The Blue Jay
Bergen County Audubon Society
LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

FALL/WINTER 2025/26

Volume LXXXIV
Issue 4

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

THE FUTURE OF THE BALD EAGLE IN NEW JERSEY MAY BE IN QUESTION

There is no question that the most amazing environmental success story in our lifetime is the comeback of the Bald Eagle from the brink of extinction. That success story is particularly remarkable right here in the Garden State - from just a single nest in 1980 to well over 200 today. The ability of our nation's symbol to adapt to the most densely populated state in the country has amazed even the most optimistic environmentalists. But just as the Bald Eagle has fought back from the brink of extinction, the jury is still out on whether they will continue to flourish or for that matter even maintain a healthy population here in New Jersey.

Announcements made in press conferences and media blasts by our elected officials standing together with big smiles announcing that our Bald Eagle is no longer on the state's Endangered Species list. This on its surface is great news for whoever dreamed that we would even see Bald Eagles in New Jersey never mind have them nest here again? Not me for one! However there are many of us that fought hard to save this magnificent raptor and have volunteered to monitor their nests over the years yet we still feel it was way to soon to delist it which may set the stage for the decline of the species once again, and here is why.

Removing the Eagle from the endangered list may alter the land use rules by allowing developers to build closer to their already stressed out habitats. Anyone that even passes through our Garden State sees the unprecedented pressure by developers. So much so the gargantuan warehouses filling our landscape seem to be the new symbol of our state. Perception is everything! As soon as I heard the news that the Eagle would be delisted I could hear the developers screaming in my ear, "We don't care any longer Don, the Eagle is not endangered !" as they laugh all the way to the bulldozer. Now let us add to that the Avian flu which is deadly to Bald Eagles and is greatly affecting their numbers all over the U.S., and New Jersey is no exception. So my question is one that no one wants to answer, 'why are they delisted while this disease continues to be lethal to them?' And let's not forget there are no longer funds to research avian flu for birds or people so we should all be concerned.

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. This backbone law that protects our eagle populations is a federal law which is administered by United States Fish and Wildlife Service. In the past this law and the good folks from USFWS have helped us and others in our area save and protect Bald Eagle nests from destruction including nests of our local celebrities Al & Alice. When I first voiced my opposition to the Eagle being removed from the list I was told not to worry because we have a strong federal law that will protect them. Unfortunately, there have been layoffs and cutbacks at USFWS and now we are hearing that this Administration's "Interpretation" of this vital law may be drastically changing. Also to add insult to injury they are in charge of issuing Eagle nest "TAKE PERMITS" which under certain conditions make it legal to remove a nest.

So once again we could be moving backwards because the number of active Eagle nests in 2024 in NJ was 264 compared to 242 in 2025. Is this a trend ? We will see but it would be heartbreaking to lose our Eagle population after they have fought so hard against all odds to come back. For now it will be up to us to stand up and have our voices heard that in no uncertain terms we want our Eagles protected, no questions asked. If it is necessary at some point for us to go to the streets to demand the eagles be saved then that is what we will do. Make no mistake we will not go back to the days when we only dreamed of seeing a Bald Eagle in the sky right here at home.

See you in the Meadowlands!

DON TORINO

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

INSIDE THIS EDITION

Sad note of passing.

A longtime BCAS member and Conservation Board Member, Dr. Edith Wallace died peacefully, surrounded by family, on September 3, 2025, at the age of 89.
Edith was a teaching professor with degrees in zoology and horticulture. She became well-known for conducting enjoyable and informative walks and talks at many gardens in Northern New Jersey as well as with our member walks where she would explain the flora and fauna along with the wildlife.

In lieu of sending flowers, she asks us to "grow some flowers and visit a garden full of flowers! "

(For more info, go to North Jersey.com/ Edith Wallace obituary.)

