just know how to quiz her.

DAVE HALL

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14.

MEADOWLANDS BIRDING FESTIVAL with keynote speaker, Sharon Stiteler, aka "The Bird Chick!"



* * *

JOIN THE FUN – The day will include bird walks, talks, raptor visits, kids activities and more celebrating the Meadowlands' amazing bird population.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE. Our volunteer column thanking those who have donated their time and energy for our wildlife. This time BCAS thanks **Gabrielle Bennett-Meany** for her efforts on behalf of increasing the Meadowlands native plant diversity. She is the NJSEA Parks Coordinator and has spent 26 years at the NJSEA in various capacities within the agency's Natural Resources Department . * * * *



In an effort to protect the ecology of the Meadowlands, the NJSEA Natural Resources Department has been monitoring the flora throughout the Meadowlands District. Through our field surveys and studies we have been able to track progress in the species in the region. Much of the floral diversity in the Meadowlands is disappearing and few places remain where native plant diversity can be found. Some sites are small patches of a unique assemblage of plants surrounded by an area overrun with weedy or non-native vegetation. The non-native plants are a threat to local diversity. They may look attractive, but provide little food or nesting opportunities for wildlife. They also tend to be aggressive, growing quickly and crowding out more valuable species.

The main goal of our parks and open space group, in addition to continually improving and enhancing the District's parks and natural areas, is to educate the public about native plants. When you visit Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, either on your own or by attending one of the BCAS-NJSEA free public events, you can observe many native plants. But Beware: not all plants in the park are native and that leads us to our future goals. We are looking to increase available wildlife habitat by planting native plants that can provide food for local wildlife and establish greater coverage of native plant species by removing the weedy and non-native vegetation from the site.

Lastly, we hope that members of the general public will see how easy it is to plant native plants and will want to do the same in their own backyards. There's not much to it. These plants have evolved in the area. They are the reasons why ecosystems naturally work the way that they do. Native plants promote biodiversity and stewardship of our natural heritage. Lawn or gardens that mostly feature non-native species of plants are of little benefit to wildlife. Natural landscaping is an opportunity to reestablish native plants and invite birds and butterflies to your home.

The Bergen County Audubon Society has been providing donations to assist with the reestablishment of native plants throughout the park. They are a welcomed partner with a shared vision and common goal.

by **GABRIELLE BENNETT-MEANY**

2019 ANNUAL FEEDER CLEANING FUNDRAISER

Chair, PEGGY O'NEILL

On Sat. June 1, BCAS had our **Annual Birdfeeder Cleaning at Wild Birds Unlimited** in Paramus. The weather cooperated and brought out some 169 feeders which raised \$970.00 to help us to support our mission of conservation and education on nature. In addition to thanking the owners of those birdfeeders, the following volunteers came out and worked very hard to help achieve our goal.

THANKS TO

Allan Monday, Jim Macaluso, Dave&Nancy Hall, Joan Hessing, Carl Hogelin , Marty Prince, Susan Lindstrom,

Rachel Stern, Phil Selby, Karen Nickeson, Tracy Carcione, Tammy Laverty, Pam Ferrera, Olivia Mistretta,

Micheal Buckley, Cindy Lopez , Chris Takacs, Mary Kostus, Joe Koscielny, Pat Torino and Peggy O'Neill.

In addition we want to thank Scott Gunther, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, who has been a very good friend to Bergen County Audubon and the staff, Deborah, Susan and Don Torino.

If I have left anyone out who worked that day I apologise and if notified will credit in the next BlueJay.

CONSERVATION

Chair, **KAREN NICKESON**

The Grand Duke of America

Bubo virginianus



If you collect the Audubon/Wild Republic plush birds fitted with sound chips of their songs, you may notice that the tag offers international collectors the French description. Here the Great Horned Owl is also known as Le Grand-duc d'Amérique. I think it's a better name, appropriately noble. Perhaps because this bird is so well camouflaged and stealthy, birders in this area take special delight in knowing they have been discovered. Seeing an evening fly-out, or fledglings on a branch is a particular treat. We protect them by keeping the location of nest sites under wraps and place the owl's safety above our desire to view them or take photographs.

Although the species status for Great Horned Owl conservation is classified as "Least concern," the population in the U.S. and Canada has declined by 27% in recent years, according to Partners in Flight. What can we do to help?

