



SPRING/SUMMER 2021

Volume LXXXI
Issue 2

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

BIRDING AND TIME



Lately some of my days out birding feels more like an old vaudeville routine than a day in the field. A good friend of mine has a problem hearing and I have a big problem seeing but together as we jokingly like to put it we equal one complete birder. He depends on me to tell him what I heard and I need him to tell me what I missed-- part of nature's many intricate symbiotic relationships I guess. But there is no time to feel sorry for ourselves, nature does not allow for that. After all, there is nothing more perfect than friends helping each other especially when it comes to birding.

As much as birding is about the birds themselves, it is also about our life's journey as it all comes together to connect and intertwine with the natural world around us. Of course being part of the natural world means that just like everything else from the trees to the rivers-- time passes by. Some may look on that law of nature as being sad or even final but if it was not for those past years and times, I would never have had the pleasure of seeing the many incredible birds that I have enjoyed so much or the joy and honor of birding with some of the most amazing people I have ever met.

Back when I was the younger guy, I had the privilege to learn about nature from some great folks, all much older and wiser but also along with that they had the knowledge, passion and forethought of any zealous evangelist willing to preach to all who cared to listen and learn about our birds and the natural world around us. They were a little slower up the hill, fumbled for their glasses when looking at the field guide and didn't always pick up on your many bird questions right away, but had what seemed like the knowledge of the entire natural world at their finger tips. But as things have always been in nature and always will, nothing stays the same and nothing is forever. and with the inevitability of nature's perfection, many of those special people are no longer here with me. I can remember feeling everything from sadness to anger when some of my aging friends would hang up their binoculars for good. Many times with no other choice but for some others out of frustration from not being able to bird with the same precision as they once had. Maybe it was selfish on my part but I was mad that they would deny me more time to spend afield with them. But I also knew many others were being denied their passion and knowledge and even though I thought they had a lot more to contribute-- they felt it was time to call it a day.

Of course now I am that older guy and understand all too well the frustrations my friends had many years ago. And now of course those same maladies have somehow been transferred to me. Now my old legs will no longer take me to the top of mountains, my eyes will deny me the warbler in the tree tops and my ears may lessen the song of a Wood thrush but hanging up the binoculars will not be an option, at least for me. In fact I would not have it any other way to be where I am right now. Age may be catching up to me as it has to many birders but to be frustrated or give up would mean that I am ignoring where I have been, the way nature has always worked, and that the birds that I have come to love over those many years are now meaningless, and the great people I love birding with are not important. This is something I would never consider or surrender to. When we accept that we are part of nature then we can better understand that where we are in life is where we are meant to be, and that it should be joyfully embraced and shared to see how magnificent life is and that each phase of it is no less special than the other, young or old.

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BERGEN COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY—

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Published quarterly by the Bergen County Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Send articles to PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653-0235 or email editor, Nancy Salvati at nancys@nj.rr.com.

President's Perch Cont'd

Although there are those days when I wish I had better legs that would take me farther and my eyes see a little better I would never wish that I was any younger than I am now.

With my age comes the knowledge and love of all the places I have been, the people I came to love, and the birds I will never forget just as nature intended it to be.

Get outside, never stop wandering the meadows and woods, share your years of knowledge and love for nature with everyone you can because that in the end is what our long journey has been all about.

DON TORINO

2021 FUNDRAISING \$\$\$\$ -

Peggy O'Neill, Chair

The following generous people made donations to BCAS Jan.-Mar. 2021. Thanks to all of you for your generosity.

KEVIN AVERY, KEVIN BUCKLEY, LINDA/ SCOTT CALAMITO, CYNTHIA/JEFF FORSTER, SUSAN FREDMAN, JOHN GERBERTH, MARY ELLEN HANNIBAL, MARY MATSUI, LORRAINE MATYS, NANCY SALVATI, NORMAN SMITH, KARL SOEHNEN, KATHY SULLIVAN, RITA WARNER

Celebration Birthday FB Fundraiser John Hughes

Celebration Birthday Fundraiser – Nancy Salvati

Donations made to new Overpeck Butterfly Garden by Lucille Garritano, Dawn Horstmann, Helene McCarty, Dorothy Violet.

