

# 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 37 Number 1

March-May 2009



**Saturday, March 7, 2009**

## **Reading the Winter Landscape: Tracking on Snow Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Center**

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Vincent Walsh

**Registration:** Call the Paul Smith's VIC at (518) 327-3000.

Professional tracker Vincent Walsh, of Kawning Crow, will lead this adult tracking workshop. Please dress for a day outside and bring a lunch. Preregistration is required. There is a \$10 fee for each participant. This event is jointly sponsored with the Paul Smiths Visitor Interpretive Center.

**Saturday, March 21, 2009**

## **Late Winter Birds of the Adirondacks Bloomingdale Bog**

**Time:** 8:30-10:30 a.m.

**Leader:** Brian McAllister

**Registration:** Call the Paul Smith's VIC at (518) 327-3000

Directions will be given at time of registration. This event is jointly sponsored with the Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Center.

**Saturday, March 21, 2009**

## **Bluebird Nest Box Workshop Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Center**

**Time:** 1-3 p.m.

**Registration:** Call the Paul Smith's VIC at (518) 327-3000

During this workshop you will learn about Eastern Bluebird conservation efforts and then build a nest box to be taken home. Cost: \$7.50 per box. This event is jointly sponsored with the Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Center.

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Mary McAndrew



## NNYA

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Northern New York Audubon Society,  
Inc.

A chapter of National Audubon Society  
serving the Adirondack, Champlain and  
St. Lawrence regions of northern New  
York, including Clinton, Essex, Franklin,  
Hamilton and St. Lawrence counties.

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## Sunday, March 29, 2009 Ausable Marsh, Peru

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.

**Location:** Meet at the parking area just before the campground entrance.

**Leader:** Melanie McCormack

**Register** by calling Melanie at (518) 312-6123 or email [mruddyduck@aol.com](mailto:mruddyduck@aol.com)

This location, where the Ausable River empties into Lake Champlain, is a great location to observe migrant shorebirds and waterfowl.

## Saturday, May 2, 2009 Spring Wildflowers & Early Migrants Indian Creek Nature Center, Canton

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**Distance:** Under 1 mile on level terrain.

**Meet:** At the East End Entrance. Take Route 68 to Rensselaer Falls Road, and travel 2.5 miles – the East End Entrance will be on your left (there is a barn on the right).

**Hike Leader:** Peter O'Shea (315) 848-2178

No registration required.

This trip is jointly sponsored by the Indian Creek Nature Center, and the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

## Sunday May 3, 2009 Ausable Marsh, Peru

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. to noon

**Meet:** At the parking area just before the campground entrance.

**Leaders:** Charlotte Demers & Melanie McCormack

**Registration:** Charlotte Demers at (518) 582-2157 or email:

[cdemers@frontiernet.net](mailto:cdemers@frontiernet.net)

Spotting scopes will be positioned along the road so participants can either drive or walk between stations. There should be waterfowl as well as land-birds, and hopefully the Osprey will be nesting. Coffee and donuts will be served at the parking spot by the causeway!

**Saturday, May 9, 2009**  
**Hulls Falls Road**  
**Keene Valley**

**Time:** 7:30 a.m.

**Leaders:** Ruth Kuhfahl and Pat & John Thaxton

**Registration:** No need to register; just show up.

Meet at the Marcy Field end of Hulls Falls Road and look for birds 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 sandpiper and Indigo bunting. Jointly sponsored by the Hurricane Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club and Northern New York Audubon.

**Sunday, May 10, 2009**  
**Amphibians and Reptiles of the North**  
**Country**  
**Indian Creek Nature Center, Canton**

**Time:** 10 a.m.

**Leader:** Dr. Glenn Johnson

**Registration:** Call Glenn at (315) 267-2710

Join Glenn Johnson for a hike, and demo with live animals, at Indian Creek Nature Center.