1. Preserve habitat. This is a prime objective in our county and beyond.
2. Flight collisions. Cars are enemies of raptors. A carelessly thrown apple core on the side of the road may attract a rodent that may attract a raptor, flying into deadly traffic at dusk.
3. Remove discarded fishline and report the location to BCAS. Entangled owls perish. <https://bergencountyaudubon.org/monitoringobservations/>
4. Fight the use of rodent poisons. Owls prey upon rodents that have ingested rodenticides resulting in a long debilitation and death. If you know of a property owner that is using rat poison near open space, report it to BCAS and we will act to alter that behavior until statutes are changed to control rodenticides.

ANNOUNCING THE 10TH ANNUAL "BCAS/HAROLD FEINBERG CONSERVATION AWARD"

One of the best things about leading Bergen Audubon as the President has been the opportunity to meet many devoted, hardworking people in many small communities around Bergen County that are committed to conservation and making the environment a better place for their neighbors and the wildlife around them. These unsung heroes have given of themselves with little recognition and often with personal sacrifice. So it is in their honor that we are proud to announce our annual "**Bergen County Audubon/Harold Feinberg Conservation Award**".

This award is named in honor of Harold Feinberg, a long time member and field trip chairman for many years. Harold had been a mentor, an enthusiastic supporter of our endeavors and had always given freely of his expertise with a combination of patience and knowledge that few possess. **We are asking you to nominate a candidate that you think should be recognized with this award. Please send us the name of someone who you think has worked on behalf of the environment and the BCAS board will consider them for the Award.** (Current BCAS board members are not eligible).

Nominations must include:

a) Name and address or phone number of the individual. b) Description of their accomplishment; why you think this individual(s) should receive this award (400 words or less). c) Your name and address or phone number.

All nominations must be received no later than September 30, 2019. Award presentation at our December meeting.

-Submissions may be mailed to BCAS, PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653 or email to Don Torino at greatauk4@gmail.com

SPRING COUNT FUNDRAISER

Thanks to all who have participated in this event. A full listing of contributors' names will be in the next edition of Blue Jay.

PEGGY O'NEILL

FIELD TRIPS: --SUMMER/FALL, 2019

Unless noted, all field trips are rain OR shine. For last minute changes due to inclement weather or other conditions, please notify trip leader. For additional information or to make suggestions for field trips, **please contact chair, CHRIS TAKACS 201-207-0426 or americanchris22@gmail.com. Updates are posted on www.bergencountyaudubon.org.**

Where not noted, *Don Torino contact info -Don Torino 201-230-4983 or greatauk4@gmail.com*

August 4 (Sun) 10:00 AM Richard DeKorte Park. Herons, Egrets and shorebirds. Contact: Don Torino

August 6 (Tues) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Butterfly and Native Plant Walk. Contact: Don Torino

August 8 (Thurs) 10:00 AM River Barge Park Members Only Boat Trip. Pontoon cruise looking for egrets, osprey and other birds of interest. Space is limited, pre-registration required. Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

August 11 (Sun) 1:00 PM Butterfly Walk at NJ Botanical Garden in Ringwood. \$5.00 per car parking fee.
Contact: Don Torino. 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

August 18 (Sun) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Thrushes, Warblers, and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

August 20 (Tues) 10:00 AM Mill Creek Marsh. Shorebirds, Egrets and fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983

August 22 (Thurs) 10:00 AM River Barge Park, Members Only Boat Trip. Pontoon cruise looking for egrets, osprey and other birds of interest. Space is limited, pre-registration required. Contact: Chris Takacs 201-207-0426, americanchris22@gmail.com.

August 31 (Sat) 8:00 AM Hatfield Swamp. Meet at Stop N Shop Parking Lot, Warblers, forest birds and other fall migrants. Contact: Dave Hall 973-226-7825 david.hall@einstein.yu.edu

September 1 (Sun) 10:00 AM DeKorte Park. Shorebirds, Warblers and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

September 3 (Tues) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Warblers and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

September 14 (Sat) 8:30 AM-4:30 PM. MEADOWLANDS BIRDING FESTIVAL, DE KORTE PARK. Walks, Programs and more
Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com.

