

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.

Volume 39 Number 1

March-May 2011

**March 24th
7 PM**

**Joan Weill Library, Adirondack Room
Paul Smiths College**

***Out of Africa, Into the Adirondacks:
A Conservation Journey***

Dr. Bill Weber will be talking at Paul Smiths College on March 24th at 7 PM in the Adirondack Room of the Joan Weill Library. Bill's talk will be "Out of Africa, Into the Adirondacks: A Conservation Journey." Bill will recount experiences and lessons from his thirty year career in conservation on two continents, and he will draw on the messages and stories in his book, *In The Kingdom of Gorillas: The Quest to Save Rwanda's Mountain Gorillas*, which he wrote with his wife, Dr. Amy Vedder.

Weber has lived in Africa for ten years, including seven years in Rwanda, where he initiated the highly successful mountain gorilla tourism program. He is a pioneer of the modern ecotourism movement and a recognized expert in human aspects of conservation. After beginning his career with the Wildlife Conservation Society's Africa Program, from 1996 to 2005, Dr. Weber turned his attention to issues in North America, initiating programs through WCS to address wildlife aspects of energy development, exurban sprawl, native lands management, wilderness recreation, wildlands connectivity and climate change. From 2005 through 2008, he returned to Rwanda to help restore that nation's capacity to manage its parks, wildlife, and tourism.

Dr. Weber has authored dozens of articles on subjects ranging from community development to carnivore conservation, and his work has been featured in National Geographic, NPR, PBS, CNN, and other media outlets. He is senior editor of *African Rain Forest Ecology and Conservation*. His experiences in Rwanda are described in the book, *In the Kingdom of Gorillas*, which was featured by *BBC Wildlife* as one of "the most influential books from the past 40 years of wildlife publishing" and selected as one of the "Best Science and Nature books" by National Public Radio. He continues to work in Rwanda and is currently writing another book drawing on his experiences in Africa and North America.

The talk is free and open to the public.

Co-sponsored by Northern New York Audubon, Wildlife Conservation Society and Paul Smiths College Fish and Wildlife Science Program

One of "the most influential books from the past 40 years of wildlife publishing."

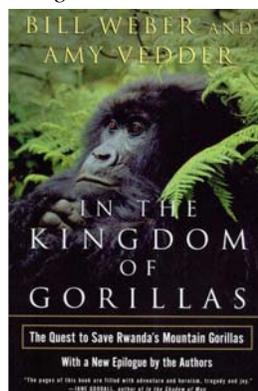
—BBC Wildlife

The pages of this book are filled with adventure and heroism, tragedy and joy.

—Jane Goodall, author of In the Shadow of Man

The best book ever written for those who want to understand not only the glory of Africa's wildlife but also the setting for that glory.

—Bill McKibben, author of The End of Nature



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NNYA

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Northern New York Audubon, Inc.

A chapter of National Audubon Society
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St. Lawrence regions of northern New
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Hamilton and St. Lawrence counties.

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Saturday, March 5, 2011

Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC), Newcomb

Description: Hike/snowshoe the lovely trails at the AIC. The trails lead through lakeshore, river, forest, and wetland ecosystems. After checking out the birds at the AIC feeder, which has recently included redpolls, evening grosbeaks, chickadees and nuthatches, we will head out to the Sucker Brook trail. This 1.0-mile trail runs along the outlet to Rich Lake providing opportunities to glimpse mink and otter in the open water. The surrounding hardwood forest is a great place to spot pileated woodpeckers.

Time: 9 a.m.

Meet: At the Adirondack Interpretive Center (formerly the Newcomb VIC) main building.

Leader: Charlotte Demers

Registration: No registration required. For more information, visit the AIC website at: www.ESF.edu/AIC or call (518) 582-2000; or contact Charlotte at cde-mers@frontiernet.net or (518) 582-2157

Saturday, April 2, 2011

Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC), Newcomb

Description: Hike the lovely trails at the AIC. The trails lead through lakeshore, river, forest, and wetland ecosystems. Depending on the snow cover, we will snowshoe or hike out to the R. W. Sage Jr. Memorial Trail. The Sage Trail is a loop trail that crosses the Rich Lake Outlet. We'll enjoy an easy walk along the shoreline of Belden Lake through a mixed wood forest that often harbors woodpeckers and creepers.

