

Northern New York Audubon

Serving the Adirondack, Champlain, St. Lawrence Region of New York State

Mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems in the Adirondacks, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

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September-November 2014



Important Notice (Really!)

At its July meeting the NNYA Board of Directors voted to transition to *electronic-only* newsletters for the members of National Audubon Society *who do not contribute directly to NNYA*. This means the following:

- National Audubon Society members at large who do not contribute directly to Northern New York Audubon *will no longer receive the Northern New York Audubon Newsletter unless they provide us with an email address*
- *Members of Northern New York Audubon have the option of receiving a paper or electronic copy*—simply indicate which version of the newsletter you want when you respond to the Annual Appeal Letter, or by emailing Pat Thaxton, NNYA Membership Chair, at: jpthax5317@aol.com
This transition will begin with the March-May 2015 Northern New York Audubon Newsletter. In other words, this change will not take effect until March, 2015.

What you Need to Do

- If you are a member of Northern New York Audubon you do not need to do anything; you will continue to receive your paper or electronic copy of the newsletter as usual. You can, at any point, switch from a paper to an electronic newsletter, or vice versa, if you want.

If you are a member of National Audubon Society who has not joined Northern New York Audubon you need to supply us with an email address if you want to continue to receive the Northern New York Audubon Newsletter.

How to Supply Your Email Address

By Mail: Send your email address to:

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Keene Valley, NY 12943-0488

By Email: Send your email address to:

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Northern New York Audubon Does Not Share Member Email Addresses With Anyone!

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NNYA

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Northern New York Audubon, Inc.
A chapter of National Audubon Society
serving the Adirondack, Champlain and
St. Lawrence regions of northern New
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Hamilton and St. Lawrence counties.

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President's Message

The board of Northern New York Audubon is made up of a diverse group of hard working and passionate individuals. I consider myself very lucky to be able to work with and learn from each of them. It is my pleasure to introduce you to several new board members this year.

Stacy McNulty is an ecologist with research interests in forest ecology, landscape ecology, and the impacts of land use on wildlife habitat. Her research includes songbirds, amphibians, mammals and other wildlife populations in north-eastern forests. She has degrees in Biology from SUNY-Geneseo and Environmental Science and Forestry Biology from SUNY-ESF. She aspires to be a better birder and enjoys hiking, canoeing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and anything else "that gets me outdoors."

Kendra Ormerod received a Master's degree in Environmental Interpretation from SUNY-ESF in Syracuse, New York, and began working as a Naturalist for The Wild Center shortly thereafter. Her specialty is birding and she particularly enjoys leading bird trips for The Wild Center at various locations throughout the Adirondack Park. She is also a dog trainer for the Adirondack High Peak Dog Training Club, a NYS Licensed Guide and a Wilderness First Responder.

Originally from Binghamton, NY, Liz DeFonce moved to the Adirondacks in March of 2003 to begin work as a librarian at Paul Smiths College, a position she held for nearly a decade. In that time her love of nature deepened as she found a community of like-minded people that she could share it with. She currently lives in the Saranac Lake area and owns and operates *Moose Maple Books & More* on Olive Street in Saranac Lake.

Susan Willson is a tropical avian ecologist and conservation biologist. She received a BA from Skidmore College and a PhD from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Before coming to St Lawrence University, she taught with the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) in Costa Rica and also led a semester program in Tanzania for Earlham College while teaching there.

—Leah Valerio

NNYA Educator Grant Report

Amy Sholtis, a science and, for the first time this semester, environmental science teacher at Plattsburgh High School received this year's Educator's Grant to spend a week at National Audubon's Hog Island Camp during Educator's Week. Here's her letter of thanks for the experience.

Do you remember what it was like to be nine years old? Do you remember what it was like to be filled with wonder and awe as you entered the sacred shrine of the forest? Do you remember the sounds, the taste, and the feel of the forest? In those moments, you felt like anything was possible! The world was yours to explore and define. Maybe you even had a special, secret place to call your own, under the canopy of green.

