

# 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 43 Number 3

September-November 2015

## NNYA Conservation Education Grant (\$2,500)

### Biodiversity Research Institute's Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation

In 2014 NNYA gave the Biodiversity Research Institute's Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation a \$2,500 grant to partially underwrite the salary of an intern who worked on a wide variety of projects until Spring, 2015. This new grant essentially renews the intern program begun last year, which benefited both the Loon Center and the intern. This exceptional opportunity will enable the intern to learn first-hand about loon natural history and behavior, and acquire a variety of essential skills, including data management and interpretation, public speaking, scientific and natural history writing, and environmental curricula.

*The "loony-tern" will assist in the following projects:*

1. Conducting public outreach, including public presentations and displays; preparation and distribution of the Loon Center's annual newsletter, *The Adirondack Tremolo*; and updating their website, [www.briloon.org/adkloon](http://www.briloon.org/adkloon), and Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/adkloon](http://www.facebook.com/adkloon);
2. Coordination of the Loon Center's *Third Annual Adirondack Loon Celebration* on October 11, 2015, and other events;
3. Analysis of the Loon Center's nest cameras, productivity, and nesting platform datasets, particularly in relation to mercury exposure;
4. Coordinating the Loon Center's fishing line recycling program, *Lead and Line-Free Lakes*; and
5. Enhancing educator awareness and utilization of the Center's innovative school curricula, *The Loon Scientists Program* and *Science on the Fly!*

The combination of the "loony-tern's" scientific work and public outreach will no doubt prove to become a valuable repertoire of skills as well as a first-rate reference in terms of future employment in the environmental conservation field.

The "loony-tern" started working in mid-August 2015 and will continue on the job through May, 2016.

*Common loon with chicks Photo by Larry Master www.masterimages.org*



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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  
York, including Clinton, Essex, Franklin,  
Hamilton and St. Lawrence counties.

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## President's Message

This time of year, most of us North Country residents are doing one of two things: desperately pawing off excessive zucchini on unsuspecting victims, and scratching our heads wondering “where in the world did the summer go?” The latter is what I’m doing now, with the crisp August air seeping through my windows. But I do love this time of year in our beautiful Adirondack Park—deliciously chilly evenings paired with warm days, the hints of fall colors, perfect hiking weather and no bugs! And by now most of our local wildlife have had their young of the year, bringing ample opportunity to observe the adorable but serious work of young birds and mammals trying to act all grown up.

This is also a great time of year to be a part of Northern New York Audubon. We recently voted in some enthusiastic and energetic new board members and have undergone many changes in leadership. Our engaged chapter and board members are eager to begin what promises to be an intense but fruitful year. We have an ambitious agenda, including re-evaluating and editing our constitution and bylaws, amplifying our online presence through social media and website, and ultimately creating a strategic plan. We’d like to continue to provide grant funding to some of the stellar research and educational work done in the region, regardless of the economic tenor. We hope to tap into some of the passion of our members for providing opportunities to connect North Country youth with birding and the outdoors. We’re excited to continue providing great field trips across the region, and hope to increase the ways we can serve this region.

I’m so excited to be the new President of this chapter, and I’m grateful for the amazing team of dedicated members I’ve already had the pleasure of working with in my role as Vice President this past year. The goals outlined above are what this team will start with. But I’d like to hear from you, our chapter members. What do you love about Northern New York Audubon. What would you like to see this chapter accomplish, and how would you like to help us reach these goals?

Thanks so much for supporting this chapter with your membership.

—Kendra Ormerod

## In Memoriam Joan Alexander Clark

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Joan Alexander Clark, a long time member, volunteer and supporter.

She was also a lot of fun and a great birding buddy. Joan saw over 7,000 species as well as at least one species from every bird family in the world. She travelled extensively and told the story of marrying the love of her life, Charles R. Clark III (aka Dewey) the day before he graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology, packing his suitcase for him and travelling with him to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary for their honeymoon.

That was but the first of many birding journeys she told me about, from her adventures in a helicopter in high winds off the coast of Antarctica to a night in a tent in the middle of a desert in the United Arab Emirates waiting to hear the call of an owl she needed for her life list (“unbelievable how bright the starlight makes the desert!”).