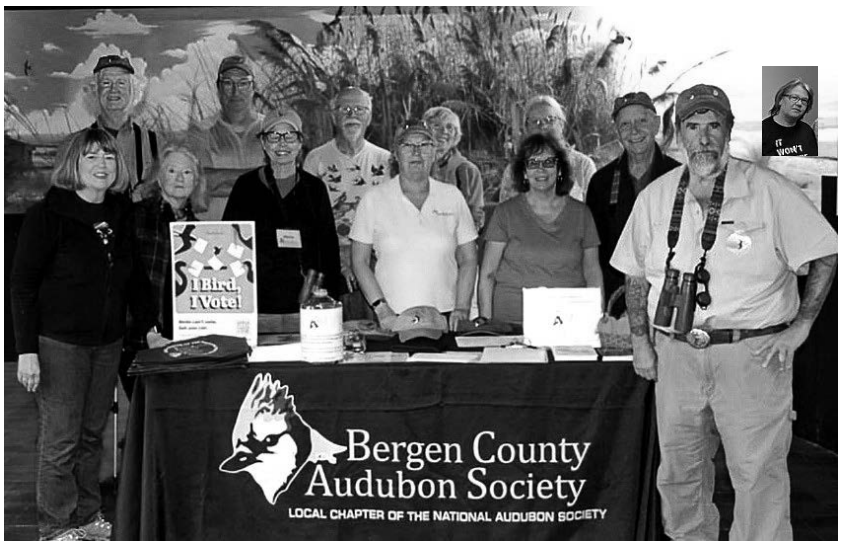
SAVE THE DATE

December 20, 2025. Christmas Bird Count. Participate with BCAS. Call Dave Hall or see pg. 6 for info.

January 11, 2026- 10am-2pm. Meadowlands Eagle Festival- Richard DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst

January 18, 2026- 1 pm. Save the Eagles Day- Bell Drive, Ridgefield.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR BCAS BOARD MEMBERS



From left-right (first row) Nancy Hall, Karen Nickeson, Nancy Salvati, Marie Longo, Patrice Torino, Don Torino. (second row) David Hall, Chris Takacs, Joe Koscielny, Tammy Laverty, Marilyn Sadowski, Tzvee Zahavy, Julie McCall dropped in top right.

Photo credit -Linda Antenucci.

BCAS FIELD TRIPS NOV-JAN 2026

Unless noted, Field Trip Contact is Don Torino (201) 230-4983, greatauk4@gmail.com
Contact Field Chair, Chris Takacs for new trip suggestions at 201-207-0426, americanchris22@gmail.com.
Visit www.bergencountyaudubon.org for field trip directions.

November 2 (Sun.) 10AM Harrier Meadow, North Arlington. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

November 5 (Wed.) 10AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck. Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

November 9 (Sun.) 10AM Hackensack River County Park, Hackensack. Entrance is behind the Shops at Riverside.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

November 12 (Wed.) 10AM Overpeck County Park, Leonia
Meet in the parking lot by the bandshell and restrooms.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

November 16 (Sun.) 10AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck. Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

November 19 (Wed.) 10AM Laurel Hill County Park, Secaucus. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

November 23 (Sun.) 10AM Richard DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

November 27 (Thurs.) 9AM Annual Thanksgiving Day Walk at Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck. *Please note earlier start time. Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

November 30 (Sun.) 10AM Frank Chapman Trail, Teaneck
Meet in the parking lot on the corner of River Road and Riverview Avenue. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

December 3 (Wed.) 10AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck. Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

December 7 (Sun.) 10AM BCAS 84th Anniversary Walk at Richard DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

December 10 (Wed.) 10AM Losen Slote Creek Park, Little Ferry. Park and meet in the lot adjacent to the soccer field. Trails may be muddy, boots are highly recommended.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

December 14 (Sun.) 10AM Mill Creek Marsh, Secaucus Park behind Bob's Furniture Store.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

December 17 (Wed.) 10AM Disposal Road Raptor Walk, North Arlington. Meet by the AMVETS Memorial Carillon on Disposal Road.
Contact: Don Torino, (201) 230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

December 20 (Sat.) 10AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck. Part of the **77th Annual Hackensack/Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count.** Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983.