Time: 9 a.m.

Meet: At the Adirondack Interpretive Center (formerly the Newcomb VIC) main building.

Leader: Charlotte Demers

Registration: No registration required. For more information, visit the AIC website at: www.ESF.edu/AIC or call (518) 582-2000; or contact Charlotte at cde-mers@frontiernet.net or (518) 582-2157

Saturday, April 30, 2011

Indian Creek Nature Center, Canton

Description: Come enjoy a spring bird walk at Indian Creek Nature Center. Participants will view a wide variety of species on a hike through shrubland, marsh, wetland, and forest habitats along the Tower and Succession Trails. A spotting scope will be used to view birds on Lower Lake from the top of the observation tower. Bring binoculars!

This trip is jointly sponsored with Indian Creek Nature Center

Time: 8:15 a.m.

Distance: Approximately 2 miles on level trails

Leader: Mary Beth Warburton

Meet: At the main parking area for Indian Creek Nature Center

Register: Mary Beth at (315) 268-0150 mbwarburton@verizon.net

Sunday, May 1, 2011

Paul Smith's College Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC)

Description: Meet at Paul Smiths College VIC parking lot. Early May is when migration finally kicks into to high gear here in the Adirondacks. Warblers, vireos, waterfowl, thrushes, and wading birds are all good possibilities as we explore the many varied habitats of the VIC. About 2 miles of slow-paced walking.

Time: 8 a.m.

Leader: Brian McAllister

Meet: At the VIC parking lot

Register: By calling 518-637-1773 or emailing birder64@yahoo.com

Saturday, May 7, 2011
Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC),
Newcomb

Description: Hike the lovely trails at the AIC. The trails lead through lakeshore, river, forest, and wetland ecosystems. We will hike The Rich Lake Trail and Peninsula Trail which offer great views of Rich Lake and Goodnow Mountain. The old-growth hemlocks along the trail provide excellent habitat for kinglets, chickadees and juncos. The trail also passes some large glacial erratics and interesting rock outcrops.

Time: 9 a.m.

Meet: At the Adirondack Interpretive Center (formerly the Newcomb VIC) main building.

Leader: Charlotte Demers

Registration: No registration required. For more information, visit the AIC website at: www.ESF.edu/AIC or call (518) 582-2000; or contact Charlotte at [cde-mers@frontiernet.net](mailto:cdemers@frontiernet.net) or (518) 582-2157

Saturday, May 21, 2011
Hulls Falls Road, Keene Valley

Description: Bird with Northern New York Audubon member Ruth Kuhfahl. On a previous year's May walk in this diverse habitat we found nesting Pine warblers, Solitary sand-piper and Indigo bunting. Jointly sponsored by the Hurricane Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club and Northern New York Audubon.

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Ruth Kuhfahl and Pat & John Thaxton

Meet: Hulls Falls Road @ Marcy Field

Registration: Call Ruth Kuhfahl at (518) 576-4699

Saturday, May 14, 2011

Ausable Marsh

Join Pat and John Thaxton for a morning of birding at one of the most productive birding spots in the Adirondacks. With a river, a marsh and Lake Champlain shoreline, and habitats ranging from pine woods to mixed woods, Ausable Marsh hosts a stunning variety of breeding and migratory birds, from warblers and bitterns to wood ducks and scaup. We'll look along the banks of the Ausable river for warblers and vireos, and scan the marsh and the lake for waterfowl.

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Pat & John Thaxton

Meet: Entrance to main parking, north end.

Registration: Call Pat & John: (518) 576-4232 or email: jpthax5317@aol.com

Save the Dates

Great Adirondack Birding Celebration

June 3rd-5th

www.adkvic.org/birdcelebration.html

Hamilton County Birding Festival

June 10th-12th

www.adirondackexperience.com

Nancy Smith Collins Bequest

The board of directors would like to express their deepest gratitude to the late Nancy Smith Collins and her family by promising to use her extremely generous bequest to enhance the conservation of Adirondack habitats and the plants and animals that utilize them.