Joan left her library to NNYA, and Pat and I arranged to meet her daughter, Cathryn, at Lake Forest, where Joan lived, to pick up the books.

After we loaded all the books into our car, Joan’s daughter said, abruptly, “My mother’s last year was a wonderful experience for me, and her last day especially wonderful. She was very agitated and couldn’t calm down, so I started massaging her shoulders and whispering ‘shhh...’

“All of a sudden she started to calm down and become incredibly relaxed, and all of a sudden I realized I was sphishing, like my father used to, and he could call in any bird.

“And then she fell sound asleep, and never woke up.

“Thank you. I simply had to tell that story to someone who would really understand.”

We really understood, smiling, holding back tears. —John Thaxton

**Field Trip  
Champlain Valley  
Saturday November 21, 2015  
Westport, NY**

**Meet:** Westport Boat Launch

**Time:** 8:00 am

**Bring:** Lunch

**Leaders:** John & Pat Thaxton—(518) 576-4232

Join John and Pat Thaxton for a tour of some of the Champlain Valley's best birding spots, from the Westport Boat Launch to Hoysington Brook, Dudley and Stephenson Roads and the Magic Triangle.

We will look for a wide variety of migratory and resident species in a wide variety of habitats—lakeshore, farm fields, woods and marshes. We should see wintering waterfowl on the lake, and wintering raptors working the fields and open areas. Rough-legged hawks and northern harriers usually hunt the farm fields in Westport and Essex, and bald eagles have become regular and reliable visitors to the shores of Lake Champlain.

Common goldeneye, along with an occasional Barrow's, regularly winter on Lake Champlain, mingling in mixed flocks with greater and lesser scaup, common mergansers and horned grebes. Common loons usually linger on the lake until it freezes, and red-throated loons frequently show up in early November.

We will probably see flocks of American tree sparrows, horned larks, snow buntings and maybe bohemian waxwings. For the past couple years we've seen Savannah sparrows on Stephenson Road, red-bellied woodpeckers near Hoysington Brook and, at dusk, short-eared owls in the Magic Triangle.

*Snow Buntings*



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**Facebook**



**Low's Ridge – Upper Dam Trail  
Leaf Peeping and Birding!  
Saturday, September 19, 2015  
Piercefield/Colton, NY**

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 restroom at the Geiger Arena meeting location. Register by calling the Long Lake Parks and Recreation Department at 518-624-3077. This field trip is jointly sponsored by Northern New York Audubon and the Long Lake Parks and Recreation Department. There is a maximum of 15 participants.

*Photos by Joan Collins*





## NNYA Conservation/Education Grant (\$2,350)

### Lake Placid Phenology Trail

Dr. Ezra Schwartzberg and Adirondack Research, LLC received this grant to promote the new Phenology Trail developed with last year's NNYA grant. The trail is a physical path that links together a network of plants at which phenology observations are recorded. Phenology refers to the timing of recurring plant and animal life cycle stages, such as spring budbreak, leaf expansion, flowering, insect emergence or bird migration.

This grant support will be used to demonstrate data collection techniques to ninth grade Environmental Science students at Lake Placid Middle School. The course teacher, Tammy Morgan, will be taking students to the Phenology Trail every week in late April and May to collect data on smartphones. Dr. Schwartzberg will assist the class in following data collection protocols outlined by the USA National Phenology Network (USANPN) and teach the class how to use the USANPN smartphone app *Nature's Network*.



*Marcy Fagan, North Country School Bio Teacher instructing students  
Photo by Mike Lynch of the Adirondack Explorer*

Students are currently using USANPN curriculum materials to learn about phenology, and will soon prepare to collect data in the field on the new Phenology Trail. This grant will also support a community outreach component aimed at the general public, which will include leading a workshop to demonstrate smartphone use, create user accounts on *Nature's Notebook* and introduce new Phenology Trail users to phenology observation techniques. The public workshop will attract 15-20 participants and will include a press release and press package to promote newspaper coverage. Dr. Schwartzberg will also provide printed materials including a guide to phenophases and a printed map of the trail that includes tree locations.

Dr. Schwartzberg will conduct three 40-minute workshop sessions catered to the ninth grade Environmental Science class with the assistance of Tammy Morgan, one two-hour workshop advertised to local community members in Lake Placid, and two two-hour workshops with students and teachers from Northwood School.