Well, I have just spent a week reconnecting with my inner-nine-year-old in the wilds of Maine. It was a complete joy to attend Educator's Week at Audubon's camp on Hog Island. My days were spent on guided nature hikes, exploring tidal pools, and connecting with 60 other kindred spirits. I lived under the watchful eye of the Osprey that have their nest right in the camp. We took boats out to Easter Egg Rock Island to get a first-hand look at *Puffin Project*. Dr. Stephen Kress, the director of the project gave us an inspiring presentation on his work with the puffins. As I met educators from all over the country, we began to create the utopia of learning and sharing. I did not want to leave the island.

This experience has rejuvenated my spirit and passion for the environmental education. I am excited to get back to my classroom this September and share all that I have learned with my fellow teachers and my students.

This was the best professional development experience I have ever had. This experience will continue to have a profound effect on my teaching for years to come.

I thank all of you again for this amazing opportunity

—Amy Sholtis

Bicknell's Thrush Events

Bicknell's Thrush was the focus of two summer events held in the Adirondacks.

On June 25, 2014, the Adirondack Foundation hosted "Bicknell's Thrush One Bird – Two Countries" at Heaven Hill Farm in Lake Placid. The event brought together people and organizations actively protecting the homes of this species. Representatives were in attendance from the Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, Adirondack Council, Audubon New York, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Wildlife Conservation Society, Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), Adirondack Park Agency, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Northern New York Audubon, the Wild Center, and a group of people from Fundación Loma Quita Espuela and Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano, who work to protect the species in its winter habitat.

In 2007, several conservation organizations established a dedicated fund for protecting habitat for Bicknell's Thrush. The fund focuses on the bird's wintering grounds on the Island of Hispaniola.

The event was an opportunity to learn more about recent conservation efforts, meet the representatives from the Dominican Republic, recognize ORDA for raising public awareness about Bicknell's Thrush on Whiteface Mountain, and thank Centerplate for supporting the fund.

Joan Collins, Larry Master, and Pat & John Thaxton were in attendance on behalf of Northern NY Audubon. Mike Burger, of Audubon New York, gave the opening remarks.

On August 7, 2014, Larry and Nancy Master hosted an event at Intervale Lowlands in Lake Placid to highlight the work of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies on behalf of Bicknell's Thrush. Special guest Chris Rimmer, Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, presented, "Conservation on the Wings of a Tiny Songbird – from the Adirondacks to the Caribbean". Chris has dedicated several decades to understanding and protecting Bicknell's Thrush. He discussed how scientists at VCE discovered that this species practices polygynandry, a reproductive strategy that occurs when two or more males have an exclusive sexual relationship with two or more females. He also highlighted his winter work in the Dominican Republic where deforestation is a huge threat to the species. Male Bicknell's Thrushes take the best winter habitat with females often relegated to suboptimal habitat. The consequences for female survival could be pronounced with effects on the entire species' viability.

If you would like to help conserve Bicknell's Thrush and its habitat, donations can be made to the Adirondack Foundation's Bicknell's Thrush Protection Fund, and/or the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. Thank you!

—Joan Collins

Bicknell's Thrush photo by Joan Collins



Low's Ridge – Upper Dam Trail Leaf Peeping and Birding! Saturday, September 27, 2014 Piercefield/Colton, NY



Photo by John Thaxton

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meet: Geiger Arena

Leader: Joan Collins

Bring: Lunch, water, rain jacket, sturdy hiking boots

Registration: Call Long Lake Parks and Recreation Department @ (518) 624-3077

Join Joan Collins for a walk into beautiful Hitchins Pond and the Upper Dam on the Bog River. Common Loons nest on Hitchins Pond each year. Bald Eagles and Great Blue Herons are also a common sight. The route is an old dirt road that passes through many lovely and varied habitat areas including a boreal bog, marsh, mixed forest, and ponds/lakes. After the 2.5 mile walk on level terrain to Hitchins Pond, there will be a food break at a scenic picnic area. Participants may order lunch from the Adirondack Trading Post. Lunch menus will be provided before departure. Order and enjoy a warm Panini delivered picnic side via guide boat! There will be an optional 2 mile round trip hike up Low's Ridge featuring spectacular views of the Bog River Valley and High Peaks. The round trip distance is 5 miles, or 7 miles if the hike up Low's Ridge is added. Bring food (lunch can be ordered at departure), water, a jacket, appropriate attire/hiking shoes, binoculars, hat, sunscreen, and insect spray. Meet at the Geiger Arena parking area in Long Lake at 8 a.m. for transportation to the trailhead on Long Lake's "Little Bus"! There is an outhouse at Hitchins Pond and a bathroom at the Geiger Arena meeting location. This field trip is jointly sponsored by Northern New York Audubon and the Long Lake Parks and Recreation Department. **Maximum 15 participants.**