December 20 (Sat.) **All day 77th Annual Hackensack/ Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count, various locations**.
This is a rain or shine event. Volunteers needed.
Contact: Dave Hall david.hall@einsteinmed.edu (973) 226-7825

December 25 (Thurs.) 9AM Annual Holiday Walk at Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck *Please note earlier start time. Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

December 28 (Sun.) 10AM Frank Chapman Trail, Teaneck Park and meet in the parking lot on the corner of River Road and Riverview Avenue. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

January 1 (Thurs.) 10AM New Year's Day Walk at Richard DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

January 4 (Sun.) 10AM Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Teaneck. Meet in the parking lot off Puffin Way.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

January 7 (Wed.) 10AM **Eagle Watch at Overpeck Park,**

Leonia . Meet in the parking lot by the bandshell and restrooms. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

January 11 (Sun.) 10AM-2PM . **Eagle Festival** at **Richard DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst.** Walks, talks, children's activities, music, partner information tables and more.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

January 14 (Wed.) 10AM . **Eagle Watch** at River Barge Park, Carlstadt. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

January 17 (Sat.) Time TBD **Annual Eagle Count .**
We will be counting eagles at various locations. More details to follow. Volunteers needed. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

January 18 (Sun.) 1PM . **Save the Eagles Day** on Bell Drive, Ridgefield. Meet at the end of Bell Drive.
Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com

January 21 (Wed.) 10AM. **Eagle Watch along the Frank Chapman Trail,** Teaneck. Park and meet in the parking lot on the corner of River Road and Riverview Avenue. Contact: Don Torino greatauk4@gmail.com (201) 230-4983

January 28 (Wed.) 10AM **Eagle Watch at Overpeck Park**, Leonia. Meet in the parking lot by the bandshell and restrooms.
Contact: Don Torino (201) 230-4983 greatauk4@gmail.com

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EDUCATION — Marie Longo, Chair

Leave Them Be

This fall, I grant you permission to be a lazy gardener, it's time to Leave Them Be. Help birds, pollinators and other wildlife by leaving your leaves in your garden. There are so many reasons why, here are just a few. Create or add to brush piles, leave your flower stems standing, the seeds will provide food for birds and also add winter interest, cut hollow stemmed plants back to 6-18 inches in the spring, the stems provide nesting sites for native bees, you can also leave some bare soil for nesting bees to burrow in, air and noise pollution can be reduced by using a rake instead of gas powered mower or blower, a blanket of leaves in your garden beds insulates the soil and when the leaves decay they provide much needed nutrients to the soil. To learn more visit bergencountyaudubon.org/leaves.

Certified Wildlife Garden Program

We certified 4 new gardens over the summer. One each in Moonachie, Hohokus, Hasbrouck Heights, and Teaneck. That brings the total number of CWG's to 262 in seven states. Fall is a great time for planting and transplanting; the roots have more time to become better established and don't have to compete with weeds. If you haven't already, consider having your garden certified by BCAS, there is no application fee and you'll receive a free sign to display in your garden. Visit bergencountyaudubon.org/cwg for an application and to learn more.

Audubon Adventures

Audubon Adventures is an environmental education program. The printed kits get mailed directly to your school. The Audubon Adventures kits for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows:

- Bird Migration Explorer Interactive Maps/STEM Classroom Kit contains three modules: Bird Migration Explorer; Birds on the Move; and Safety for Birds in Flight.
- A Very Birdy Collection Classroom Kit contains three modules: Raptors: The Birds of Prey; Watery World of Wading Birds; and Seabirds: Feathered Ocean Mariners.
- Nature's Connections vol. 2 Classroom Kit contains three modules: Caretaking Our World's Water; Safety for Birds in Flight; and Plants Are for the Birds.
- Birds, Bees, Flowers & Trees Classroom Kit contains three modules: Bird on the Move; The Buzz About Native Bees and Plants Are for the Birds.