Memorial Gifts - in memory of Richard Ardito -by Anne Jaye, David Nashold.

Companies- Metropolitan Plant Exchange, Matching Donation- Johnson&Johnson.

UPCOMING MAY/JUNE 2021 BCAS ZOOM PROGRAMS-

Check www.bergencountyaudubon.org for updates -

Tues. May 4, 7:30pm *The (horseshoe) Crab that Saved Us from Covid 19*, David Wheeler, Exec. Dir. of Conserve Wildlife Foundation

Tues., May 11 7:30pm **Field Notes from an Unintentional Birder**. Author, Julia Zarankin. **BCAS and Ridgewood Library present.** Register at www.ridgewoodlibrary.org.

Tues. May 18 7:30pm *Birds of Summer*, Todd Pover of Conserve Wildlife Foundation .

Tues. June 1, 7:30pm *Coyotes: Meeting Our Newest Neighbors* , David Wheeler, Conserve Wildlife Foundation.

Tues. June 15, 7:30pm *Beyond the Controversy: The Black Bears of NJ*, David Wheeler, Conserve Wildlife Foundation .

For questions or program ideas, contact Marilyn Sadowski at msadowskibcas@gmail.com

2021 BCAS SPRING COUNT - Bird-watchers Wanted!

Would you like to volunteer for our 28th Annual "Spring Count"?



It will be held Saturday, May 8, rain or shine [last May we even had snow during the event, but that will be hard to repeat!]. BCAS reported total birds at 4,784; total species at 144 last year.

Similar to last year's event, we invite participants to view birds in your local park, your yard, or in one of the larger natural areas in Northern New Jersey, such as Garret Mountain, Oradell Reservoir, Teaneck Creek, DeKorte Park, or the Celery Farm.

But we would also love to send people to other promising habitats such as Mahwah/Ramapo, Van Saun Park, Tenafly Nature Center or even further afield. The goal is not only to identify as many bird species as possible, but to estimate the number of birds that you have found in your territory. This event will also be the basis for our Spring Fundraiser, which is explained below.

Invite a friend to join you. Tell me in advance (by email, please) where you plan to be birding, and I may be able to match you with other birders with the same goal. If you send an email in advance of the event, I can share a report form to record your birds. After May 8, please send back your findings to **Dave Hall** (973 226-7825; david.hall@einsteinmed.org), including a clear account of where you were birding.

May brings us the best possible mix of birdlife, and this event can be a fun way to practice your bird identification skills. The more the merrier!

DAVID HALL david.hall@einsteinmed.org

BCAS SPRING FUNDRAISER - Saturday, May 8, 2021

Pledge your support for BCAS and all the conservation and education projects by sending in this form or using our website.



In recognition of these challenging times, please note the guidelines above from Dave Hall. You may pledge "X" amount per species and your donation will be multiplied by the total number of species seen on that day, or you can pledge/donate a fixed amount. Your donation is fully tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to Bergen County Audubon Society.

1. Mail form/check to BCAS Spring Fundraiser
P.O. Box 235
Paramus, NJ 07653-0235 or
2. Use the donate button at www.bergencountyaudubon.org.

We appreciate any donation you can make and if your financial situation is limited we appreciate that too, but hope you can still go birding and help with the data collection and enjoy the spring migration .

Pledge- per species amount _____
or check amount _____

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. # _____

Contact Peggy O'Neill at (201)868-5829 if you have questions

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

ITS TIME TO BLOW OUR HORN!

Over the last several months our BCAS Board has approved numerous educational and conservation projects – from swallow nesting boxes to new interpretive signs in several parks, to say nothing of all the newly established butterfly and native plant gardens.



The list keeps growing thanks to all of you, our members, who have been generous through fundraisers, volunteering efforts, and citizen science projects, and much more.

(Photo (l) displays interpretive signs given to Great Oak Park in Oakland.)