Her generous gift will enable NNYA to more effectively preserve and protect the natural beauties of the Adirondacks she so loved.

Linda Collins loving description of her mother-in-law speaks volumes about the spirit of a genuine conservationist:

November 23, 2010

Dear Ms. Demers,

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you something about my Mother-in-Law, Nancy Smith Collins.

Nancy's generous gift to the Northern New York Audubon Society as well as the Audubon Society in Michigan is an example of how much both Northern New York and Michigan meant to Nancy. She grew up in Bay City, Michigan and graduated from Michigan State in the Agricultural Program at a time when it was very unusual to have a woman in college much less the Ag School. Later she married and moved to Malone, New York where she lived in the foothills of the Adirondacks.

Nancy loved animals, trees, plants especially flowers, rocks and minerals and all things natural and in the wild. She was a member of the Michigan Rock and Mineral Club and the St. Lawrence Rock and Mineral Club. She gave generously to the Nature Conservatories, Audubon's, World Wild Life Federation and many health organizations. Her biggest concern was to keep natural habitats safe for plants and animals.

Nancy noticed changes in the landscape daily and would remark on the beauty of a newly opened flower, the color of the leaves, the number and kinds of birds at her many feeders, the striations on a rock, the antics of the squirrels or the size or shape of a tree. Her appreciation of all things in the natural world opened my eyes to their beauty as well and for this I will be forever grateful.

Sincerely,

Linda Collins

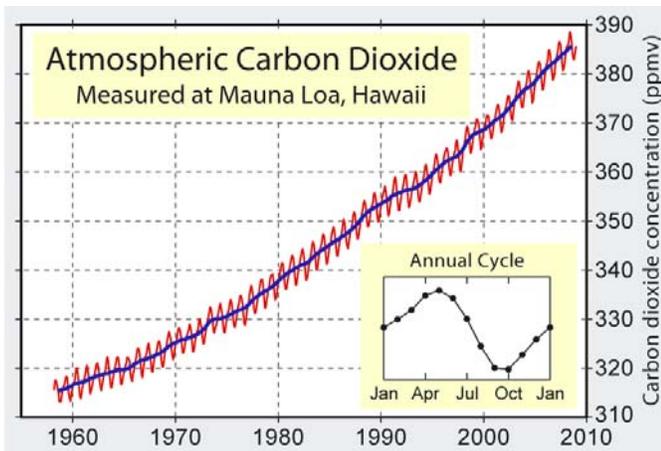


Conservatively Speaking

390 Parts Per Million & Rising

In December 2010, the carbon dioxide (CO₂) level in the atmosphere reached 390 parts per million (PPM). By 2014, the CO₂ level will pass 400 PPM. By the end of the 21st century, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency projects atmospheric CO₂ levels will be at least 535 PPM and possibly as high as 983 PPM. The amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere is directly related to the temperature on Earth. 2010 was just ranked one of the three hottest years on record, within the hottest decade (2001-2010) on record.

Dr. Charles David Keeling developed the first accurate method for measuring the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and in 1958 he installed a machine to measure this level at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii. For the past 52 years, the machine has hourly recorded the level of CO₂ in the atmosphere. In 1958, the level was 310 PPM, and as shown in the “Keeling Curve” graph below, it has been relentlessly climbing with the curve growing steeper:



Before the Industrial Revolution, the CO₂ level in the atmosphere was 280 PPM, where it had been for 1,000 years. For the past 800,000 years, the CO₂ level ranged from 180 to 300 PPM – levels during which humans thrived. The last time atmospheric CO₂ was at 390 PPM was 15 to 20 million years ago – a time when the temperature was 5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit warmer, seas were 75 to 120 feet higher, and there was no permanent ice cap in the arctic – the Earth was vastly different. Earth’s history offers no comparison to the human combustion of fossil fuels. Calculating the effects of such an unprecedented, rapid rise in atmospheric CO₂ is extremely complex.