Classroom kits and nature news packets (one title) contain enough materials for 32 students. If you are an educator or know of one who may be interested in participating in the program, contact Marie Longo MLongo8383@aol.com. BCAS proudly sponsors the kits free of charge.

Project Feederwatch

The 39th Annual Project FeederWatch begins November 1st. This citizen science project is a great activity for young and old alike and you don't even need a feeder! All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water, or food that attracts birds. The project runs from November-April, there is a small fee to participate. Visit feederwatch.org for more info.

UPCOMING BCAS PROGRAMS-
NOV-DEC 2025

All our programs are planned for zoom. Check our website bergencountyaudubon.org for more updates and enhanced info on our speakers, their bios, descriptions and photos.

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Nov. 12 - **Katie Fallon,** will speak on **The Vulture**. Katie is an author of the nonfiction books *Vulture:The Private Life of an Unloved Bird* and *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird* as well as two books for children.

Dec 10 - **Nick Dorian, PhD**. presents **The Secret Lives of Native Bees** . You've probably heard "Save The Bees!" but do you know which bees need saving? Nick is the author of the first field guide to wild bees (watchingbees.com) .

January 14 - To Be Announced.

For speaker and program suggestions, contact Marilyn Sadowski at 201-982-0483, or email msadowskibcas@gmail.com

CONSERVATION **Karen Nickeson, Chair**

The Joys of Fall

The season of calm between summer and frost is my favorite. The heat abates, the air is dry, the light rakes in the afternoon. Our spring birds visit and challenge us to recognize them on their muted trip south. But the best part is the fall canvas of our wildflowers. The star is the unassuming but glorious Goldenrod, along with the yin to its yang, the Aster. In my opinion, there is nothing more impressive than a wild expanse of the yellow Goldenrod and blue New England Aster blossoms together.

Both genera are excellent fall flowers for pollinators. Heather Holm calls out Zigzag and Stiff Goldenrod as well as Large-leaved and New England Aster in her book, **Pollinators of Native Plants,** for the diversity of insects they attract and host. The USDA lists Seaside Goldenrod as an important nectar source for Monarch butterflies and an excellent resource for other insects, as well as birds. Seaside Goldenrod has been used widely over decades in roadside plantings because of its tolerance to salt run-off (halosalinity). It hybridizes with Rough-stemmed Goldenrod, so some plants look different from ones you may see in shore dunes that have not hybridized. I notice that Calico, or Starved Aster, is always loaded with insects. White Wood and Heart-leaved Aster volunteer happily in my yard with no care required.

If you'd like to get into the "weeds" with these plants, use a field guide like Peterson's or Newcomb's **Wildlower Guide** to sort out the different species you may find. There is a dichotomous key to identify Goldenrod from Long Island Botanical Society at http://libotanical.org/newsletters/0205.pdf. It can be a challenging, but rewarding task. Don't forget to turn the leaves over to look at the vein structure. You can find many different Goldenrod and Aster species at the Overpeck Butterfly Garden and at the New Overpeck "Hill" garden.

Also, be aware that genetic analysis has recently changed the classification of some Goldenrods and Asters, some even changing genus. I hope you may enjoy some of this fine season in the field with plants and wildlife.

Jimmy's "Hill" Garden

"The Jay-time Blues"

Blue Jays hide mostly alone in the dim, eerie light
Hidden from our view, and predators' sight
Chirps blend together high up in the canopy
Stealthy as shadows, waiting silently.

When hunting, they switch to birds of prey
All skills, tricks and tools, put up on display.
Diving through branches and cutting sharp turns
A jay's predatory look doesn't just hurt, it burns.

Gobbling up few seeds, nuts and berries on a bush;
Slimy little thieves with a vibrant whoosh
They mimic and mock, with ingenious flair
The ruler of the treetops, emitting power in the air.