This year alone BCAS has funded Lincoln Park in Jersey City -12 swallow boxes; American Kestrel Nest Program, Meadowlands; Garret Mountain Butterfly Garden; Frank M. Chapman Birding Trail – with signage, nest boxes; Overpeck County Park with an expansion of our Butterfly Gardens, and DeKorte Park with ongoing native plant & pollinator gardens.

BCAS has major ongoing partnerships with Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Canco Park in Jersey City; NJ State Botanical Gardens where BCAS has native pollinator and hummingbird gardens and with NJSEA where this Spring we are especially proud to fund the installation of a MOTUS System in the Meadowlands which will link the northeast region of New Jersey to this global wildlife tracking network... more below.

INTERVIEW WITH Terry Doss, NJSEA Assistant Director of Natural Resources Management accepting the BCAS check from Bergen Audubon President Don Torino. *(Don is taking the picture.)*

“The NJSEA extends a HUGE thank you to the Bergen County Audubon Society for its donation of \$8,000 to fund the Authority’s new Motus Wildlife Tracking System, a tremendous asset to the agency’s efforts to track migratory birds in the Meadowlands.” she said.



Terry kindly talked to Don and I over a Zoom meeting about NJSEA plans and how Motus works. Terry said that using Motus, we can look at migration routes in real-time using old fashioned radio telemetry. They use this system by first fitting birds with small geolocators. Transmissions from the geolocators are then picked up by a series of towers placed in opportune areas.

The goal is to create a line of towers that birds using the Atlantic Flyway would pass over. These relatively small towers use radio signals and receivers to track birds. The small nanotags transmit a signal a few times every minute that can be picked up by a Motus tower. Staging these towers along migration routes creates a virtual net to capture the animals’ information. These towers connect to the internet and download tag ID numbers as they are detected in real-time, giving the researchers who deployed these tags the whereabouts of the bird as the individual migrates and is truly a collaborative effort that informs us and scientists from around the world tracking their birds.

Terry explained that Motus, which is the Latin word for movement, is a new way to use older technology to track migrating birds. In the past, to understand how migratory birds use the Meadowlands, they’ve been banding birds, which is a tedious effort. You have to band thousands of birds to successfully recapture a few individuals and ultimately gather data to learn about each individual’s journey or destination.

Two sites have been chosen in the Meadowlands for bird tagging, Harrier Meadow and the adjacent Erie Landfill in North Arlington. These sites are being assessed to determine breeding success of native birds and usefulness of these sites as stopovers to refuel during spring and fall migration. The chief researcher Cailin O’Connor Fitzpatrick from Kean University is a licensed bird bander and will be affixing the nanotags/receivers to spring and fall visitors to the meadowlands.

The tower will most likely be placed on the NJSEA’s building at DeKorte Park due to ease of access and best connectivity. I asked Terry about other towers in the area and she mentioned Coney Island, Sandy Hook and Jamaica Bay.

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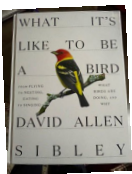
NJSEA INTERVIEW continued

NJSEA and other researchers are hoping for additional towers to be built throughout the Atlantic Flyway as there are large gaps that still exist along the Atlantic coast. The NJSEA staff will manage and maintain the tower.

The overall goal of NJSEA and its Natural Resources staff is to continue to preserve and manage Harrier Meadow and restore grasslands on the adjacent Erie Landfill to further enhance the use of the site by migratory birds and create a healthy natural source of native foods that they seek.

For the pieces of the MOTUS puzzle you can visit www.Motus.org. The Motus Wildlife Tracking System, an international research network, uses coordinated automated radio telemetry to facilitate research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals was developed by Birds Canada in partnership with collaborating researchers and organizations.

BOOK REVIEW: WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A BIRD. FROM FLYING TO NESTING, EATING TO SINGING. WHAT BIRDS ARE DOING AND WHY by David Allen Sibley



Did you know that geese and ducks drop all their feathers at once?
Did you know that our feathered friends have inspired scientists and designers?
Did you know that songbirds have over 2000 feathers with more in winter than summer? When the tiniest feather is out of place it needs to be reset for their flight agility and efficiency?
Did you know that birdsong and harmonic human music are similar?
Did you know that birds use visual camouflage to disguise ground nests?

