



WINTER 2015

Volume LXXIV, Issue 1

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FOR THE AGES

The 66th annual Hackensack/Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by Bergen County Audubon, has achieved a new record high number of species. Held on Saturday, December 20 under gray skies, many volunteers found the birding rather ordinary. Yet when the results of all 12 groups were added together (plus some excellent feeder counts), the net result was spectacular. We had 97 species on count day, plus 3 exotic species and several strange hybrids. Our previous high count was 93 species in 1993.

The weather in December had lacked any extremes, so that all surface water was still unfrozen, and the lack of a hard freeze may have allowed more sensitive birds to hang on later than normal. This may explain the lingering Palm Warbler and Gray Catbird seen at Mehrhof Pond, among others. The diversity of sparrow species was also better than usual, perhaps due to the warm weather and thanks to the sharp eyes of our spotters. At the same time, many waterfowl were still straggling southward into our region, and their numbers often seemed low per species. In some cases we were only able to find one duck per species (Canvasback, Goldeneye), but one is better than none. Compared to last year, our volunteers enjoyed decent weather, as temperatures remained above freezing all day, much nicer than last year's steady snowstorm. This gave us better visibility for distant birds like perching or soaring raptors, and better chances to search through flocks of Canada Geese for the occasional Snow Goose or Cackling Goose lurking among them. The number of Bald Eagles remains quite high in our circle, though they did not approach record numbers this time. Great Horned Owls and Screech Owls were very active and vocal before dawn in northern parts of the county, and a Barred Owl was perched above the meadows in Little Ferry. Winter finches have not been very numerous yet this winter, but we were fortunate to discover a single Redpoll and a few Pine Siskins hiding among the flocks of Goldfinch. Monk Parakeets continue to gain in numbers and to spread more widely along the Palisades. A winter roost of Common Crow and Fish Crow moved into our area to swell those numbers locally.

None of this would have been possible without the help of many volunteer leaders in the field, who worked hard to bring back thorough lists even when the birding felt slow. Some birds had been scouted out in advance, and we enjoyed a better than average number of feeder counts too. I am very grateful to all who took part this year.

DAVE HALL

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- FIELD TRIPS, FEBRUARY—APRIL
- HAROLD FEINBERG CONSERVATION AWARD WINNER
- EDUCATION & BIRDING FOR BEGINNER CLASSES
- CHRISTMAS 2014 BCAS BIRD LISTING (*97 species in total, 28,000 birds*)

**BERGEN COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY—
Officers, Directors & Committee
Chairpersons**

PRESIDENT: Don Torino
201-230-4983

VICE PRESIDENT: Position open.
201-931-6394

TREASURER: Dave & Nancy Hall
973-226-7825

RECORDING SECRETARY: Patrice Torino
201-414-0534

CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY:
Julie McCall 201-639-4647

FIELD TRIPS: Position open.

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201-840-0542

PUBLICITY, WEBMASTER:
Peter Ernst 973-896-1483

CONSERVATION CHAIR: Mary Kostos
973-779-6929

EDUCATION: Marie Longo
201-498-0809

LEGISLATION: Dave Hall
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BIRDATHON: Peggy O'Neill
201-868-5829

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201-797-0536

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS



I am told that some folks dream of breakfast on the French Riviera , others about having breakfast in bed and still others about having Breakfast at Tiffany's but, as for me, I prefer to have my morning meal with the birds . I don't think there is a better way to sip my morning coffee and crunch my pre-dawn toast than sitting by the window watching my backyard bird feeder.

There is something special about beginning the day with a raucous Blue jay and a stately Cardinal that just seems like the right way to prepare for the oncoming trials and tribulations that the new day surely will bring. As a Red-bellied woodpecker hammers at its banquet of suet and a Chickadee hurries to the nearest tree branch to open its prized sunflower, I can just relax and enjoy nature up close and personal right outside my window.

I have been having breakfast with the birds for about 35 years now. Through good times and bad, births and deaths, sickness and health, the birds have always been there patiently waiting for me to pour my morning coffee and join them in welcoming in the new day, a ritual I could never be without.

On occasion some may argue the scientific benefits of backyard bird feeding but there are no academic studies that I know that can measure the connection to nature we get from feeding our backyard birds. There are countless people that have begun their love of nature and a life of birding from just hanging a feeder full of sunflowers in a tree by the window. The sense of wonder of seeing the first Downy Woodpecker up close and personal soon brings them to the realization that birds must be protected and their habitat preserved. There is nothing that I know that brings that understanding and appreciation of our natural world quicker and easier to folks that otherwise would never be aware of the miracles of nature than feeding backyard birds.