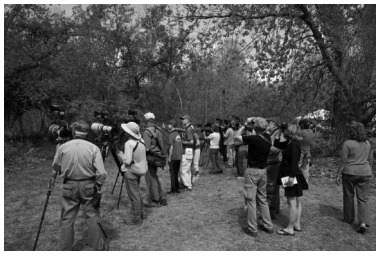
For six to eight years, they may raid and dominate with their minds,
Eating opportune eggs, rodents, grasshoppers and other bugs of many different kinds.
It is not their intent to hurt, or take other lives in their sight,
It is all in the nature of things; terraforming, mindlessly, without delight.

Poem by Andrew C. Skirpan,12 yr old student
(Garfield Middle School of Bergen County, NJ)

2025 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT- DECEMBER 20th DAVID HALL

This is a Nature Program Cooperative Event. Our 77th annual Hackensack-Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 20. The official count period extends from December 17 through December 23.

Our goal is to count all the birds within a 15 mile diameter circle, centered at the River Edge Railroad Station. We will count the number of species and the number of individuals of each species within this circle. This effort continues to teach us about the status and survival of our native birds, and helps to identify important bird areas in Bergen County.



We need your help in the field or in your neighborhood on count day. **Feeder counts** conducted in your yard on Dec. 20th can be very valuable, and we welcome you to call in your feeder results to my home on the day following the count (david.hall@einsteinmed.org). The event will take place in any weather – rain, sleet or snow *will not cancel*.

Even if you can only participate for part of the day, every observer can be a valuable addition to our group effort. We invite you to join us and have a good time. We have experienced leaders assigned for most of the territories described below. Please make arrangements for participating with one of these leaders. We have observed over 183 species over the past 76 years, including a record 97 species in 2014, plus several exotics. Every winter season is different, and with your help we can produce another outstanding result. We found 87 species last year.

If you would rather conduct a count in your local neighborhood or at a local park, please contact me in advance, so that we can coordinate your effort with that of our leaders. You don't have to be an expert to take part. If you can identify the common winter birds, you can be a valuable participant. If you would like more information about the Christmas Bird Count, please contact David Hall at david.hall@einsteinmed.org

AREA LEADERS:

Area I-A: **David Hall (973-226-7825)**
Includes: Meadowlands district, Little Ferry, South Hackensack, Moonachie.

Area I-B: **Chris Takacs & Linda Mullaney (201-804-7817).**
Includes: Teterboro Airport, Clifton, Hasbrouck Heights, Wood Ridge, Wallington, and Paterson.

Area I-C: **Kevin Avery & Tammy Laverty** (ka7887079@gmail.com)
Includes Ridgefield Park, lower Hackensack River.

Area II: **Steve Kuitems (908-630-0033) [leave a message]**
Includes: New Milford, Hackensack, Maywood, River Edge, and parts of Haworth, Dumont, Bergenfield, Oradell, Emerson, Teaneck, Bogota and Paramus.

Area IIA: **Joel Rudin,** (joel.rudin@gmail.com) **Closter Nature Center**

Area III: **Evan Zupfer**, (pnanaturalist@gmail.com). Includes: Tenafly, Greenbrook Sanctuary.

Area IV: **Marie Longo (201 498-0809), Don Torino and Jimmie Macaluso**
Includes: Leonia, Teaneck Creek and Overpeck Creek.

Area V: **Ken Witkowski** (**973-208-9808**). Includes: Park Ridge, Woodcliff Lake, Hillsdale, Rivervale, Westwood, Washington and parts of Emerson and Oradell.

Area VI-A: **Nancy Hall (973-226-7825) and Sheila Keane**. Includes: Hohokus, Ridgewood, parts of Saddle River, Waldwick, Midland Park, Saddle Brook, Garfield, Glen Rock, Paramus.

Area VI-B: **Holly Cowen and Liana Romano**, liana.romano@hotmail.com, 201-6752427. Includes parts of Fairlawn, Hawthorne and Rochelle Park

Area VII: **Denise Farrell (201-370-1148)**. Includes: Old Tappan, Northvale, part of Rockleigh, Norwood, Harrington Park, Demarest, Closter and parts of Cresskill.