Crown Point Banding Station 2014 Report

The Crown Point Banding Association opened the Crown Point Banding Station on May 9th, beginning the 39th consecutive year that this station has banded birds at the Crown Point State Historic Site on the Lake Champlain New York peninsula of the same name. Established in 1976 by J.M.C. "Mike" Peterson, this Banding Station has been monitoring spring migrant birds, by using banding, longer than all but a few banding stations in North America east of the Mississippi River. The Station closed for the year on May 25th.

Current plans for the Station in 2015 are for it to open on Friday, May 8th, and to close on Sunday, May 24th.

Temperatures this year were more moderate than in past times. There was no frost at the site, a first in over 20 years, and most days started above 40 degrees. By noon, it was time to shed long sleeves and outer wear on most days. Lake Champlain remained at above average levels throughout the period, barely attaining flood stage levels (100 feet above sea level) in the early banding season. "The Swamp" net area was dry except after rain. This year, people had more ticks than birds. Only one bird, a Brown Thrasher, had ticks; it had 4 ticks, 2 next to each eye.

There was no predation at the nets. A red fox was seen at the bottom of one net lane, but it was not interested in the nets. This year there were plenty of dead alewives (fish) on the lake shore along with some carcasses of double-crested cormorants that had been shot by agents of the NYSDEC as a "control" measure. So, the scavengers had plenty of easy food away from the station.

The arrival of birds was a bit upside down this year. Our first bird was a least flycatcher. Late arrivals included white-crowned sparrow. Usually, this arrival order is reversed. Often, the white-crowns have gone by before the Station opens. No new species were banded this year, leaving the total number of species banded at the Station since 1976 at 106 plus two "types."

Ted Hicks, our licensed hummingbird bander, banded two ruby-throated hummingbirds during his stay. Hummers were hard to come by again this year.

Founder Mike Peterson assisted at the Station the middle weekend, during which we caught a male Baltimore oriole that Mike had banded in 2007. The bird was hatched in 2005 or earlier and was, at this time, at least 8 years 11 months old. It had been recaptured at the Station several times. The oldest Baltimore oriole of record was 12 years old.

This year the setup crew went to the Station site on the Wednesday before opening Friday. All agreed that this was a more efficient way to set up the tent and canopies. This year's set-up crew was Judith Heintz, Lesley Fisher and Gordon Howard.

At setup, the hawthorn leaves were just beginning to emerge. The "green" worms were a millimeter long. By mid-season these caterpillars were large enough to rappel to the ground where they pupate until fall; they are the larvae of winter flying moths. The adults mate and lay eggs in late fall and early winter; many bird species enjoy this food source.

The Crown Point Banding Station is a 100% volunteer organization. The staff welcomes newcomers who wish to learn to assist in the Station's operation.

This year the Station broke 2 records for number of a species banded. The old record for veery was 4, set in 2013; this year 5 were banded, a 20% increase. This was the year of the gray catbird. The old record was set in 1995 at 66; this year we banded 98, one bird shy of a 50% increase. We also banded warblers that are uncommon to the station, including a blue-winged and a mourning warbler.

A total of 137 visitors signed the guest book this year (some did not), from as close as Port Henry and farther away like New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina, Vermont, Washington and Quebec.

This year's licensed banders were: Ted Hicks, Gordon Howard, Gary Lee, Mike Peterson and Nina Schoch.

Warblers: Warblers of 18 species were banded this year, up from 15 species the previous 4 years. In the species list below, the number banded in 2014 is presented followed by the number of that species banded in 2013 in brackets { }. A plus sign (+) followed by a number (i.e., +3) indicates the number recaptured this year from previous years. For example: American Goldfinch 12 {56} +1 = 12 in 2014, 56 in 2013 and 1 recaptured from a previous year. "R" = New Station High Count.