Edith Wallace sent a review of this book by David Allen Sibley late last year. She said, "You are a birder. You know about birds until you read this book. Sibley has done it again - He has written a fact-filled fascinating book about birds, especially their biology. It reminds me of the ornithology text I used long ago and of comparative physiology classes I taught. How do birds fly so high and so long and find their way? We do not have good answers to all of these questions. This book will help you answer the many questions posed by beginners: children and adults. **Read it!**"

And so I did and continue to, since it is not meant to be read at once but savored over time. The bird art fills the pages of this 9 x 11 hardbound book. The book size adds to the realism of Sibley's beautiful paintings of 87 familiar birds. I find myself returning to it to read of another species and its related essay. The book has three sections, a broad overview of birds and species; the second are life-size paintings with essays for each and the third is a short synopsis of each highlighted bird in the book.

So I will repeat Edith's call to **Read It!** as Sibley gives us the science along with the similarities in instinct and feelings, choice and decisions, that bring us together on planet Earth - human and bird alike.

Nancy Salvati, Editor

DEAR BCAS BIRDLIVERS. There are a few things we can do outside to occupy us while we stay safe and stay home. **We can clean our feeders.** This is our second year without our annual BCAS June Cleaning at Wild Birds Unlimited. So keep our birds disease free with these simple tips:

CLEAN FEEDERS - Rinse the feeder well with soapy water, then dunk it into a bleach-water solution. "A monthly cleaning with a nine-to-one water-bleach solution will deter bacteria in plastic, ceramic, and metal feeders. "A dilute vinegar solution (three-to-one) or non-fragranced biodegradable soap should be used on wood to minimize fading." Dry out the feeder before hanging it back up. Double the frequency of cleaning if you suspect disease a-lurking.

SHARE THE WEALTH. Spread out food among a couple feeders so there's less opportunity for sick birds to touch and contaminate each other. Crowding only expedites the spread of disease, so give the birds variety and plenty of room."

CONSERVATION

Karen Nickeson, Chair

TURN! TURN! TURN!

To everything, there is a season. Now is the time to plant for pollinators. Many BCAS members are Certified Wildlife Gardeners. But, if you're not, or even if you are, think about adding at least one plant. Milkweed is a winner. Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) can't lose. Mountain mint is an Olympian attractant.



If you would like some practical input about planting natives, I highly recommend you visit our Butterfly Garden behind the Overpeck Equestrian Center. Have a look and observe the growing habits of the various labelled native species and consider what might be right for your space, tall or short, spreading or compact. If you visit on a Tuesday, you may well run into our volunteer gardeners, Pat Knight and Tammy Laverty, who will likely be able to answer questions you have about the plantings.

Another helpful planning resource is a recent book by Heather Holm, **Pollinators of Native Plants**. It's all about plants, but offers descriptive connections between natives and their pollinators and the butterflies they host. A copy is on site at the Butterfly Garden. If you are there when gardeners are at work, you can ask them for a look. The listing for each plant describes plant-insect interactions, including pollinator profiles and larval host information. There are also handy icons at the top of each plant page for information about associated butterflies and moths, pollen-collecting specialist bees, hummingbirds, and honey bees. The book is arranged by habitat, so it's easy to focus on plants appropriate for your location. If you've used BugGuide, you may recognize Heather Holm's name as an authority.

It's spring. It's the perfect time to plant to provide food for travelers in our yards, our neighborhoods, our towns, our state, and our planet.

A PARTIAL HISTORY OF US – (1941-1980) HACKENSACK AUDUBON TO BERGEN AUDUBON.

A few days before Pearl Harbor on December 5, 1941 a small group of naturalists, birders and conservationists held a meeting at the Hackensack YMCA and decided to form a club. They called it the *Hackensack Audubon Society*. The first few years, they were tied down with gas rationing and restrictions on places to go- even the Oradell Reservoir was "off limits" because the government feared sabotage.