FUNDRAISING — Tammy Laverty, Chair

These are just a few of the successful programs from our busy summer/fall season - Butterfly Day, Moth Night, and the Birding Festival. Thousands of folks were able to enjoy these and other programs because of the donations from our wonderful and generous members. With your help we are able to fulfill our mission, to promote and protect wildlife in its natural habitat by providing opportunities for observation, education and conservation. We hope you all get a chance to participate in our future programs, walks and activities.

FUNDRAISING 2025 (6/9 - 9/17/2025)

TOTAL DONATIONS - JUNE 9 thru SEPT. 17 = $ 9,607

DONATIONS - SPRING COUNT APPEAL $296
Rochana Muenthongchin, Dennis Murphy

GENERAL APPEAL / MONTHLY DONATIONS / DONATE BUTTON / CHECKS/ ETC. $2266

Kevin J. Avery, Pedro Cruz, Madeline Giotta, Marianne Herrmann, Art Johnson, the Johnsons, Monica Maley, John & Claudia Moran, Reskakis Family Charitable Trust, Ridgefield Park Environmental Commision / Joe Koscielny Nature Photography Walk, JoAnn Strauss, Jennifer Thomas, Barbara Watterson, Sandra Wolkenberg

DONATIONS DEDICATED TO BUTTERFLY GARDEN $345

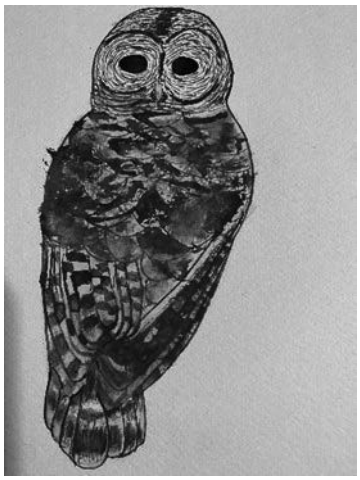
Daniel Alfonso, Anonymous, Leslie Schur Gottlieb, Marie Longo, Nancy Raum honoring Regina's birthday. Ethel Abrams & Herman Atlas in memory of parents Hortense & Herman Atlas. RT Coyle in memory of Smalls.

COMPANY MATCHING DONATIONS AND PARTNER DONATIONS $6700
LSEG, Veolia

VOLUNTEERS & GENEROUS ADDITIONS TO BCAS BUTTERFLY GARDEN
KPMG, Boy Scout Troop 1200

The Barred Owl — By Maggie Estrada, 7th Grade

The Barred Owl is a beautiful, large, fluffy owl that has brown barring on the upper breast and brown streaking on the lower breast and belly. It has a round head, and the eyes are dark brown. It can be found throughout the eastern United States. Increasingly found in wooded, suburban neighborhoods with mature trees, largely in the southeastern United States. In northern New Jersey, these owls inhabit hemlock ravines, mixed wetland, forests, or woodlands. There are large numbers in the Highlands region of northern Jersey, the Pequannock watershed, High Point State Park, Sterling Forest, Wanaque Wildlife Management Area, and the Passaic River basin.



The Barred Owl has impressive vocals. Their hooting resonates throughout remote, swampy woodlands in New Jersey. It has a distinct hooting call which sounds like 'Who *cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?'* It has a wide variety of calls, including a loud sound, similar to maniacal laughter. This sound will stand out in any suburban area. The Barred Owl lives on a wide variety of small mammals, birds, amphibians, fish, reptiles, and invertebrates. They nest in large trees in old forests, but their habitat is shrinking due to deforestation.

Information on their breeding habits is not extensive, mainly because their nests are hidden and not easy to access, but nest cameras are producing new, useful data on their breeding habits. So get your binoculars out and listen for the Barred Owl's distinctive hooting! Happy Birding!

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
OCTOBER 2025

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 2025/2026

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 _____