2014 Species List: {Lat. 44° 01" North; Long. 073° 26' 00" West} May 9-25, 2014:

Ruby-throated hummingbird, 2 { }; downy woodpecker, 3 { }; hairy woodpecker, 1 { }; northern flicker, 1 {1}; Trail's flycatcher, 8 { }; least flycatcher, 8 {5}; eastern kingbird, 1 {3} +1; eastern phoebe, 1 { }; great crested flycatcher, 3 { }; eastern kingbird, 3 {1}; tree swallow, 2 {3}; barn swallow, 0 {1} +1; blue jay, 15 {20}; black-capped chickadee, 10 {3}; white-breasted nuthatch, 1 { }; house wren, 4 {1}; ruby-crowned kinglet, 1 {1}; eastern bluebird, 3 {5}; veery 5 {4} +2 R; gray-cheeked thrush, 1 {3}; Swainson's thrush, 7 {1}; wood thrush, 4 {2}; American robin, 17 {15} +5; gray catbird, 98 {19} +2 R; brown thrasher, 2 {1}; European starling, 1 {2}; warbling vireo, 3 {1} +1; red-eyed vireo, 1 {1}. **Warblers:** Tennessee, 7, { }; Nashville, 4 {4}; mourning, 1 {1}; northern parula, 1 { }; chestnut-sided, 3 {1}; yellow, 3 {1}; magnolia, 13 {1}; black-throated blue, 4 {2}; yellow-rumped, 140 {93}; blue-winged, 1 { }; palm – western 3 {9}; blackpoll, 2 { }; American redstart, 9 {9}; ovenbird, 2 { }; northern water-thrush, 2 {3}; common yellowthroat, 22, {19}; Wilson's, 2 { }; Canada, 1 { }. **Other:** northern cardinal, 4 {1}; rose-breasted grosbeak, 2 {1}; indigo bunting, 2 { }. **Sparrows:** chipping, 2 {2}; song, 13 {9} +1; Lincoln's, 11 {4}; swamp, 3 {2}; white-throated, 2 {34}; white-crowned, 3 {4}; **Additional Species:** bobolink, 2 { }; red-winged blackbird, 19 {3} +1; common grackle, 2 { }; brown-headed cowbird, 3 {1}; orchard oriole, 4 {3}; Baltimore oriole, 6 {8} +10; American goldfinch, 36 {6} +1. —**Gordon Howard**

Current plans for the Station in 2015 are for it to open on Friday, May 8th, and to close on Sunday, May 24th.

Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation/NNYA Boreal Bird Studies Award

A Glimpse at the Field Work

In early June, NNYA board members Charlotte Demers, Pat Thaxton and John Thaxton accepted an invitation from Steve Langdon to spend an afternoon, evening and morning at Shingle Shanty Preserve and Research Station, a sprawling, 15,000 acre private property that stretches roughly between Long Lake and the Stillwater Reservoir.

NNYA has awarded Steve Langdon several Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation/NNYA grants to conduct bird point counts on the preserve, and this year we had an opportunity to help with a morning's point count.

First, we met Steve at a locked gate, and then followed him for sixteen miles on an extremely funky dirt road, sufficiently funky, in any case, that Steve had to stop his truck and cut and move a couple of trees out of our way—not huge trees, but sufficiently huge that they probably would have forced me to turn around. The road passed through sections of dense woods, past open meadows with streams and a couple of gorgeous bogs.

The lowland boreal peatland complexes at Shingle Shanty represent unique habitats, at the absolute extreme of their southern range, that evolved from Glacial Lake St. Agnes. The peat, in places, goes down thirty-six feet and the landscapes they form approach the otherworldly in beauty. Research at the preserve involves, among other subjects of study, 20 intensive vegetation assessment plots within 50 meters of a subset of the 67 boreal bird point locations in the peatland complex.

The research involves describing forest structure by quantifying species composition and stem density of woody plants in ground, shrub and overstory strata, basal area of overstory and coarse woody debris volume in 25-square-meter plots. Environmental variables (e.g., pH, conductivity, peat-depth and soil class, etc.) will also be collected. The plots will be permanently marked for continued long-term monitoring.