September 15 (Sun) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Warblers and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

September 17 (Tues) 10:00 AM Losen Slote Creek Park. Warblers and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

September 22 (Sun) 10:00 AM NJ Botanical Garden Nature Walk. Looking for Butterflies, Flowering plants and fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

September 26 (Thurs) 10:00 AM Borg's Woods, Hackensack. Warblers, Thrushes and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

October 1 (Tues) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Sparrows, Warblers and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

October 6 (Sun) 10:00 AM Richard DeKorte Park. Don's Birthday Walk. Shorebirds, Herons, Egrets, Sparrows and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

October 10 (Thurs) 8:30 AM Branch Brook Park. Meet at Cherry Lane Visitor Center. Contact: Dave Hall 973-226-7825 david.hall@einstein.yu.edu

October 12 (Sat) 8:30 AM Becker Tract. Meet at Essex County Environment Center, Roseland. Warblers, Sparrows and other fall migrants. Contact: Dave Hall 973-226-7825 david.hall@einstein.yu.edu

October 13 (Sun) 10:00 AM Birding For Beginners at The New Weis Center, Ringwood. Introductory class with Don, followed by a walk. Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

October 15 (Tues) 10:00 AM Harrier Meadow Herons, Ducks, Sparrows, Shorebirds, and other birds of interest. Contact: Don Torino 201-230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

October 20 (Sun) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Looking for sparrows and other fall migrants. Contact: Don Torino

October 26 (Sat) 8:30 AM Hatfield Swamp. Meet at Stop N Shop Parking Lot, Warblers, forest birds and other fall migrants.
Contact: Dave Hall 973-226-7825 david.hall@einstein.yu.edu

EDUCATION

Chair, MARIE LONGO

Certified Wildlife Gardens. -Our latest addition is **Van Vleck House & Gardens in Montclair**, bringing our total to 140. Help make a difference for birds, pollinators and wildlife by adding some native plants to your garden and have your garden certified by BCAS. To learn more about the program or for an application, visit bergencountyaudubon.org/cwg/.

Audubon Adventures. -The title for the 2019-2020 season will be **Sharing Our World With Birds**. Topics for each of the three Audubon Adventures magazines will explore seabirds, shorebirds and birds of prey. If your school, group or nature center is interested in participating in the program, please contact Marie Longo MLongo8383@aol.com. To learn more about the program visit audubonadventures.org.

2019 Dick Engsberg Teacher Appreciation Award. -The award ceremony was held at our June chapter meeting. The three recipients were honored for their environmental leadership and for connecting students with nature. Congratulations to these three outstanding teachers!



From left to right:

Allyson Kennedy, -Seventh grade Science teacher at Lincoln Middle School in Kearny.

Joanne Cavera, -Science Department Chair and teacher at St. Joseph Regional High School.

Dr. Sarahfaye Mahon, -Teacher Grades 9-12, Biology Club Moderator at Paramus Catholic High School

AWARD TO VP OF MEADOWLANDS MUSEUM



Carol Kowalski, VP of Meadowlands Museum, is awarded a check for \$1000 by BCAS president, Don Torino for the creation of a Butterfly Garden on the museum's site at 91 Crane Ave., Rutherford, NJ. This local history museum of the Meadowlands has rotating and permanent exhibits, many focused on NJ poet/doctor, William Carlos Williams.

If you would like to visit, here is the link-www.meadowlandsmuseum.com/ or call first at 201-9351175.

SCHEDULE OF MONTHLY EVENTS & MEETINGS

Meetings are held at Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Puffin Way, Teaneck.

Business Meeting at 7:30pm. Programs begin at 8pm.

Wed., 9/18/19: 8PM. Tenafly Nature Center, *Rapp'n with Raptors*. Participants will observe several live raptors up close and learn about their behavior, physiology, adaptations ecological importance and natural history. Hands-on artifacts and demonstrations will capture the imagination of everyone.

Wed., 10/16/19: 8PM. Marc Gussen, Closter Nature Center. *Mushrooms, The Amazing World of Fungi*.

Wed., 11/20/19: 8PM Gabrielle Bennett-Meany, the NJSEA Parks Coordinator. *Habitat Improvement Project -Kingsland Overlook*.

Contact Marilyn Sadowski at 201 982-0483
for speaker and program suggestions.