**Saturday, May 16, 2009**  
**Breakfast with the Birds**  
**Keene Valley**  
**Time: 8:00 a.m.**

**Description:** Join Pat and John Thaxton on the deck of their house in Keene for coffee, cake, fruit, juice and birds. First, we will listen for the birds and practice identifying them by ear. Then, we will hopefully see them and verify our identifications because in early May the leaves in our 16-acre yard are small and few and far between, and our deck looks directly into the canopy. Nesting warblers include Black-throated blue, Black-throated green, Blackburnian, Yellow-rumped, Ovenbird, Magnolia, Nashville and Black and white; other nesters include Red-eyed and Blue-headed vireo, Yellow-bellied sapsucker, Downy, Hairy and Pileated woodpecker, American Robin, Ruffed Grouse, Common Raven, etc. If things grow quiet on the deck, a short walk down our road usually includes stops for Chestnut-sided warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird and Red-shouldered and Broad-winged hawk.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Route 73 & 9N South (between Keene & Keene Valley), turn east towards Elizabethtown; go approximately 2 miles uphill to where the road levels and turn onto Baxter Mountain Lane (just beyond little yellow house) on right; go past Round Top Lane on left, pass a house on left as road levels, look for driveway on right, #84, and take it to the end.

**Registration:** Contact Pat & John Thaxton, 518.576.4232, or email JPTthax5317@aol.com.

*All paintings in this newsletter by Mary McAndrew*

**Sunday, May 17, 2009**  
**Indian Creek Nature Center, Canton**

**Time:** 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

**Distance:** Approximately 2 miles on level trails

**Leaders:** Joan Collins & Eileen Wheeler

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

**Register:** by calling Joan at (315) 261-4246 or email:

[jecollins@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jecollins@twcny.rr.com) or Eileen Wheeler (315) 386-2482

or email: [eiwheeler@yahoo.com](mailto:eiwheeler@yahoo.com)

or email: [eiwheeler@yahoo.com](mailto:eiwheeler@yahoo.com)  
 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 and the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

**Saturday, May 30, 2009**  
**Massawepie Mire, Colton**

**Time:** 7:30 a.m.

**Leaders:** Joan Collins & Eileen Wheeler

**Register:** by calling Joan at (315) 261-4246 [jecol-](mailto:jecollins@twcny.rr.com)

[lins@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jecollins@twcny.rr.com) or Eileen Wheeler (315) 386-2482

or email: [eiwheeler@yahoo.com](mailto:eiwheeler@yahoo.com).

Massawepie Mire is the largest bog (actually a fen!) *cont p 4*



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in New York State. We will walk the old, level railroad bed (now a dirt road) for ~ 4 miles round trip and visit the South Branch of the Grass River location near the trailhead. There will also be an optional 2 mile round-trip hike on the Mountaineer Trail along scenic Massawepie Lake in the afternoon. Boreal birds, bog plants, and scenic views will be our focus! This trip is jointly sponsored with the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.



### President's Message

It is hard to believe with all the snow and cold weather of this winter that spring is just around the corner. In preparation for the season NNYA has been working on some spring cleaning and a few improvement projects. Our web site has moved and now incorporates the Northern New York Audubon name – [www.nnya.org](http://www.nnya.org). Along with the change of Internet address there will be a new section on “Where to Bird” that will include maps of our favorite birding locations and suggestions on where to go to see regional bird species. We will also be posting current conservation issues on our site to keep members informed on how they can help with critical environmental issues. In addition to our web site, NNYA now has a *Facebook* site as well. *Facebook* is a free access social networking Internet web site that has over 132 million users. This is one of the ways that we are reaching out to our younger members and hoping to attract more. Our *Facebook* site lists all of our upcoming events, provides information and additional links to conservation issues, and offers an open forum for members. In some ways, it is similar to the Northern New York Birds Yahoo site that many of you are familiar with. Members, or “fans,” of the NNYA *Facebook* page can post observations, upload photos, or make comments about all things bird as well as get access to NNYA information. If you have a *Facebook* account, just search for “Northern New York Audubon” and become a fan. If you are interested in *Facebook* you can easily set up a free account at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Hope to see you on the Internet.