DON TORINO

CBC TEAM AT OVERPECK WITH RICK WRIGHT



WINNERS OF "BIG YEAR" TCC BIRDING CONTEST

Our Big Year at TCC 2014 is over with Jimmy Macaluso winning with 128 species and Marie Longo in second with 101 .

This event will help bring more attention to the importance of preserving small habitats around Bergen County . We will also donate \$128.00 to TCC .

EDUCATION

We have a new school joining the Audubon Adventures program, the gifted and talented 5th graders from **West Ridge Elementary School in Park Ridge** will be utilizing a kit. **WELCOME!**

Our schedule is jam packed this year with field trips, programs and events. We invite you to join us at any or all and we will be counting on you to volunteer when needed.



A big thank you to all who volunteered to help BCAS throughout 2014, we cannot do all that we do without your help. Here we have our Volunteers' Picnic showing Don Torino's display of Butterfly Garden artifacts to our Garden volunteer, Rose Loudon.

Our free **Birding For Beginners** classes will be held at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst

- **April 12th-Bird Identification 1PM**
- **April 19th-Optics and Field Guides 1PM**

Registration required, contact Marie Longo (551) 580-2372 or MLongo8383@aol.com

Great Backyard Bird Count. Bergen County Audubon will be making the most of the annual GBBC through field trips and participation with some of our partner schools. Contact Marie Longo.

MARIE LONGO



BCAS BOOK CORNER

***THE SIBLEY GUIDE TO BIRDS*, David Allen Sibley, Second Edition, 2014.**

An exciting, intelligent revision of Sibley's guide to the Birds of North America (not just for East Coast) which is a bit too large to carry in the field, but will become your new favorite guide back at home. The book has the same overall format and size as the first edition, but by adding 10% more pages, Sibley has managed to stuff in 100 more species (!) to cover all the rarities and 'accidentals' that you might encounter along the southern border, or while touring Alaska, or during pelagic birding here in NJ.

The Sibley Guide was always foremost in showing more plumage variations per species than any other guide. Now Sibley has added smaller sketches to show common bird postures and to compare similar species side by side. What is more, the original images are enlarged by about 25% so that each illustration is easier to see. This edition uses a brighter, more vibrant color scheme than the first edition. The images really pop off the page!

Are there any drawbacks? Yes, a few birds seem overly dark, but the overall result is very pleasing to the eye. Bird distribution maps have been enlarged too, using brighter colors, and now focus only on that portion of the continent where the bird can be expected. Sibley has rewritten the text for the whole book, adding more details on bird habits that help to distinguish each species. The principal drawback is that all text is now reduced in font and brightness, so that those of us with weakening eyesight may be reaching for a magnifying glass or a monocle. But the pictures are a joy to behold, and this is the new best guide on the block.

Reviewed by David Hall

***THE LIVING LANDSCAPE*, R. Darke, D. Tallamy, Timber Press, 2014 .**

There are many books describing bird friendly gardens. Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy have topped them all with *The Living Landscape* (Timber Press, 2014). The photographs show how a garden designed for people AND wildlife will look. It is not a "formal" garden but it is sustainable. The fascinating images tell a complex story, as does the garden design they suggest. Tallamy's *Bringing Nature Home* may someday rank with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in changing our way of thinking about the environment.

In *The Living Landscape* the authors describe how to make a garden that will change suburbia providing "replenishment of atmospheric oxygen, carbon sequestration, groundwater recharge and filtration, soil conservation, and moderation of weather extremes" unlike typical suburban landscapes. Read this book and be inspired to begin changing your garden to benefit our environment. And may your garden (less grass, more layers, less work) challenge your neighbors to alter their yards to benefit us all: insects, birds, amphibians, small mammals and people.

Reviewed by Edith Wallace

2015 FIELD TRIPS - WINTER/SPRING FEB.-APRIL

All our trips are FREE, and open to both members and non-members. Notify trip leader so you can be advised of last minute changes due to inclement weather or other conditions. For detailed description or directions to Field Trips, go to www.bergencountyaudubon.org.

For Meadowlands (NJMC) walks, Teaneck Creek Conservancy walks, and New Jersey Botanical Garden walks: **Contact:** Don Torino 201-230-4983 **Email:** greatauk4@gmail.com. All other leaders are listed below.