Effects of global climate change (or as the current U.S. government administration prefers: “Global Climate Disruption”) are already happening and include: increasing heat waves, droughts, floods, wildfires, extreme storms, forest destruction by pests, and sea level rise; the melting of Arctic sea ice, ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica, and mountain glaciers; climate refugees; and signs of stress in coral reefs

and alpine meadows – to name just a few. The extreme storms, such as heavy snows, are now occurring in areas that would not normally experience this type of weather. Northern Europe is experiencing more severe weather in winter as a result of global climate change – specifically, the jet stream is now wandering farther north and south. This change is also bringing freezing temperatures to Florida in winter. (For an explanation of the change in the jet stream path, see Judith Cohen’s “*Bundle Up, It’s Global Warming*” in the December 25th, 2010 *New York Times*.) Without immediate action to curb the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and the conversion of natural ecosystems into agricultural systems, the world faces dire effects: mass extinctions; devastating ocean acidification, brutal summer-long heat waves; rapidly rising seas; and widespread desertification. It is clear that without urgent action there will be unprecedented degradation to the ecosystems on which humans, and other wildlife, depend.

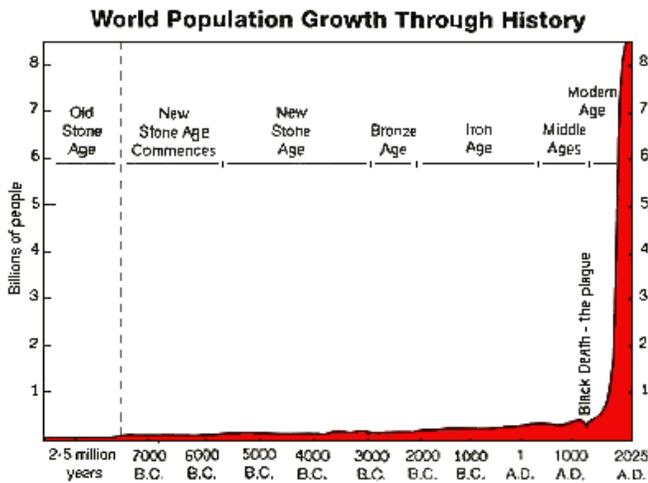
In National Audubon’s 2009 report titled, “*Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion*”, North American Christmas Bird Count data from the past four decades was analyzed to see if there were winter trends related to global climate change. There was a significant northward movement in 58% of the species (177 out of 305 species). There was also a movement inland from warmer coastal states. The average annual January temperature in the continental U.S. rose 5 degrees Fahrenheit over the past 40 years. The northward and inland movements “clearly point to significant ecological disruption underway, their short and long term impacts will vary for specific species and even groups”. Some species may be able to adapt to the changes underway, but species that have very specialized breeding habitats will be hurt. Projected effects of climate change on high elevation habitat, used by Bicknell’s Thrush, show the spruce-fir forest disappearing completely by 2100. Global climate change is suspected to be the culprit causing major changes in the extent of boreal wetlands, the chemistry of the waters, and the structure of invertebrate communities; the breeding habitat for Rusty Blackbirds. It is one of the possible causes for the staggering 95% decline in the population of Rusty Blackbirds, and declines in other species that rely on boreal wetlands.

A related milestone is approaching in 2012: the world population will reach 7 billion people (chart below). If this author is fortunate enough to make it to my estimated life expectancy, I will have witnessed the world population *triple* from 3 to 9 billion people during my lifetime. Developing countries with large populations have surging atmospheric CO₂ emissions. China has just surpassed the U.S. in CO₂ output, and India and Brazil are not far behind. There are billions of people who aspire to live as most Americans do: with a house, two cars, a furnace, and grocery stores filled with unlimited food options transported from around the globe.

Since the Industrial Revolution, humans have built a world dependent on burning fossil fuels. With a population nearing 7 billion, deforestation will continue, as will the conversion of natural ecosystems to agricultural lands. Humans know what we need to *stop* doing in order to avert catastrophe from runaway global climate change. What is needed is a model way *forward* – a way that is affordable. Governments

of the world, and in particular, the U.S., since it was the largest contributor of CO₂ to the atmosphere, need to help companies develop (affordable) alternative energy solutions so we can break our dependency on fossil fuels. We need to protect forests and other natural ecosystems from destruction and development. Major changes to the way we currently live will be needed. And, we need to find a way to curb human population growth.