—Charlotte Demers

## Poetry Corner

### The Dalliance of the Eagles

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,)
 Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles,
 The rushing amorous contact high in space together,
 The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,
 Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,
 In tumbling, turning cluttering loops, straight downward falling,
 Till o'er the river poised, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,
 A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,
 Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse
 flight,
 She hers, he his, pursuing.

—Walt Whitman

## Great Adirondack Birding Celebration

### June 5-7, 2009

If you'd like to volunteer for, exhibit at or simply find out about the 7th annual Great Adirondack Birding Celebration centered at the Paul Smiths Visitor Interpretive Center, check out their web site at: [www.adkvic.org/birdcelebration.html](http://www.adkvic.org/birdcelebration.html).

## Adirondack Birding Festival

### June 19-21, 2009

The Hamilton County web site ([www.hamiltoncounty.com](http://www.hamiltoncounty.com)) has a link to information about the 6th annual Adirondack Birding Festival. They would like to hear from potential volunteer trip leaders as soon as possible.



## 2008 Christmas Bird Counts

### Elizabethtown CBC

44°13'N 73°36'W Center at Essex Co. Courthouse. Dec 27, 2008; 5:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Temp: 28° to 40°F. South wind, 0-10 m.p.h. Snow cover: 6-24 inches. Still water frozen, moving water partly open. A.M.: cloudy with no rain to heavy rain. P.M.: cloudy with no rain to heavy rain. Observers: 20 in field in 9 parties (non-owling). Total party-hours: 63.5 (22.25 on foot, 41.25 by car). Total party-miles: 379.5 (18.5 on foot, 361.0 by car). Feeder effort: none. Owling effort: 7 miles covered in 1.5 hours.

Canada Goose 1, Mallard 63, Ring-necked Pheasant 1, Ruffed Grouse 4, Wild Turkey 25, Merlin 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 1, Rough-legged Hawk 1, Rock Pigeon 133, Mourning Dove 147, Barred Owl 2, Northern Saw-whet Owl 1, Belted Kingfisher 1, Downy Woodpecker 27, Hairy Woodpecker 30, Northern Flicker 2, Pileated Woodpecker 10, Northern Shrike 3, Blue Jay 251, American Crow 258, Common Raven 29, Black-capped Chickadee 503, Boreal Chickadee 2, Tufted Titmouse 23, Red-breasted Nuthatch 97, White-breasted Nuthatch 20, Brown Creeper 7, Carolina Wren CW, Golden-crowned Kinglet 20, Eastern Bluebird 14, American Robin 187, European Starling 346, Cedar Waxwing 97, American Tree Sparrow 63, Dark-eyed Junco 217, Snow Bunting 6, Northern Cardinal 11, Red-winged Blackbird 1, Pine Grosbeak 24, Purple Finch 5, Red Crossbill 14, White-winged Crossbill 106, Common Redpoll 12, Pine Siskin 470, American Goldfinch 232, Evening Grosbeak 7, House Sparrow 109.

**Totals:** 47 count-day species, plus one count-week species; 3,585 individuals.

**Participants:** Becky Bosley, Robin Brown, Joan Collins, Una Crendon-Carey, Charlotte Demers (co-compiler), Diane Demers, Beth Edmonds, Matthew Medler (compiler), Dan Nickerson, Stan Oliva, Nancy Slack, Carole Slatkin, Laura Smith, Sally Smith, Hank Stebbins, Eric Teed, John Thaxton, Pat Thaxton, Eve Ticknor, and Yvette Tillema.