Feb. 1 (Sun.) 10:00 AM DeKorte Park –

“Super Bird Sunday” A 2-hour nature walk with NJMC awarding a prize to the 1st person to spot a bird with an NFL name. **Contact:** Don Torino

Feb. 3 (Tues.) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy - Winter birds and possibly raptors. Meet at parking lot - Puffin Way. **Contact:** Don Torino

Feb. 13 (Fri.) 10:00 AM DeKorte Park -Great Backyard Bird Count – A morning of Citizen Science. We'll track the number of species, the totals for each and send them into the GBBC.

Contact: Don Torino

Feb. 14 (Sat.) 9:00 AM Barnegat Lighthouse State Park - Looking for Harlequin Ducks, eiders, loons, and other wintering waterfowl and seabirds. Dress for cold, windy weather. Meet at the Lighthouse State Park parking lot. Bring lunch.

Leader: Peg O'Neill omargarito@aol.com or 201-868-5829 and Bill Resotko 732-899-2004

Feb. 15 (Sun.) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy - Great Backyard Bird Count - A morning of Citizen Science. We'll track the number of species, the totals for each, and send them into the GBBC.

Contact: Don Torino

Feb. 17 (Tues.) 10:00 AM Losen Slote Creek Park - Wintering birds. Meet at Little Ferry DPW parking lot – Mehrhof Rd. **Contact:** Don Torino

Feb. 22 (Sun.) 1:00 PM NJ Botanical Gardens in Ringwood – Join us for a indoor presentation on the **Owls of New Jersey** in the carriage house.

Contact: Don Torino

Mar. 1 (Sun.) 10:00 AM Mill Creek Marsh, Secaucus - Wintering birds, waterfowl and any raptors. Meet at marsh entrance. **Contact:** Don Torino

Mar. 3 (Tues.) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy - Meet at the parking lot - Puffin Way. Winter birds, any early migrants. **Contact:** Don Torino

Mar. 14 (Sat.) 9:00 AM Sandy Hook and the “north” North Shore - Bring lunch. Seaducks, wintering waterfowl and other birds of interest. Ocean, bay and ponds. Meet at the first parking lot upon entering Sandy Hook (Bayberry-B lot). Dress warm.

Leaders: Peg O'Neill omargarito@aol.com or 201-868-5829 and Bill Resotko 732-899-2004.

Mar. 15 (Sun.) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy - Meet at the parking lot - Puffin Way. Winter birds, any early migrants. **Contact:** Don Torino

Mar. 17 (Tues.) 10:00 AM Harrier Meadow - Lingering waterfowl & early spring arrivals. Celebrate the arrival of spring a little early with this Harrier Meadow bird walk. Meet at entrance to Harrier Meadow.

Contact: Don Torino

Mar. 22 (Sun.) 1:00 PM NJ Botanical Gardens in Ringwood - Birding for Beginners (one session) - Join us in the carriage house for an overview of birding tips for those just starting out. We'll take a walk around NJBG after the program to look for birds of interest and practice what was covered in the program.

Contact: Don Torino

Mar. 23 (Mon.) 6:45 PM Laurel Hill County Park, Secaucus - Woodcock Walk- To hear and possibly see American Woodcock peenting and displaying. Bring flashlights. Dress appropriately; can be cold by the river.

Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 5 (Sun.) 10:00 AM DeKorte Park – Easter morning walk Looking for early spring arrivals and migrating water-fowl. **Contact:** Don Torino

Apr. 7 (Tues.) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy - We'll be looking for early spring arrivals and lingering birds. Meet at parking lot - Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 12 (Sun.) 1:00 PM DeKorte Park
Birding for Beginners (Part 1 - Bird Identification) – Free class followed by a walk to help you begin birding. First of two. Registration requested.
Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 12 (Sun.) 9:30 AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy - We'll be looking for early spring arrivals and lingering birds. Meet at parking lot - Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 19 (Sun.) 1:00 PM DeKorte Park
Birding for Beginners (Part 2 - Optics and Field Guides) - Free class followed by a walk to help you begin birding. Second of two. Registration requested.
Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 21 (Tues.) 10:00 AM Harrier Meadow - Spring bird walk. Osprey, early warblers, shorebirds. Meet at entrance to Harrier Meadow.
Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 22 (Wed.) 10:00 AM DeKorte Park - Earth Day Walk with NJMC Celebrate Earth Day with us as we look for migrating birds.
Contact: Don Torino

Apr. 26 (Sun.) 10:00 AM NJ Botanical Gardens in Ringwood - Join us for a **Butterfly Gardening with Native Plants** presentation in the carriage house.
Contact: Don Torino



**JOIN US IN SUPPORTING BCAS FUNDRAISER NIGHT
ON WED., APRIL 1,
5pm-9pm
AT HOULIHANS,**

5 RT. 17, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604 (201) 3939330.

**RSVP by March 30 to Peggy O'Neill at omargarito@aol.com.
Ask for your ticket/flyer.**

May be applied to 'to go' orders

No Early bird menus.