Returning to the subject of birds, the National Audubon report referenced above states: “Birds are well-known barometers of environmental health. Changes in their condition can warn of threats to habitats and natural systems critical to all life on earth. Like canaries in a coal mine, they can alert us to danger. And, if we heed their warnings, caring for the birds can help us protect ourselves and the future of the world we share.”



—Joan Collins

The 2011 Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation Grant

I feel downright giddily happy to announce that the Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation renewed their support of NNYA with a grant of \$10,000 for 2011.

This grant represents a mandate for NNYA to continue our work in Adirondack conservation, education and research. This refunding amounts to a major vote of confidence in NNYA’s ability to identify crucial conservation initiatives at the grass roots level, where we interact and partner with organization as diverse as the Adirondack Visitor Interpretative Center in Paul Smiths and the Adirondack Interpretative Center in Newcomb, the Wildlife Conservation Society, The Wild Center, The Adirondack Loon Project, The Nature Conservancy, The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, The American Association of Wildlife Rehabilitators, Saranac Middle School and Elizabethtown/Lewis Central School District, SUNY ESF and SUNY Potsdam.

NNYA shares with the Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation an ardent desire to preserve, promote and protect the Adirondacks through on the ground, real time, conservation, education and research.

The NNYA Board of Directors administers this grant on a completely volunteer basis—no meals, no junkets, no reimbursed expenses.

For grant applications contact: Charlotte Demers at: cdemers@frontiernet.net, or visit our web site: www.nnya.org



2010 Christmas Bird Counts Elizabethtown CBC

Elizabethtown NY – 44° 13' N 73° 36' W centered at Essex County courthouse. The 2010 count was held on Sunday December 19 from 4:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eighteen observers participated in the count for a total of 57.25 party-hours, covering 8.5 miles on foot, 324.5 miles by car and 4.5 miles on snowshoes/x-country skis. Weather was brisk but beautiful with temperatures ranging from 4° F in the morning and warming to 31° F by the afternoon. Cloud cover ranged from partly cloudy in the morning to cloudy by the afternoon and the wind was calm. Snow cover ranged from 2" in the wind swept areas to 6 inches in the more protected woodland areas. Still water was frozen while moving water was partly open. No precipitation on count day.

Graylag Goose 3, Mallard 28, Ring-necked Pheasant 1, Wild Turkey 54, Red-tailed Hawk 2, Rock Pigeon 76, Mourning Dove 179, Barred Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Downy Woodpecker 22, Hairy Woodpecker 251, **Pileated Woodpecker 12**, Northern Shrike 1, Blue Jay 229, American Crow 108, Common Raven 23, Black-capped Chickadee 485, Tufted Titmouse 27, Red-breasted Nuthatch 67, White-breasted Nuthatch 28, Brown Creeper 6, Golden-crowned Kinglet 29, Eastern Bluebird 6, American Robin 14, European Starling 224, Cedar Waxwing 15, **American Tree Sparrow 129**, Song Sparrow 2, Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco 189, Snow Bunting 38, Northern Cardinal 15, Pine Grosbeak 1, Purple Finch 1, White-winged Crossbill 3, Common Redpoll 12, American Goldfinch 118, Evening Grosbeak 4, House Sparrow 53.

Totals: 39 species and 2027 individuals

Participants: Becky Bosley, Robin Brown, Joan Collins, Una Carey-Creedon, Charlotte Demers, Denise Griffin, Barbara Kearns, Fuat Latiff, Megan Murphy, Dan Nickerson, Stan Oliva, Carole Slatkin, Eric Teed, John Thaxton, Pat Thaxton, Eve Ticknor, Yvette Tillema, and Kathleen Wiley

—Charlotte Demers

51st Ferrisburgh CBC

December 18, 2010 dawned bright and beautiful for the **51st Ferrisburgh Christmas Bird Count**. Forty participants and two feeder watchers spent the day tallying birds. We ended with 81 species and 19,746 birds, both totals higher than our ten-year average (79 species and 16,402 birds). Highlights included a first for the count **cackling goose** from the Button Bay area. Cackling goose, a smaller duck-sized version of the Canada goose, was only split off as a separate species in 2004. The New York portion of the count produced the second ever **yellow-bellied sapsucker** and the fifth ever **blue-winged teal** (previously 1 in 1973, 2 in 1977, and 1 in 1990). Other unusual waterfowl included a **black scoter** and a pair of **green-winged teal**. **Evening grosbeaks** returned after an eight year hiatus; three total were observed in two territories.