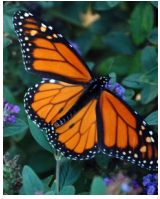
After the war years, it became a very active local club, with a few hundred members, and monthly meetings much like we have now. The club ran an extensive field trip schedule, with a focus on longer trips to farther locales including the National Wildlife Refuges at Jamaica Bay, Brigantine, the north shore of Massachusetts, and Bombay Hook in Delaware. It was unaffiliated with either National Audubon Society or New Jersey Audubon Society for its first 39 years of operation.

Hackensack Audubon Society met in many different locales in and around Hackensack, including the Johnson Public Library and the Bergen Museum. Later Bergen County Audubon Society met for many years at Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, before moving to the Puffin Center and DeKorte Park. In the 70's, dues were \$5.00 for individual and \$8.00 for a family. So we're still a bargain at \$20.00.

In 1971 only a few members still lived in Hackensack and the group was renamed ***Bergen County Audubon Society*** to reflect their growing voice in this region. They became a local chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1980. BCAS grew rapidly in the late 1970s and like its early founders continues to be an important voice in our local society with over 2000 members today..

Editors note: Look for more BCAS history in our Anniversary issue Summer/Fall 2021 Blue Jay.

MONARCH BUTTERFLY UPDATE



Sad news to report. The Monarch butterfly population continues to be in peril. The 2020 annual Thanksgiving count in California was a mere 1,914 Monarchs. The eastern population is down 26% from the previous year. And yet, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has determined that listing the monarch under the Endangered Species Act is warranted but precluded at this time. The Monarch is a candidate on a long list of higher priority candidates and their status will be reviewed every year until USFWS can begin developing a proposal to list the Monarch.

Rearing Monarch caterpillars is highly discouraged. As tempting as it is, something as innocent as handling a caterpillar or touching a butterfly can spread the OE parasite. The spores are spread quite easily and you may be doing more harm than good. Please enjoy these beauties from afar, provide host and nectar sources for them and leave the rearing, tagging and releasing to more experienced folks.

The best way to help these beautiful creatures is to plant native plants that attract them, which in turn, will also be beneficial to birds, bees and wildlife. Milkweed is the only host plant for Monarchs, there are several varieties to choose from to add to your garden. Also important, are late blooming natives such as asters and goldenrod, crucial during migration in the fall. There are many other ways to help as well - Participate in citizen science projects, some may be found on the following websites: journeynorth.org, monarchwatch.org, pollinator.org and xerces.org. Join a conservation group like Bergen County Audubon Society that aids in habitat restoration and protection.

Certified Wildlife Gardens



BCAS has currently certified 157 gardens. We encourage you to create a pollinator garden or add more native plants to your existing garden. Planting natives creates stepping stones in between fragmented habitats. Habitat loss, climate change and pesticides contribute to the downward spiral in pollinator populations.

A great tool for determining which plants are native to your area is the National Audubon Society native plant database at audubon.org/plantsforbirds. An application for our Certified Wildlife Garden program may be found at bergencountyaudubon.org/cwg/. If you have any questions you may contact Marie Longo MLongo8383@aol.com (201) 498-0809.

Third Annual Dick Engsberg Teacher Appreciation Award

We are so proud to announce the winners of our Third Annual Dick Engsberg Teacher Appreciation Award. Congratulations to all three!

Craig Cohen-Memorial Middle School, Fair Lawn
Dr. Jennifer Rupprecht-Ridgefield Memorial High School, Ridgefield
Jeffrey Train-Northern Valley Regional High School, Old Tappan

We hope you will join us as we celebrate all three of these deserving educators at an upcoming virtual award presentation evening to be announced.

BERGEN COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY



A CHAPTER OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
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**Dated Material
APRIL 2021**

*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.*

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2021

Please enroll me as a member of the Bergen Audubon Society (Q07) and/or the National Audubon Society.

My check is enclosed for

\$20 Individual or **\$35 Family Chapter Sustaining Member**. All funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services in Bergen County. 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.)

BlueJay will be mailed to you unless you request online version.

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 Gardens/Events Other _____