: *Photos by John Thaxton*



Boreal Chickadee With Insect

Between negotiating the almost impassable road and stopping a couple of times to gawk at gloriously pristine bog lands, we spent several hours getting to our destination, a small metal cabin with no running water or electricity, perched on the shore of a pristine lake. The accommodations featured platforms for us to pitch our tents on and a screened-in dining tent with a couple of picnic tables.

We pitched our tents, arranged our sleeping bags and



blankets and repaired to the cabin's approximation of a front porch, which served as an outstanding venue for some Chilean Cabernet, cheese, humus and nuts. And then Steve went into action, disappearing into the cabin for perhaps half an hour, then emerging to announce the advent of dinner, a scrumptious and copious offering of cheese and bean and vegetable burritos, which we assembled ourselves and brought into the screened-in dining area.

We concluded the meal and evening with a dram of Irish whiskey and assembled for breakfast at 4:30 a.m., after which we drove along the road and stopped at specific intervals to get out and census the birds we heard and saw, and boy, oh boy, did we see and hear lots of birds—yellow-bellied and olive-sided flycatchers, boreal chickadees, gray jays, astonishing numbers of black and white warblers, Nashvilles, magnolias, black throated blues and greens, yellows, yellowthroats, blackburnians, swamp sparrows, song sparrows, blue-headed and red-eyed vireos, a bald eagle, a broad-winged, hawk—you get the picture.

—**John Thaxton**

Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation/NNYA 2013 Avian Research Award *Progress Report*

The Wildlife Conservation Society is extremely grateful to the Joseph & Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation/Northern New York Audubon Avian Research Award we received for 2013 grant cycle.

This grant of \$2,000 supported our work to disseminate long-term research on boreal birds in the Adirondacks.

The Adirondack Park represents the southern range extent for several species of boreal forest birds within North America. Like any other species at the edge of its range, they face challenges in this environment, and they are geographically isolated from the Canadian conspecifics. The habitats of these boreal specialists—cool, wet, sphagnum-draped bogs and swampy woods—are thought to be particularly vulnerable to climate change, especially here in the park where they represent disjunct and isolated bits of the “true boreal” to our north.

WCS has been visiting a set of boreal habitats since 2003 and counting birds within them. Our database of bird detections in Adirondack peatlands now numbers more than 20,000 records and includes occurrence data for more than 2/3 of the bird species that breed in the Adirondacks. The main focus of our monitoring is the suite of iconic boreal species including gray jay, rusty blackbird, olive-sided flycatcher, three-toed woodpecker, and others. We have been using these counts to understand population trends for these rare species, and to understand what may influence these trends at the landscape scale—factors such as area and connectedness of the wetlands they inhabit, and how close those wetlands are to potential sources of disturbance.

A detailed analyses of these data using occupancy modeling revealed strong support for a metapopulation structure within these communities, evidence that some species may be responding to climate change, and evidence that nearly all of them are sensitive to the proximity of human infrastructure. We are finding that most of the species we have monitored are showing patterns of decline. For some—boreal chickadee, Lincoln’s sparrow—the declines are modest. For others—rusty blackbird, gray jay, yellow-bellied flycatcher, and black-backed woodpecker—they are more troubling. The number of boreal peatlands occupied by these 5 species has declined by 15% or more since 2007. Only the palm warbler appears to be increasing in our landscape.

Boreal Manuscript. We are pleased to report that a manuscript documenting the boreal bird research was published in *Northeastern Naturalist* in 2014. “Dynamics of boreal birds at the edge of their range in the Adirondack Park, NY” describes the results of analysis for a 5-year dataset and findings with respect to drivers of annual dynamics among these populations. WCS developed a press release around this paper which subsequently resulted in write-ups in two different newspapers and an interview with NCP. More recently we were asked to describe these findings in a *Viewpoint* piece for the *Adirondack Explorer*, published in the July/August 2014 issue.

Presentation for Audubon. Though we have not scheduled a presentation for Northern New York Audubon and would prefer to wait until a time when the membership and board feel this would be of primary interest, we have made presentations for the Huntington/Oyster Bay Audubon chapter and are scheduled to present these findings to the Mohawk Chapter on September 8.