Results: Common Loon-16, Red-throated loon-1, Red-necked Grebe-1, Horned Grebe-20, Double-crested Cormorant-1, Great-blue Heron-12, Canada Goose-629, Cackling Goose-1, Snow Goose-7, Mallard-432, American Black Duck-65, Gadwall-1, Common Goldeneye-1007, Bufflehead-50, Black Scoter-1, Hooded Merganser-65, Common Merganser-212, Red-breasted Merganser-9, Greater Scaup-4, Lesser Scaup-1, Green-winged Teal-2, Blue-winged Teal-1, Sharp-shinned Hawk-6, Cooper's Hawk-12, Northern Goshawk-1, Red-tailed hawk-60, Rough-legged hawk-12, Bald Eagle-20, Northern Harrier-3, Merlin-3, American Kestrel-2, Peregrine Falcon-3, Ruffed Grouse-2, Wild Turkey-255, Great Black-backed Gull-22, Herring Gull-21, Ring-billed Gull-331, Rock Pigeon-879, Mourning Dove-560, Eastern Screech-owl-9, Great Horned Owl-10, Barred Owl-4, Northern Flicker-11, Pileated Woodpecker-20, Hairy Woodpecker-42, Downy Woodpecker -84, Red-bellied Woodpecker-19, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker-1, Bluejay-259, Common Raven-43, American Crow-580, Horned lark-467, Black-capped Chickadee-966, Tufted Titmouse-158, White-breasted Nuthatch-151, Red-breasted Nuthatch-2, Brown Creeper-8, Carolina Wren-9, American Robin-690, Eastern Bluebird-33, Golden-crowned Kinglet-42, Northern Mockingbird-1, European Starling-3305, Bohemian Waxwing-45, Cedar Waxwing-202, Northern Cardinal-204, Dark-eyed Junco-402, American Tree Sparrow-1049, White-throated Sparrow-15, Song Sparrow-8, Lapland Longspur-16, Snow Bunting-4,613, Red-winged Blackbird-2, Brown-headed Cowbird-4, Purple Finch-3, House Finch-94, Evening Grosbeak-3, Common Redpoll-320, Pine Siskin-44, American Goldfinch-448, House Sparrow-630. Total Species 81; Total Individuals 19,746

—Mike Winslow

Plattsburgh CBC

2010 Christmas Bird Count summary for the Plattsburgh, NY/VT (NYPL) circle 44°39'N 73°29'W as described in 1986 with the center at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base. The 2010 count was held on Sunday, December 19, 2010 from 6:00 to 16:30 with temperatures ranging from 9 to 30°F under sunny to partially sunny skies. The north to northwesterly wind was negligible throughout the day. 25 field workers logged 48.5 party hours and a total of 378.25 miles of which 6.75 miles and 4.85 hours were on foot. One group of three spent one hour, driving 12 miles for owling. The 18 feeder watchers and other reporters spent 38 hours at feeders. There were 63 species recorded count day and 11048 individuals. There was one American Black Duck x Mallard reported on count day and 5 count week species:

Snow Goose cw, Canada Goose 1013, American Black Duck 13, Mallard 391, Northern Shoveler 1 (new to the Plattsburgh Count), Greater Scaup 8, Lesser Scaup 191, Bufflehead 164, Common Goldeneye 699, , Hooded Merganser 9, Common Merganser 122, Red-breasted Merganser 1, American Black Duck X Mallard 1, Ring-necked Pheasant 2, Ruffed Grouse 2, Wild Turkey 38, Common Loon 5, Horned Grebe 5, Great Blue Heron 3, Bald Eagle cw, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 2, Cooper's Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 16, Rough-legged Hawk 1, Merlin 1, Ring-billed Gull 338, Her-

ring Gull 4, Great Black-backed Gull 7, Rock Pigeon 645, Mourning Dove 440, Eastern Screech Owl 1, Barred Owl cw, Belted Kingfisher 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker cw, Downy Woodpecker 55, Hairy Woodpecker 33, Pileated Woodpecker 4, Blue Jay 191, American Crow 2553, Horned Lark 108, Black-capped Chickadee 505, Tufted Titmouse 7, Red-breasted Nuthatch 15, White-breasted Nuthatch 56, Brown Creeper 1, Carolina Wren 3, Eastern Bluebird 9, American Robin 180, Northern Mockingbird 4, European Starling 1014, Bohemian Waxwing 220, Cedar Waxwing 383, American Tree Sparrow 109, Song Sparrow 2, White-throated Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed Junco 215, Snow Bunting 634, Northern Cardinal 101, Red-winged Blackbird cw, Brown-headed Cowbird 26, Pine Grosbeak 13, Purple Finch 7, House Finch 101, Common Redpoll 23, Pine Siskin 2, American Goldfinch 434, Evening Grosbeak 12, House Sparrow 179.

The participants were, Derek Allan, Wayne Bedard, Alan Belford, Helen Booth, Bob Booth, John Brown, Gwen Cateenwalla, Jim Cayea, Joy Cayea, Walter Coryea, Mike DiNunzio, Julie Dumas, Keitha Farney, Holland Fitts, Liz Fitts, Cornelia Forrence, Evelyn Fuller, Melissa Hart, Linda Harwood, Judith Heintz, Euclid Jones, Bill Krueger, Linda LaPan, Julie Lattrell, Larry Master, Brian McAllister, Janet Mihuc, Cerise Oberman, Nancy Olsen, Carol Pinney, Geri Reichert, Mary Roden-Tice, Dana Rohleder, Ingeborg Sapp, Michelle Snyder, Janet Stein, Gary Sturgis, Nora Teeter, William Teeter, Steve Tice, Lynn Valenti, Amy Valentine, Dan Vogt.

The Northern Shoveler, a very late date for this bird to be around was one of our unusual reports. The Eastern Screech Owl, peeking out of a barn window and being harassed by Black-capped Chickadees was spotted by first time field participant, Mary Roden-Tice. The day was particularly beautiful for being out in the field.

—Judy Heintz

55th Saranac Lake CBC

Twenty-three field observers and a number of feeder watchers participated in the 55th Saranac Lake CBC (covering Saranac Lake, Lake Placid, and Bloomingdale) held on Sunday, January 2. A very poor wild food crop led to a predictable shortage of winter finches except for Common Redpolls, which are increasing in numbers as their biannual invasion down from Canada picks up steam. The species total was the second lowest (after last year's poor food crop and absence of finches) in 20 years. Next year's count should be much better as a conifer mast crop again develops.

The most notable species this year was a Common Goldeneye on the Saranac River, unable to fly and possibly winged in hunting season. Also notable was an enigmatic and record-breaking number of Golden-crowned Kinglets, the total for this species breaking the previous record by 65%. Species and the numbers recorded this year are as follows.

American Black Duck-43, Mallard-476, American Goldeneye-1, Hooded Merganser-9, Cooper's Hawk-2, Bald Eagle-2, Ruffed Grouse-8, Wild Turkey-68, Rock Pigeon-185, Mourning Dove-111, Barred Owl-cw, Downy Woodpecker-32, Hairy Woodpecker-48, Pileated Woodpecker-8, Gray Jay-18, Blue Jay-156, American Crow-210, Common Raven-54, Black-capped Chickadee-1823, Boreal Chickadee-22, Red-breasted Nuthatch-109, White-breasted Nuthatch-47, Brown Creeper-7, Golden-crowned Kinglet-168, European Starling-301, Bohemian Waxwing-2, American Tree Sparrow-4, Dark-eyed Junco-24, Snow Bunting-2, Northern Cardinal-5, Brown-headed Cowbird-1, Common Redpoll-270, Pine Siskin-2, American Goldfinch-46, Evening Grosbeak-72, House Sparrow-16. **Totals:** 35 species; 4352 individuals