The workshops will take place in early May when several tree species are in bloom.

After the workshops have taken place in May Dr. Schwartzberg and Ms. Morgan will work with Phenology Trail participants (Lake Placid High School Environmental Science students, Northwood School students and community members) to facilitate continued smartphone use and data entry for the remaining phenology season (budbreak in spring to leaf senescence in autumn). This will include regular email correspondence to answer questions from participants and to promote continued use of the trail.

This project will provide direct benefits to community members as well as Northwood and Lake Placid High School students participating in these workshops by enhancing environmental science curricula with place-based outdoor learning, add phenology data to (public) national databases, provide a framework for climate change education and awareness and encourage the use of a publicly accessible interpretative experience related to climate change.

### Field Trip Leonard Pond Trail Saturday, October 17, 2015 Tupper Lake, NY

**Time:** 8:00 am

**Meet:** Leonard Pond Trail

**Leaders:** Mary Beth Warburton (315) 268-0150; Eileen Wheeler (315) 244-9957

**Registration:** Please call to register

Join Eileen and Mary Beth for a hike on the wide, flat Leonard Pond Trail, which runs through mixed forest and boreal habitats. Some of the later migrants will be moving through the woods, especially some of the larger raptors, such as red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks, and there should be plenty of passerines as well. The flat terrain makes for easy hiking.

### Adirondack Garden Club Ellen Lea Paine Memorial Nature Fund Grant to Northern New York Audubon

The Adirondack Garden Club's Ellen Lea Paine Memorial Nature Fund awarded NNYA a grant of \$500 for the purpose of upgrading its computer and software.

The current computer, eight years old and getting funkier by the day, and the current software Microsoft Office 2003, were creating obstacles at every turn during the editing and production of the newsletter and the maintaining of the membership database.

The new computer and its new software run circles around the old equipment and are much more compatible with the National Audubon Society Monthly Membership software and with the software of our newsletter printer.

NNYA would like to thank the Adirondack Garden Club for giving us the opportunity to apply for an Ellen Lea Paine Memorial Nature Fund grant and for awarding it to our chapter of National Audubon Society.

I promise not to start playing computer games with the new computer... —JT

## Crown Point Banding Station 2015 Report

The Crown Point Banding Association opened the Crown Point Banding Station on May 8th, beginning the 40th consecutive year that this Station has banded birds at the Crown Point State Historic Site on the Lake Champlain (NY) peninsula of the same name. Established in 1976 by J.M.C. Peterson, this Banding Station has been monitoring spring migrant birds, 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 23rd.

**Current plans for the Station in 2016 are for it to open on Friday, May 6, and to close on Sunday morning, May 22nd, subject to revision.**

Temperatures this year were more moderate than in past years. There was no frost at the site again this year, with most days starting above 46 degrees. By noon, it was time to shed long sleeves and outer wear on most days. Lake Champlain was unseasonably low, and warmed quickly to 50 degrees by the end of the first week of banding. The entire area was 50% below average rainfall for that time of year. "The Swamp" net area was dry except after rain. This year, there were few ticks on people or the birds.

There was no predation at the nets, though for several days a Northern Harrier hunted the area. Foxes, a concern in previous years, were not seen in the banding area.

Migration hit with a bang, with 115 birds on the 10th, 120 on the 11th and 104 on the 12th. Fifty-three birds were banded on the 13th, with the numbers declining nearly steadily until the Station closed on the 23rd. The first six days accounted for 66.6% of the birds banded. Many of the birds banded the second week were suspected to be "local birds" as opposed to migrants heading to Canada or other locations. 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 7 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds this year during his stay.

Station Founder Mike Peterson's banded male Baltimore Oriole, featured last year, returned. It was banded in 2007, but born in 2005. This year it was 9 years 11 months old. It was recaptured at the Station several times, providing many people with a look at this extremely deeply colored individual. The oldest Baltimore Oriole of record was 12 years old.

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

A total of 275 visitors signed the guest book this year (some did not), from as close as Port Henry and farther away like New Jersey, Maryland, Florida, South Carolina, Vermont, Montreal, Canada and Munich, Germany.