—Matthew Medler

### Ferrisburgh CBC

Common loon 17, Red-necked grebe 1, Horned grebe 9, Great-blue heron 1, Canada goose 302, Snow goose 2, Mallard 296, Am. Black duck 116, Wood duck 1, Redhead CP, Ring-necked duck 8, Common goldeneye 463, Bufflehead 39, Long-tailed duck 4, Hooded merganser 48, Common merganser 156, Red-breasted merganser 12, Turkey vulture 1, Northern goshawk 1, Sharp-shinned hawk 5, Cooper's hawk 9, Red-tailed hawk 66, Red-shouldered hawk 1, Rough-legged hawk 13, Bald eagle 8, Northern harrier 2, Peregrine falcon 1, Merlin 1, Ring-necked pheasant 1, Wild turkey 70, American coot 1, Iceland gull 2, Great black-backed gull 20, Herring gull 20, Ring-billed gull 230, Rock pigeon 464, Mourning dove 557, E. screech-owl 2, Great horned owl 2, Short-eared owl 1, Belted kingfisher 1, Northern flicker 12, Pileated woodpecker 18, Red-bellied woodpecker 18, Hairy woodpecker 47, Downy woodpecker 93, Horned lark 475, Blue Jay 444, Common raven 17, American crow 377, Blk-capped chickadee 851, Tufted titmouse 81, White-brst nuthatch 98, Red-brst nuthatch 26, Brown creeper 9, Carolina wren 2, N. mockingbird 1, Brown thrasher CP, American robin 493, Eastern bluebird 18, Golden-crwnd kinglet 2, Ruby-crwnd kinglet 1, Bohemian waxwing 28, Cedar waxwing 1877, Northern shrike 2, European starling 4258, House sparrow 580, Red-winged blackbird 7, Brown-headed cowbird 6, Northern cardinal 208, Purple finch 6, House finch 214, Pine siskin 172, American goldfinch 469, White-winged crossbill 33, Savannah sparrow 1, Dark-eyed junco 557, Am. Tree sparrow 544, White-throated sparrow 12, Song sparrow 10, Lapland longspur 11, Snow bunting 855.

**Total spp.** 80 + 2CP

**Ten-year running avg.** = 80

**Total birds** 15,887

**Ten-year running avg.** = 20,033

Thank you everyone for your efforts on the count. The 2009 count will take place on Saturday December 19<sup>th</sup>.

—Mike Winslow

### Plattsburgh CBC

2008 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 2008 count was held on Sunday, December 14, 2008 from 7:00 to 16:00 with temperatures ranging from 6 to 34°F under cloudy skies. The south winds reached more than 20mph near Lake Champlain, but were 6-10mph inland. 25 field workers logged 68.5 party hours and a total of 369.7 miles of which 14 miles and 10 hours were on foot. The 18 feeder watchers spent 34 hours at feeders. There were 59 species recorded and 9403 individuals.

Snow Goose 13, Canada Goose 1586, American Black Duck 47, Mallard 439, Ring-necked Duck 3, Bufflehead 3, Common Goldeneye 450, Hooded Merganser 3, Common Merganser 111, Ruffed Grouse 1, Wild Turkey 53, Common Loon 1, Pied-billed Grebe 1, Great Blue Heron 2, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 2, Cooper's Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 7, Rough-legged Hawk 3, Merlin 1, Peregrine Falcon 1, Ring-billed Gull 147, Herring Gull 64, Great Black-backed Gull 13, Rock Pigeon 388, Mourning Dove 537, Northern Hawk Owl 1, Downy Woodpecker 53, Hairy Woodpecker 40, Pileated Woodpecker 5, Blue Jay 226, American Crow 1548, Common Raven 2, Horned Lark 154, Black-capped Chickadee 466,

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Tufted Titmouse 17, Red-breasted Nuthatch 13, White-breasted Nuthatch 57, Brown Creeper 2, Eastern Bluebird 1, American Robin 38, Northern Mockingbird 1, European Starling 641, Bohemian Waxwing 4, Cedar Waxwing 141, American Tree Sparrow 49, Song Sparrow 1, White-throated Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed Junco 273, Snow Bunting 927, Northern Cardinal 78, Red-winged Blackbird 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 67, Purple Finch 1, House Finch 50, Common Redpoll 25, Pine Siskin 26, American Goldfinch 434, House Sparrow 182.