--Larry Master

President's Message

This is such a great time of year to be a birder or even a casual observer of birds. The activity at my bird feeders and in my yard this winter has been stupendous: evening grosbeaks, downy and hairy woodpeckers, tree sparrows, juncos, blue jays, Bohemian waxwings, chickadees, wild turkey and over 150 common redpolls have paid a visit. Interestingly, I've heard from many people that feed the birds that they are seeing fewer birds and fewer species this winter. Certainly some species like the American goldfinch have been scarce this winter season. This type of information underscores the importance of Citizen Science Projects like ebird, the CBCs, Project Feeder Watch (PFW) and the Great Backyard Bird Count. I'm sure lots of our members participate in these great projects. If you don't, I strongly encourage you to join in the fun. Check out the websites of these interesting projects to learn how scientists are using these bird observations to help in wildlife conservation efforts.

Enjoy what is left of winter then get out this spring, maybe to one of the great field trips listed in this newsletter, and welcome our birds back to the North Country.

—Charlotte Demers

Board of Directors Meeting Saturday, April 2nd, 2011 The Wild Center

The NNYA board of directors welcomes all members to attend its meetings, which cover a wide range of topics and directly impact important chapter decisions. The board encourages as much input as possible from members and always appreciates a meeting room with guests.

Poetry Corner

Birds singing
in the dark
—Rainy dawn.

—Jack Kerouac

Editor's Note

As we stood around introducing ourselves in the parking lot of the Westport Boat Launch, spewing plumes of smoke in the four degree air as we spoke, a Carolina wren started calling in the woods maybe fifty feet away, and when we wandered into the brushy backyard of a friend who lives directly across from the boat launch another Carolina wren started calling, and by the time we felt ready to leave the Westport Water Treatment Plant we heard and saw another three Carolina wrens, not to mention three red-bellied woodpeckers and the second ever yellow-bellied sapsucker recorded in the fifty-one year history of the Ferrisburgh Christmas Bird Count. By the end of the day we had also seen a red-winged blackbird and a blue-winged teal.

That species like these have the least inclination, to say nothing of the sheer ability, to linger into an Adirondack winter (to breed in spring?) says to me a lot more than piles of pro and con arguments about global warming, which every serious birder I know considers a colossal no-brainer, a foregone conclusion with a febrile farrago of data to back it up, and then some. Since not a few of our elected representatives seek to hobble the Environmental Protection Agency and abrogate its ability to control carbon dioxide and other emissions, perhaps we should begin thinking about new feeding strategies and potential new feeder designs to accommodate the various species of birds that will likely expand their ranges northwards as the cold hereabouts attenuates of a winter and painted buntings begin dressing up the loblolly pines.

When I checked my answering machine the other day and listened to a slightly disgruntled UPS guy say that he didn't even attempt to drive up Spruce Hill never mind Baxter Mountain Lane, I looked out at the twelve inches of snow on my deck and smiled as widely as my facial muscles permit because I knew the package he left for me at the hardware store contained a check from the Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation, and I proved right. Every member of NNYA should feel proud that the Cullman Foundation has given us a grant of \$10,000 or more for the past five years in a row, despite market downturns.

We have a nifty bunch of outings scheduled for spring, with field trips, among others, at the Adirondack Interpretative Center in Newcomb, a reinvention, or reincarnation, if you will, of the Newcomb VIC, which I, for one, felt extremely pleased to see in the process of developing an entirely new agenda with a highly invigorated new director, Paul Hai. I can't begin to say how happy it makes me to see that fabulous facility becoming increasingly active and dynamic as a conservation and educational force.

I devoted quite a bit of space to the Christmas Bird Count results and Joan Collins' *Conservatively Speaking* column, which includes a couple of chilling graphs depicting rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and its correlation to human population growth. We have, you might say, no time to chill...

—John Thaxton