Additional Leveraging of Northern New York Audubon Support. We are pleased to report that the Support of NNYA in enabling us to disseminate our boreal findings has resulted in 2 additional opportunities which will help us to further understand these populations in the Adirondacks and to galvanize support for their protection. *Barnum Bog JT*



First, we were approached by researchers at the Northeast Climate Science Center in Hadley, MA to make use of our boreal bird dataset as part of a larger-scale investigation into the status and trends of spruce-fir forest bird species utilizing data from 16 monitoring programs in the eastern US from the Upper Midwest to the Northeast. A manuscript describing the findings is in preparation and will be submitted to *Conservation Biology* by the end of September or sooner.

Second, our boreal bird findings and communication around them resulted in a grant from a private donor to continue with our work in order to (1) develop a second manuscript to make use of data for non-target species and describe changes in community structure and the characteristics of sites and species which are changing more rapidly than others, (2) develop best management practices for landowners, state agencies, and timber management companies to protect boreal birds and their habitats, (3) set spatial priorities for other locations and ownerships where conservation intervention is most critical and has the greatest potential benefit to the park, and (4) implement our existing Boreal Communication Strategy to achieve the best possible conservation for Adirondack boreal habitats. Last, we have also used our recent process on lands where management of boreal habitat is a consideration.

—Dr. Michale Glennon

Editor’s Note: The above represents Dr. Glennon’s report to NNYA about the research paper we funded, *Dynamics of Boreal Birds at the Edge of their Range in the Adirondack Park, NY*, which was published in *Northeastern Naturalist* in the April 2014 issue.

Help Protect Nesting Adirondack Loons!

Ray Brook, NY – Biodiversity Research Institute’s (BRI’s) Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation is pleased to announce the launch of a new campaign on Adirondack Gives, www.adirondackgives.org, the crowdfunding site for Adirondack region nonprofits. This campaign will provide support for the placement of trail cameras near approximately 30 Common Loon nest sites in the Adirondack Park to document nesting behaviors, clutch size, and hatch dates for Adirondack loons, and to assess the primary factors (e.g., predation, human disturbance) impacting the birds during incubation.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) provided the cameras for this project. Support from this campaign, which is seeking to raise \$1100 over the next two months, will cover the cost of the lithium-ion batteries and high capacity SD cards used in the cameras.

“By placing cameras at a variety of loon nest sites, we are better able to assess the impacts of such factors as water level fluctuation, shoreline development, human disturbance, and predation on loon nesting success” explained Dr. Nina Schoch, Coordinator of BRI’s Adirondack Loon Center. “A pilot study we did in 2013 documented the failure of one loon nest likely related to intensive human disturbance on a busy campground lake, while another nest on a remote lake hatched two chicks successfully.”

Images collected in this project will be utilized by the NYS DEC to better manage loon nesting sites in the Adirondack Park to help ensure the successful hatching of loon chicks. This project is conducted under BRI’s federal and state scientific collection permits, and in collaboration with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The nesting period is one of the most critical stages during the annual life cycle of loons to ensure continued survival, long-term sustainability, and potential growth of their populations. Thus, it is highly recommended that boaters and paddlers give incubating loons their privacy, and watch them from a wide distance with binoculars, instead of disturbing them and potentially causing a nest to fail. It is important to learn about the normal behavior of loons (and other wildlife), so one can properly interpret when a bird is stressed by your presence.

To learn more, or to contribute to this campaign, visit www.adirondackgives.org, and click on “[Help Unveil the Secret Lives of Nesting Loons](#).” As a special incentive, donors of \$100 or more will receive a beautiful 8x10” photograph of a nesting Adirondack loon.

The mission of Biodiversity Research Institute is to assess emerging threats to wildlife and ecosystems through collaborative research, and to use scientific findings to advance environmental awareness and inform decision makers. BRI’s Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation is dedicated to improving the overall health of the environment, especially air and water quality, through collaborative research and outreach focusing on the natural history of the Common Loon and conservation issues affecting loon populations and their habitats.