The participants were Tom Armstrong, Helen Booth, Bob Booth, Kit Booth, John Brown, Gwen Cateenwalla, Jim Cayea, Joy Cayea, Joan Clark, Ralph Clark, Julie Dumas, Keitha Farney, Holland Fitts, Liz Fitts, Cornelia Forrence, Jan Forsman, Evelyn Fuller, Peter Galvani, Judith Heintz, Gail Kemp, Harold Klein, Bill Krueger, Dayna Lalonde, Julie Lattrell, Brian McAllister, Melanie McCormack, Janet Mihuc, Charlie Mitchell, Karen Moffa, Jim Nolan, Nancy Olsen, Carol Pinney, Geri Reichert, Mary Roden-Tice, Ingeborg Sapp, Janet Stein, Gary Sturgis, Irma Teittinen, Saana Teittinen-Gordon, Steve Tice, Lynn Valenti, Dan Vogt, Margo Zeglis.

The Northern Hawk Owl was the talk of the Plattsburgh Count; however it was interesting that the only Purple Finch was found in Vermont in that small section of Grand Isle that is included in this circle, no Purple Finches in New York. The other notable was the record breaking number of Snow Buntings. Nearly every part of the circle reported snow buntings. Lake Champlain was particularly rough which made finding water fowl extremely difficult for those folks that had water front territory.

—Judy Heintz

### 53<sup>rd</sup> SARANAC LAKE CBC

**Saranac Lake, N.Y.** - 44°19'0"N 74°04'23"W, mostly as described 1976, but center 1.2 miles NNE of e. jct. Rt. 86 & Old Ray Brook Rd., Ray Brook and adjusted very slightly (a few seconds) in 2007 to be more precise (using Google Earth). Jan. 3, 2009; 12:00 am to 4:30 pm. Temp. 10° to 23°F. Wind W 3.5-13. Snow depth 8-15 in. Still water frozen. Moving water partly open. A.M.: cloudy, light snow. PM: clear. Observers: 32 in field in 15-16 parties (non-owling), plus 9 at feeders. Time and Distance: 20 hours at feeders; 8 hours and 30 miles owling. Total party-hours 94.75 and party-miles 405.5: 33.5 hours and 35 miles on foot, 55.25 hours and 361.5 miles by car, 6 hours and 9 miles by XC-skis.

Am. Black Duck 10, Mallard 261, Hooded Merganser 14, Common Merganser cw, Ruffed Grouse 5, Wild Turkey 14, Bald Eagle 4, **Sharp-shinned Hawk 2**, Rock Pigeon 195, Mourning Dove 108, Barred Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher cw, Downy Woodpecker 21, Hairy Woodpecker 23, Black-backed Woodpecker 2, **Northern Flicker cw**, Pileated Woodpecker 4, Gray Jay 4, Blue Jay 206, Am. Crow 125, Com. Raven 67, Black-capped Chickadee 984, Boreal Chickadee 3, Red-breasted Nuthatch 119, White-breasted Nuthatch 23, Brown Creeper 7, Golden-crowned Kinglet 4, American Robin cw, Eur. Starling 85, American Tree Sparrow 30, White-throated Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed (Slate-col.) Junco 66, N. Cardinal 26, Brown-headed Cowbird 10, Pine Grosbeak 7, Purple Finch 8, Red Crossbill 4, White-winged Crossbill 119, Common Redpoll 14, Pine Siskin 2021, Am. Goldfinch 253, Evening Grosbeak 128, House Sparrow 22.