26TH ANNUAL BCAS SPRING COUNT --

147 Total Species, 4765 total birds

MAY 11, 2019

by DAVE HALL

Common Loon	1	Red-bellied Woodpkr	58	Palm Warbler	1
Dbl-crst. Cormorant	54	Yellow-b. Sapsucker	1	Blackpoll Warbler	15
Great Blue Heron	11	Downy Woodpecker	17	Prothonotary Warbler	2
Great Egret	21	Hairy Woodpecker	9	Black & White Warbler	34
Snowy Egret	10	Northern Flicker	6	Amer. Redstart	37
Green-backed Heron	4	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Worm-eating Warbler	4
Bl-crn. Night Heron	4	Eastern Phoebe	7	Ovenbird	31
Mute Swan	5	Gr. Crested Flycatcher	18	N. Waterthrush	10
Canada Goose	137	Eastern Wood-Peewee	4	L. Waterthrush	1
Wood Duck	19	Willow Flycatcher	3	Common Yellowthroat	50
Green-winged Teal	3	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	Wilson's Warbler	1
Am. Black Duck	4	Least Flycatcher	3	Hooded Warbler	2
Mallard	124	Eastern Kingbird	6	Canada Warbler	2
Common Pintail	1	Tree Swallow	246	Scarlet Tanager	23
Northern Shoveler	4	N. Rough-winged Swallow	39	Summer Tanager	1
Gadwall	16	Cliff Swallow	5	Northern Cardinal	52
Am. Widgeon	1	Bank Swallow	3	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	12
Bufflehead	1	Barn Swallow	83	Indigo Bunting	7
Ruddy Duck	14	Blue Jay	302	Eastern Towhee	3
Turkey Vulture	33	Common Raven	3	Chipping Sparrow	14
Black Vulture	2	American Crow	12	Savannah Sparrow	30
Osprey	9	Fish Crow	10	Saltmarsh Sparrow	1
Bald Eagle	14	Black-capped Chickadee	14	Song Sparrow	39
Sharp-shin. Hawk	1	Tufted Titmouse	23	Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Red-shouldered. Hawk	4	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Swamp Sparrow	7
Red-tailed Hawk	23	Wht.-breasted Nuthatch	11	White-throated Sparrow	33
Merlin	3	Carolina Wren	15	White-crowned. Sparrow	3
Peregrine Falcon	1	House Wren	22	Bobolink	5
Wild Turkey	5	Marsh Wren	30	Red-winged. Blackbird	185
Clapper Rail	1	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	13	Common Grackle	116
Sora	3	Eastern Bluebird	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	17
Semi-palm. Plover	28	Veery	19	Orchard Oriole	14
Killdeer	7	Swainson's Thrush	24	Baltimore Oriole	81
Gr. Yellowlegs	56	Wood Thrush	28	House Finch	23
Ls. Yellowlegs	14	American Robin	223	Pine Siskin	2
Solitary Sandpiper	24	Gray Catbird	142	American Goldfinch	52
Spotted Sandpiper	15	N. Mockingbird	18	House Sparrow	70
Semipalm. Sandpiper	15	Brown Thrasher	1	Monk Parakeet	4
Least Sandpiper	905	Cedar Waxwing	37	Mallard x Wigeon	1
Dunlin	5	European Starling	78		
Short-billed Dowitcher	3	Red-eyed Vireo	35		
Wilson's Snipe	2	Yellow-throated Vireo	2		
Ring-billed Gull	60	Warbling Vireo	32		
Herring Gull	25	Blue-winged Warbler	1		
Gr. Bl.-backed Gull	2	Pine Warbler	5		
Forster's Tern	3	N. Parula Warbler	50		
Rock Dove	16	Yellow Warbler	68		
Mourning Dove	111	Chestnut-sided Warbler	14		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2	Magnolia Warbler	15		
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	Cape May Warbler	2		
Common Nighthawk	2	Black-thr. Blue Warbler	22		
Barred Owl	2	Yellow-rump(Myrtle) W.	53		
Chimney Swift	66	Black-thr. Green Warbler	13		
Belted Kingfisher	5	Blackburnian Warbler	3		

147 species, 4765 total birds,
most surprising birds **in bold**

BERGEN COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 235
Paramus, NJ 07653-0235



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Bergen County Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. As Members of Bergen County Audubon Society, we share a love for birds and a concern for the environment. Our mission is to promote and protect wildlife in their natural habitat by providing opportunities for observation and conservation.

All field trips and programs are open to the public and free of charge.

Dated Material
July 2019

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2019

Please enroll me as a member of the Bergen Audubon Society (Q07) and/or the National Audubon Society. My check is enclosed for

\$20 Chapter Sustaining Member or **\$35 Family Membership.** All funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services in Bergen County and surrounding areas. Make check payable to Bergen County Audubon.

\$20 - National Audubon Society Member. (1st year rate for new NAS members only). Includes Chapter membership. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address : _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

E-mail (I would like to be notified of upcoming events online and receive the newsletter electronically.)

Please mail to : BCAS Membership Chair, PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653-0235

Volunteer opportunities in local chapter activities or committees are available. Please circle your interest and mail with your subscription or see any officer or chair at one of the meetings.

Conservation Membership Publicity Field Trips
 Education Newsletter/Website Gardening