Special thanks to banders Tom Barber, Wendy Burkowski, Ted Hicks, Gary Lee and Bob Wei who were on-site 24/7 for varying periods.

All of us wish to thank Tom Hughes for all his help and support during his tenure as Historic Site Manager. Tom retired just before the Station opened this year, but not before

ensuring that all the paper work was in place for the Station to open. Thank you, Tom.

Michael Roets is the new Historic Site Manager. He is an archeologist. We wish him the best of luck in his new position.

**Warblers:** Warblers of 15 species were banded this year, down from 18 species the previous year. (See the species list, below.)

In the species list below, the number banded in 2015 is presented followed by the number of that species banded in 2014 in brackets {}. A plus sign (+) followed by a number (+3) indicates the number recaptured this year from previous years. For example: American Goldfinch 12 {56} +1 = 12 in 2015, 56 in 2014 and 1 recaptured from a previous year. R = New Station record high count.

**2015 Species List:** Lat: 44° 01 36" N; Long: W073° 26' 00"  
**May 8-23, 2015**

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 {}, Mourning Dove 4 {}, Ruby-throated Hummingbird 7 {2}, Red-bellied Woodpecker 2 {1}, Downy Woodpecker 1 {4}, Hairy Woodpecker 1 {1}, Northern Flicker 1 {2}, Alder Flycatcher 1 {}, Trail's Flycatcher 3 {8}, Least Flycatcher 7 {8}, Great Crested Flycatcher 4 {3} +1, Eastern Kingbird 4 {3} +1, Warbling Vireo 3 {3}, Blue Jay 75 {15} +1, Tree Swallow 2 {2}, Black-capped Chickadee 7 {10}, White-breasted Nuthatch 1 {1}, House Wren 5 {4}, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1 {}, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2 {1}, Eastern Bluebird 3 {3}, Veery 4 {5} +2, Wood Thrush 10 {4} +2, American Robin 12 {17} +1, Gray Catbird 30 {12} +4, Brown Thrasher 1 {2}.

### **Warblers:**

Ovenbird 2 {2}, Blue-Winged 1 {1}, Black and White 2 {}, Tennessee 7 {7}, Nashville 1 {4}, Common Yellowthroat 23 {33}, American Redstart 6 {9}, Cape May 36 {}, Magnolia 7 {13}, Bay-breasted 3 {}, Yellow 13 {10}, Palm-Western 9 {3}, Palm-Yellow 4 {}, Yellow-rumped 251 {140}, Black-throated Green 2 {}, Wilson's 1 {}.

### **Sparrows et al:**

Eastern Towhee 1 {}, Chipping 4 {2}, Field Sparrow 1 {}, Song 7 {13}, Lincoln's 7 {11}, White-throated 11 {2}, White-crowned 20 {3}, Northern Cardinal 1 {4}, Rose-breasted Grosbeak 2 {2}, Indigo Bunting 1 {2}, Bobolink 1 {2}, Red-winged Blackbird 5 {19}, Brown-headed Cowbird 4 {3}, Baltimore Oriole 19 {6} +4, Purple Finch 1 {}, American Goldfinch 25 {35} +1.

### **Statistics:**

2015—672 Individuals Banded, 2014—558 Individuals Banded; 2015—58 Species & Types, 2014—61 Species & Types; 2015—19 Returns-previous years, 2014—25 Returns-previous years; 2015—82 Certificates, 2014—53 Certificates; 2015—10 Return Notices, 2014—6 Return Notices; 2015—117 Species Seen/Heard (Tom Barber Recorder); 1995-2015—1375 Certificates + 99 Return Notices; 1976-2015—18604 Individuals of 106 Species Banded; 1976-2015—28 Warbler Species Banded.

## A Nonfiction Account of a Conversation I Had with Moishe

It never ceases to amaze me that just about every time I finally get a tenuous grip on something that always struck me as incomprehensible someone calls, invariably from deep left field, to ask me to explain something that they couldn't possibly have known I just figured out the previous day.

And so it came to pass that an old birding buddy of mine from Central Park, Moishe, whom I hadn't talked to in ten years, called me up to rant about a technophilic teenage birder who only came to the park on terrific fallout days.