**Total:** 40 species; 5003 individuals.

**Participants:** John Brown, Joan Collins, Tom Dudones, Ed Grant, Julie Hart, Ed, Debbie, Ned, and Tassie Kanze, Linda LaPan, Fuat Latif, Ted Mack, John Marshall, Larry Master (compiler), Brian McAllister, Matt Medler, Sean O'Brien, Mary O'Dell, Stan Oliva, Peter O'Shea, Carol Pinney, Liz Resseguie, Sheila and Lew Rosenberg, Nina and Bill Schoch, Janet Stein, Pat and John Thaxton, Yvette Tillema, Tom Wheeler, Uta Wister.

The patterns reported in this newsletter for the 2007 Saranac Lake CBC continued this year. Numbers of Blue Jays and Red-breasted Nuthatches were relatively high, continuing a 17-year pattern of relatively high numbers every other year. Common Redpolls also faithfully continued their 22-year biannual pattern with relatively low numbers this year. Record numbers of Pine Siskins were recorded, in keeping with a remarkably biannual pattern of numbers of other conifer mast seed-eating finches (Purple Finch, crossbills, American Goldfinch) – **see chart below**. These patterns, as reported elsewhere, are the result of biannual variation in the availability of foods eaten by these birds. (One wonders if the three-year patterns observed on this count in the 1960s and 1970s were the historic norm and a warming climate has allowed the trees more recently to produce biannual crops?) Seed crops for northern trees tend to be synchronous over wide areas, a strategy to maximize the chances for successful reproduction, and this causes birds that depend on these crops to move synchronously over long distances in search of food.

Many thanks to all the dedicated participants on this year's count.

—Larry Master



## The Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation

I feel at once humble and proud to announce that the Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation, despite this grim economic environment, renewed their support for NNYA with a grant of \$10,000 for 2009. The foundation's directors clearly understand that, as Neil Young put it, "rust never sleeps," that the forces chipping away at the environmental integrity of the Adirondacks will continue to do so despite intense recessionary pressure. The 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 organizations as diverse as the Adirondack Visitor Interpretive Centers in Paul Smiths and Newcomb, The Wildlife Conservation Society, The Wild Center, The Adirondack Loon Project, The Nature Conservancy, The New York Department of Environmental Conservation, The American Association of Wildlife Rehabilitators, Saranac Middle School and Elizabethtown/Lewis Central School district.

As I write the NNYA grant committee continues to evaluate initiatives we sponsored last year as well as other critical Adirondack conservation projects. 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 directors of NNYA do their work on a totally volunteer basis; we do not go on retreats, buy ourselves meals or reimburse ourselves for travel expenses or anything else. Every penny of this generous grant will go directly to conservation projects.

—John Thaxton

### Book Review

*Adirondack Birding: 60 Great Places to Find Birds*

John M.C. Peterson and Gary N. Lee

Illustrated, 240 pp. Lost Pond Press, \$20.95

I discovered very quickly while reading *Adirondack Birding, 60 Great Places to Find Birds* that one would not have to be a bird watcher to enjoy this handsome, very informative book, which is well suited for any naturalist and certain to add new dimensions to excursions by hikers, skiers, snowshoers and paddlers. Not so much a field guide for identifying birds as a detailed guide about where to find them in the Adirondack Park, the book places special emphasis on several Adirondack species, such as peregrine falcon, the endangered spruce grouse and Bicknell's thrush. Non-birders using this book will easily discover the enjoyment of looking and listening for birds and will likely have an easier time identifying them. Many of the places described in the book do not require arduous treks; you can reach quite a few with a short walk from your car.

*Adirondack Birding* consists of 240 pages divided into 5 regions—Eastern, High Peaks, Northern, West-Central and Southern—and features eight additional, birding sites. The authors describe productive birding sites in each region, provide excellent driving instruction and discuss everything from historical facts to habitats to nearby natural attractions. Beautifully illustrated, the book features maps, line drawings and photographs, including two gorgeous sections of color images by Jeff Nadler.