—Dr. Nina Schoch

2nd Annual Adirondack Loon Celebration Sunday, October 12, 2014 Riverside Park and Town Hall Saranac Lake

The 2014 *Adirondack Loon Celebration* promises to be a fun-filled day of “looney” activities! A variety of events and family activities are scheduled, including:

- Concerts at Riverside Park**
(rain location: Harrietstown Hall)
- Merriloons the Clown and other activities for kids**
- Fabulous food by Masons, Green Goddess and others!**
- Learn about loons with Sylvia Fletcher, the Ventriloquist, and her amazing puppets!**
- Loon Calling Contest—Get your yodels, tremolos and other wails ready!**
- Unique loon-oriented silent auction with an appetizer/dessert reception**
- Loon Quilt Raffle**
- Loon Art Show and Wildlife Photography Exhibit**

Special Field Trip

There will also be a Special Field Trip to observe loon behavior first hand! Please note: There is a fee for the field trip; preregistration is required. For more information about this field trip, contact: adkloon@briloon.org or call:

888.749.5666X145

Win a Fabulous Queen-Sized Loon Quilt!
Raffle Tickets \$5 Each or 6 for \$25
Raffle Drawing on Sunday, October 12th, 2014



To learn more about BRI’s Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation, contact adkloon@briloon.org or (207) 839-7600 x 145, visit www.briloon.org/adkloon, or like BRI’s Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation at www.facebook.com/adkloon to stay updated about BRI’s Adirondack loon research and outreach efforts.

Editor's Note

It started raining in late afternoon, hard, and continued through the night and early morning, overflowing our inch-and-a-half rain gauge and waking us up a few times with a not-so-muffled raindrop roar, and then the sun suddenly turned the dripping leaves and needles into a sparkling whirligig of myriad rainbow prisms trembling wildly in a slight breeze and cascading, like a shower of tiny spectral shards, through the half dark and half luminous woods. A winter wren burst suddenly into song, as though in bravura approval of the rainbow shower, and a raven, a second after the wren's song ended, croaked twice in rapid succession, I felt certain in solemn approval.

I stepped outside to perhaps catch a glimpse of the raven in the airspace over the house but saw only a pair of cabbage white butterflies pursuing one another up the driveway, flying in a horizontal, corkscrewing vortex, percolating sideways, one moment almost touching, the next half-a-foot or so apart, until they spiraled abruptly upward, like the first two bubbles in a pot of water about to boil, and twirled invisibly into the almost blinding whiteness of a huge cloud directly overhead. The still low morning sun illuminated the dazzling cloud overhead and turned the trees lining my driveway into a crazy quilt alley of dark blotches and coruscating blasts of rainbow besotted maple and beech and oak leaves, and spruce and white pine and hemlock needles glinting crazy in the light.

The following day a neighbor I ran into at the Elizabethtown Farmer's Market told me, with lugubrious seriousness, that summer ended in July, and that August, for all its charms, amounted to a prelude to hard frosts, too little firewood and the plethora of other vicissitudes of life in the North Country, adding, parenthetically, that she wouldn't have it any other way. Sure enough, the following day we went to Noblewood Park and saw twelve-hundred thirty double-crested cormorants obviously staging for migration on Lake Champlain and, at the mouth of the Boquet River, several species that breed in the high arctic feeding like crazy, clearly stopping by to fatten up on their migration south.

Two years ago, we got numerous calls and emails from people who saw a giant swallowtail, a four-inch long butterfly that looks like a Tiger Swallowtail on steroids, and although we chased it at several locations where people had seen it we came up empty. Then, during a casual walk on Hulls Falls Road, in Keene, I thought I saw a couple of Tiger Swallowtails consummating their relationship on a Joe-Pye weed flower head, only to realize, duh, that the two swallowtails were one, a huge, beautiful insect I had never seen before, impossibly big for a butterfly, gone a couple of minutes after I saw it, flying away in a looping arc across the Ausable River, as a belted kingfisher held forth with a raucous, rachety call and a stiff breeze bent the Joe-Pye weed flower heads towards us and transformed the deep blue sky and clouds reflected in the Ausable River into a sinuous field of luminous, bluish gray corduroy ripples. Gorgeous afternoon.

Bird of the season? The brown booby Gary Chapin found at Crown Point State Historic Site. —**John Thaxton**