"So for the second time this migration I go to the ramble on a dynamite day and for the second time this migration run into this fat little pisher who says to me he only goes birding on great days and he knows great days in advance because he checks the radar soon as he gets up I think he's full of {expletive deleted} and just plain {expletive deleted} lucky. But I'm beginning to wonder if maybe this overweight kid with a giant shmear on an everything bagel in his face knows something I don't know.

"I don't think so but just to make sure I thought I'd call my old buddy John from the Bronx High School of Science to find out if this kid is pulling my chain or maybe I'm missing something. Irving said he doesn't know {expletive deleted} about radar but gave me your number and said you probably knew about it or knew someone who would or whatever.

"I mean at my age I gotta get up a few times in the middle of the night anyway so why not check out the {expletive deleted} radar after I take a leak at four in the morning I can't fall right back to sleep anyway and I always leave the computer on which is where I figured I gotta go to look at radar in the middle of the night. If I wind up doing this I gotta tell Bertha before I start or she'll think I'm up looking at porn on the new laptop."

I told Moishe that for years I avoided looking into birding by radar because it seemed impossibly technical and that radar images always looked to me like an indecipherable Jackson Pollack painting superimposed on a drunken Babel of Morse code.

"That's what the {expletive deleted} it looks like to me, too," Moishe solemnly agreed, "and it doesn't mean bubbles..."

"But I finally looked into it, Moishe," I interrupted, "and, believe me, it's a no-brainer. Even you could understand it."

"{Expletive deleted} you, too, old buddy," Moishe said.

"Moishe, it's like anything else: you can really dive into it and spend a lot of time mastering it or you can wade in only as far as you need to go to understand what you need. And believe me, I can explain to you over the phone right now the absolute basics of birding by radar, and I, by the way, only waded in up to my ankle bones," I explained.

"So what I gotta do, go to the computer I suppose? I thought so. I'm pouring myself a little Schnapps before I try this. L'Chaim!"

"L'Chaim," I toasted back, "First go to this url..."

"What the {expletive deleted} is a url!" Moishe all but shouted.

"Moishe," I continued, go to the following web site..."

"You mean url?"

"Yeah, url, go to the following url:  
[www.rap.ucar.edu/weather/radar/](http://www.rap.ucar.edu/weather/radar/)."

"Wow," Moishe said, "you're gonna lose me on this one, holy..."

"Moishe, trust me, it's easy. Click on the blue tab on top that says *Radar*. Done? Good, now do you see on the top left where it says *product...*"

"You mean I gotta buy this {expletive deleted}."

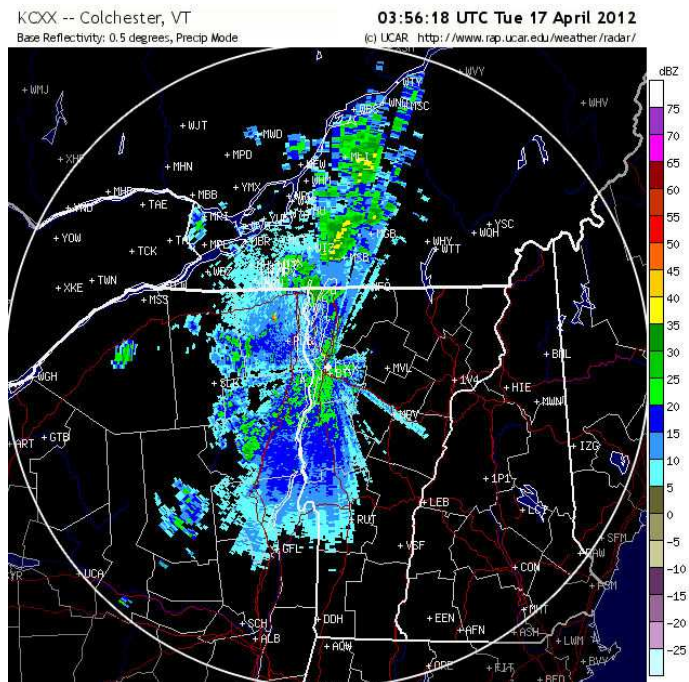
"No, Moishe, it's free, just click on *0.5 percent Reflectivity*, never mind what it means. Did you click on it? Good. Now go to the top right where it says *End Date, End Time, Loop Duration* and drop down the menu on *End Time*. Did you do that? Good. Now click on 0500. Done? Good," I said, taking a sip of wine.