I'd compare using this guide to taking a walk, or going paddling, with an experienced birder, one who would tell you not only where you could go to look for a particular bird but also, right out of the parking lot, start listening and looking for the bird. The authors describe the flora and fauna of the sites and toss in an occasional bird song description—for example, "look into the blackberry thickets, listen for the rich, *churry, churry, churry* of the mourning warbler." The text includes some extremely specific locations to look for certain species, such as Bicknell's thrush, for example, which is most easily seen at and between the two hairpin turns (named *Lake Placid* and *Wilmington*) on the Veterans Memorial Highway near the summit of Whiteface Mountain.

The text also includes useful directions for using the book and a chapter devoted to the History of Adirondack Birding; the index lists the birds' whereabouts by site chapters instead of by page numbers. Beginning and intermediate birders will benefit most by using this bird-finding guide in conjunction with a bird field guide devoted to identification.

*Adirondack Birding* serves as an excellent introduction to Adirondack birding hotspots that would otherwise take many years to track down on one's own. I look forward to exploring these sites, most of which are new to me, and returning to those I know, with an emphasis on specifically watching for birds mentioned in the book that I might see there. As a birder, I will enjoy going to particular locations in the book to search for species that I want to add to my life list. I plan to keep this book on my reference shelf as a reminder, and as an inspiration, to venture out to someplace unfamiliar, overlooked, new.

--Yvette Tillema

## Editor's Note

Although I can go for a week or so without seeing or hearing a raven from my yard, whenever I put on my full rain suit and my Plexiglas face shield and position my extension ladder against the roof in order to hammer away at the world class icicles that accumulate like glaciers in the gutters, the ravens appear within minutes. By the time the second or third nose-breaking chunk of ice ricochets off my face shield the ravens start squawking bloody murder as they flap and soar in increasingly tight circles about thirty feet over my head. They also show up to remonstrate when a winter thaw has me playing patty cake with the ruts in my driveway lest they freeze and throw my plow guy's truck, and temper, out of alignment. I imagine the ravens form ad hoc harassment committees out of a deep disdain for humans altering the environment.

After an hour or so of hammering away at icicles while getting squawked at in late December I waded through three feet of snow back into the house and sat down at the computer, only to realize that shards of ice and flying snow that had landed in my hair had begun melting and dripping down my face and onto the keyboard. Soon as I frowned and started walking to the bathroom to dry my hair I noticed a FedEx truck in my driveway at the same moment someone knocked on the door. FedEx never comes to my house, nor does UPS, because of the profoundly funky nature of my driveway. But this package needed a signature and the driver's determination to get one inspired him to risk getting stuck in a snow bank.

The envelope contained the Joseph and Joan Cullman Conservation Foundation's grant for 2009, a check for \$10,000 with a cover letter urging us to continue our work in Adirondack conservation. That the Cullman Foundation continued its support of NNYA despite the dizzying market decline stunned me completely. For some reason I walked back onto the porch to see if the FedEx guy needed any help. He had already made it past the trickiest part of the driveway and I caught a fugitive glimpse of his truck passing through a thick stand of hemlocks hard by the town road.

When I turned to go back inside the house I heard a loud, low rush of wing beats as a raven flew silently directly overhead.

The sheer number of field trips, Christmas Bird Count results and announcements about upcoming celebrations and festivals all but overwhelmed this newsletter. Make sure you read the *President's Message* about NNYA's *Facebook* page, an extremely informative and interactive tool, and the book review of *Adirondack Birding: 60 Great Places to Find Birds*.

I used the work of Mary McAndrew, a prodigiously gifted artist, to illustrate this issue of the newsletter. Mary's work ranges from wildlife to landscapes to dreamy, lyrical depictions of mythological scenes. You can see more of Mary's work at [www.marymcandrew.com](http://www.marymcandrew.com).

—John Thaxton