No discounts or coupons may be applied

**** Present flyer/ticket upon entering****

(a portion of proceeds benefit BCAS)

THE FIFTH ANNUAL HAROLD FEINBERG CONSERVATION AWARD

The Award was presented by Don Torino to Lori Charkey and the late Mark Becker, cofounders of Bergen SWAN (Save the Watershed Action Network). Lori and Mark founded this nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to preserving the Upper Hackensack River Watershed over 26 years ago and to date have helped to preserve over 800 acres in Bergen and Rockland counties from commercial and residential development. With over 850 volunteers, the nonprofit fights for the restoration of watershed lands as natural buffers which filter runoff, control erosion, mitigate flooding, and provide a safe habitat for wildlife and a sanctuary for hiking, helping to maintain water quality for nearly 1 million Bergen, Hudson and Rockland residents. For more info and to support Lori in these efforts, visit bergenswan.org.



Shown L-R, Harold Feinberg, recipient Lori Charkey, Don Torino, Pres., BCAS.

APPRECIATION AWARD TO JILL HOMCY

An Appreciation award was presented at this time to Jill Homcy to show BCAS' Appreciation for her diligent monitoring, photography and watchfulness of the Ridgefield Park eagles. Shown here is Jill with Appreciation Certificate as presented by Don Torino.



Jill was asked where she got her passion for eagles. She replied that she had been given a link to the Hornby eagle cam in 2009 where she watched the eaglet, Hoop, hatch and fledge. After that she knew she was 'hooked' on eagles. Thanks Jill.

SCHEDULE OF BCAS MONTHLY MEETINGS AND EVENTS - FEB—APRIL 2015

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

Programs are free and open to the public.

Business Meeting at 7:30pm, Programs begin at 8pm. Check www.bergencountyaudubon.org for updates.

Feb. 18 - Program Speaker, **Giselle Chazotte Smisko, Avian Wildlife Center**, a naturalist, photographer, wildlife rehabilitator, and Master Bird Bander. Over the past three decades she has taught a broad spectrum of natural history topics while working as an educator for the Morris County Park Commission, Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, The Raptor Trust, Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge, and the Avian Wildlife Center. She now directs the Avian Wildlife Center in Sussex County with the help of her husband John Smisko.

A fuzzy ball of a bird has just fallen 30 feet from its nest and now sits in your hands; what do you do? Many people have faced this dilemma and found themselves feeling more helpless than the bird. This slide presentation handles that situation and many others that confront wildlife rehabilitators. Practical information will be offered on how people can prevent many of the problems that threaten our wildlife.

- **Mar. 18** - Business Meeting, Program Speaker TBD.
- **April 15** - Business Meeting, Program Speaker TBD.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE EVENTS:

2015 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT — February 13-16. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited. It provides an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about birds and the environment we share. The GBBC website (www.birdsource.org/gbbc) is a great source for information and inspiration. BCAS conducts counts on walks and other activities. Contact Don Torino.

BCAS FUNDRAISER EVENING AT HOULIHAN'S, APRIL 1, 2015. Contact Peg O'Neill, omargarito@aol.com.

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS CLASSES BEGIN IN APRIL. (included in Field Trips).

PARTY FOR THE PLANET: Sunday, April 19th, 10AM-4PM: Join us at the Bergen County Zoo annual Earth Day celebration, Party for the Planet. This free, family fun event takes place at the zoo, Van Saun Park, 216 Forest Ave., Paramus. Contact Beth Goldberg, goldbug310@aol.com.