"Now, do you see on the map at the very top of New York and Vermont there are the letters *CXX*? Good, click on it."

"You telling me all that blue schmutz is birds? No {expletive deleted}?"

"Yeah, Moishe, the blue blob represents birds moving over the radar station in Colchester Vermont."

"This will be good when I go to visit my Daughter in Burlington, Vermont she took a job teaching at the law school and wound up marrying a shaygetz who thinks *Hava Nagila* means *have a tequila*."



Base Reflectivity Radar Image

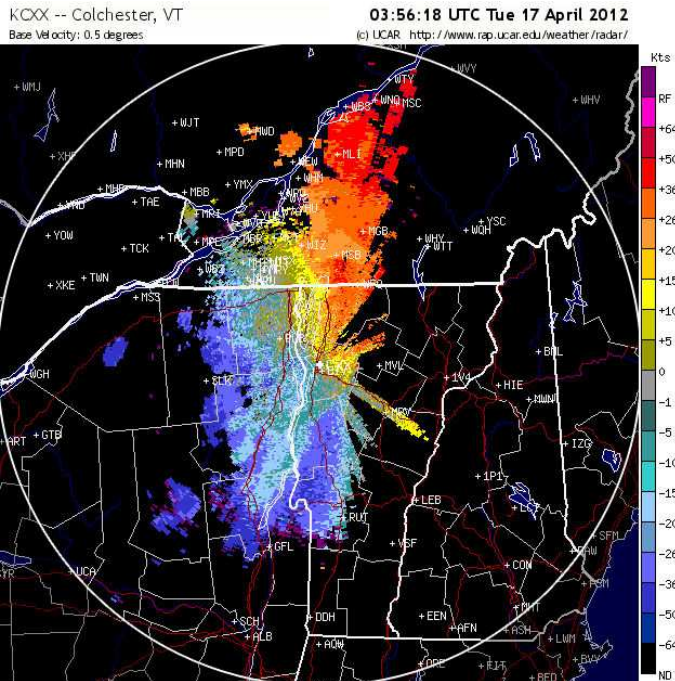
Now, right click on the middle of the satellite image."

"So is the orange stuff birds, too, or what?"

"Moishe, the orange represents velocity, those yellow and orange guys are moving at fifteen to thirty-five knots an hour, see the *KTS* at the top of the color scale on the right? Good. Now look at the top left, see the *Base Velocity 0.5 degrees*? Good. Now, right click on the middle of the satel-



lite image again. Done? Good. Now look at the top left again, it says *Base Reflectivity 0.5 Degrees*. Got it?"



*Base Velocity Radar Image*

"So what does 0500 UTC mean it sounds like a drug dose or something?"

"It means *Universal Coordinated Time*, aka, *Greenwich Mean Time*, which is four hours later than New York time, so when you clicked on 0500 UTC you called up the radar image from 1:00 a.m. this morning, and if you want to get fancy you can scroll down the *Loop Duration* window and set it for, say, *3 Hours*, at which point the radar will go through the radar image for three successive hours so you can actually watch the patterns of movement in the sky."

"You can also, on the top left, click on *Regional Reflectivity* and look at bird movements across much of the Northeast."

"Oh yeah, you shoulda been in the park today we had a hundred hermit thrushes and a white-crowned sparrow singing on the point and thanks a lot you really did me a mitzvah Irving says hello by the way and I can't wait to run into that obnoxious little pisher so I can say "Hey, how's about that twelve a.m. 0500 UTC *Base Velocity* image, eh!"

—JT

*This article originally appeared in "Adirondack Dispatches," a group blog by Adirondack Explorer staff and myself, published in the Albany "Times Union"*

*Another useful site for tracking bird migration is operated by the University of Wyoming College of Engineering's Department of Atmospheric Science: <http://weather.uwyo.edu/mapper/> which features a composite of United States NOAA Doppler Radars and satellites, which gives you a look at migratory movement all across the country.*

*The site consists of a map on which you can superimpose radar and satellite images (both in the visible and infrared ranges), and even has place to display the topography of the entire country, so you can, for example, see migratory movements along mountain ranges.*