BCAS 66th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - DEC 2014

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|-------------------------|------|------|
| Common Loon | 1 | | White-br. Nuthatch | 147 | |
| Pied-billed Grebe | 11 | | Brown Creeper | 8 | High |
| Dbl-crst. Cormorant | 87 | | Carolina Wren | 45 | |
| Great Cormorant | 2 | | Winter Wren | 7 | |
| Great Blue Heron | 76 | | Golden-cr. Kinglet | 11 | |
| Mute Swan | 4 | | Ruby-crnd. Kinglet | 3 | |
| Snow Goose | 1 | | Eastern Bluebird | 2 | |
| Canada Goose | 4705 | low | Hermit Thrush | 10 | |
| Cackling Goose | 1 | | American Robin | 232 | |
| Wood Duck | 22 | | Gray Catbird | 3 | |
| Green-winged Teal | 59 | | N. Mockingbird | 46 | |
| Am. Black Duck | 96 | | Cedar Waxwing | 20 | |
| Mallard | 1290 | | European Starling | 1988 | |
| Common Pintail | 4 | | Yellow-rump(Myrtle) W. | 3 | |
| Northern Shoveler | 38 | | Palm Warbler | 1 | |
| Gadwall | 43 | | Northern Cardinal | 224 | |
| Canvasback | 1 | low | Eastern Towhee | 1 | |
| Ring-necked Duck | 23 | | Am. Tree Sparrow | 92 | |
| Lesser Scaup | 87 | High | Chipping Sparrow | 2 | |
| Common Goldeneye | 1 | | Field Sparrow | 4 | |
| Bufflehead | 26 | | Savannah Sparrow | 1 | |
| Hooded Merganser | 173 | | Fox Sparrow | 8 | |
| Com. Merganser | 2905 | | Song Sparrow | 180 | |
| Red-br. Merganser | 2 | | Swamp Sparrow | 1 | |
| Ruddy Duck | 2424 | | White-thr. Sparrow | 431 | |
| Turkey Vulture | 4 | | Dark-eyed Junco | 914 | |
| Black Vulture | 1 | | Red-wgd. Blackbird | 233 | |
| Bald Eagle | 24 | | Rusty Blackbird | 2 | |
| Sharp-shin. Hawk | 3 | | Common Grackle | 19 | low |
| Cooper's Hawk | 5 | | Purple Finch | 4 | |
| Red-shldrd. Hawk | 2 | | House Finch | 413 | |
| Red-tailed Hawk | 45 | | Common Redpoll | 1 | |
| Rough-legged Hawk | 1 | | Pine Siskin | 5 | |
| American Kestrel | 1 | | American Goldfinch | 286 | |
| Merlin | 2 | | House Sparrow | 766 | |
| Peregrine Falcon | 3 | | Monk Parakeet | 299 | High |
| Wild Turkey | 25 | | Domestic Muscovy | 1 | |
| American Coot | 100 | High | Pekin Duck | 9 | |
| American Woodcock | 1 | | Call Duck | 4 | |
| Ring-billed Gull | 2318 | | Mallard x Pekin Duck | 2 | |
| Herring Gull | 99 | | Mallard x Domestic Duck | 1 | |
| Gr. Bl.-backed Gull | 45 | | | | |
| Rock Dove | 754 | | | | |
| Mourning Dove | 620 | | | | |
| Eastern Screech Owl | 22 | | | | |
| Great-horned Owl | 8 | | | | |
| Barred Owl | 1 | | | | |
| Belted Kingfisher | 18 | | | | |
| Red-bellied Woodpkr | 131 | | | | |
| Yellow-b. Sapsucker | 9 | | | | |
| Downy Woodpecker | 185 | | | | |
| Hairy Woodpecker | 50 | | | | |
| Northern Flicker | 18 | | | | |
| Pileated Woodpecker | 5 | High | | | |
| Blue Jay | 385 | | | | |
| Common Raven | 3 | | | | |
| American Crow | 3000 | High | | | |
| Fish Crow | 290 | High | | | |
| Bl-capped Chickadee | 274 | | | | |
| Tufted Titmouse | 287 | | | | |
| Red-br. Nuthatch | 1 | | | | |

*Unusual species or numbers per species are highlighted in bold.
High indicates a record high number for that species.
28,000 birds, 97 species in total, plus three exotic and
two hybrid species.*

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



www.bergencountyaudubon.org

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Hackensack, NJ

Dated Material
January 2015

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 2015

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

Chapter Sustaining Member. \$20.00 - Single or \$35.00 for Family Membership. 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.

\$20.00 - 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 the following and mail with your subscription or see any officer or chair at one of the meetings.

Conservation Membership Publicity Field Trips

Education Newsletter/Website