## 3rd Annual Adirondack Loon Celebration Sunday, October 11, 2015 Lake Placid Center for the Arts Lake Placid

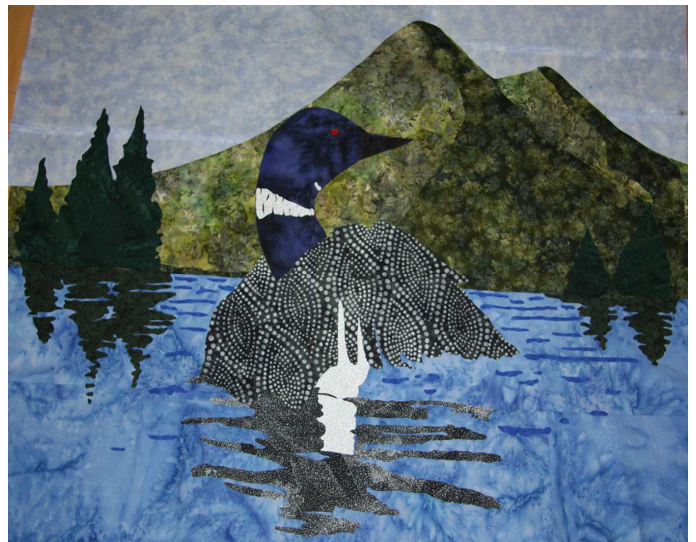
The 2015 *Adirondack Loon Celebration* promises to be a fun-filled day of "looney" activities! A variety of events and family activities are scheduled, including:

- 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](mailto: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 11th, 2015**



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

## Editor's Note

The sound of wind in leaves and needles high over head this time of year invariably reminds me of the sound of surf in late summer, the roaring and crashing of waves on the beach, the hissing of spent breakers rushing back to the ocean, the screams of gulls and the squeals of children, the motorcycles and muscle cars revving it up behind me in the parking lots, the cacophony of summer coming to an end.

Already some of the trees show signs of turning color, especially in the wet, swampy and marshy areas, and we find ourselves closing the windows against the cold of an evening, those late August drops into the low fifties and high forties, and bringing along a fleece jacket for our morning walks. We usually wind up tying the fleece jackets to our waists by their sleeves as the sun starts to warm up the atmosphere, and by late morning I usually start maundering about heat and sunscreen and how the birds have become less active, arguing, obliquely, for a trip home and breakfast, in the shade of the deck.

The trailheads I drive by all the time, like that for Baxter Mt. and Cascade and Porter, seem almost deserted now by summer standards, with maybe a dozen cars at Baxter and a mere fifty at Cascade and Porter, and by the time I sit down to put the next newsletter together both trailheads will likely be innocent of vehicles. I can't help but consider it something of a guilty pleasure that I get such joy from the fact that all manner of vacationers flock to the area where I live, take gazillions of photos of it, schlep up mountains in high heat and humidity with the kids, gush about the beauty of the place at the table next to ours in restaurants. It makes me feel that maybe I did good by abandoning Manhattan and the North Shore of Long Island for a house in the Adirondack woods, an extremely secluded and quiet place, where I never hear sirens or car alarms, unnecessary honking, jack hammers, the desultory conversations of passersby, barking dogs, the never ending ululations of urban palaver.

I hear instead, like right now, the gentle susurrus of rain amid the muffled rumble of distant thunder, and the metallic patter of water dripping off the roof onto the cover of the propane tank, sounding, in the dark, like an out-of-tune, lethargic steel drum player hopelessly failing an audition. I've been intending for years to cover the cover of the propane tank with something to attenuate the steel drum drippings of water from the roof but, alas, I haven't, over the years, eventuated all the plans I've had to get my house in order, a project, duh, that I feel certain will elude me.

But one marches on, the house projects hovering deep in the background, the sky getting bluer by the hour, the bird song clearer and newer, the migrants pouring into the neighborhood like an invasion of something I never expected even though I entertained high hopes that the never expected would overwhelm me, in a sudden explosion of surprising song and motion, an exhilarating influx of wintering species, like the dazzling flocks of bohemian waxwings that suddenly descend on the crab apple trees, or the rough-legged hawks that hover over the farm fields or the crossbills that hang upside down in the conifers and pry open cones with their, well, crossed bills.

—John Thaxton