

The Huntington Audubon Society

A chapter of the National Audubon Society



killdeer

November - December 2007

Serving Huntington Township and the Neighboring Oyster Bay and Jericho Areas

Go Green at Membership Meetings



Rather than using a disposable paper cup for coffee and tea at our membership meetings, please bring your own reusable cup or mug. This will reduce waste and help the environment. In appreciation of your effort, everyone bringing a reusable cup will get a free raffle ticket.

Hog Island Leadership Camp by Simone DaRos

In August, I had a wonderful opportunity to attend Audubon Leadership Week at Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. This opportunity was given to me and Stella Miller through the generous support from our Huntington Audubon Chapter and New York Audubon.

I was eager to learn new ways in which to enrich HAS and I was hopeful to finally get a chance to see Puffins. By the end of the week I had reached my two goals. I had gathered many new ideas and strategies to bring back to our chapter. In addition, I made connections with National Audubon staffers as well as with various chapter members from around the country. And I did get to see Atlantic Puffins.

One evening, Dr. Steven Kress, Director of Seabird Restoration, presented an informative program highlighting Project Puffin. I left the presentation with several autographed books, a Project Puffin CD, and Puffin socks! The history and success of Project Puffin is heartwarming to say the least.

During the week, we attended many interesting workshops on various topics. Some of the workshops included: Building Chapters Around Conservation,

Developing Participants and Leaders, Conservation Activities at IBAs, National Audubon Programs, Audubon at Home, and Chapter Services. The workshops were highly engaging and I walked away feeling awe inspired by an incredibly dedicated Audubon Staff and Volunteer community. Each presenter was highly knowledgeable, professional, and personable.

In between workshops we were fortunate to take a couple of cruises on the *Puffin V* through Muscongus Bay and to Eastern Egg Rock where we did see several Atlantic Puffins before they left for the season. We also hiked along moss covered paths and birded the trails through dense forests of pine, spruce, and balsam. We explored the intertidal zone with marine biologist, Sue Shubel aka "Seabird Sue", and naturalist/educator Tom Lecky.

I feel very fortunate to be part of a passionate community of dedicated Audubon members who care deeply about making positive changes to protect habitat and educate others about the natural world. Thank you HAS and NY Audubon for affording me this wonderful experience on the enchanted and unique place called Hog Island Audubon Camp.

Recycling Still Working



Recycling of ink jet, laser cartridges, and discarded cell phones is still bringing in revenue. Please keep dropping them off at our meetings, field trips, or at Huntington Business Products in Huntington Village.

Thank you for helping the environment and HAS.

November Program

Wednesday, November 14
Cold Spring Harbor Public Library

7:00 PM Refreshments
7:30 PM Speaker

Winter Waterfowl with John Turner

During the winter, Long Island hosts many species of waterfowl. Common Mergansers, Redheads, Loons, Long Tailed Ducks and Common Eiders are just several of a long list of species. Our speaker tonight will discuss the various species that call Long Island home during the winter. John Turner has a long history of environmental service to Long Island. He is a co-founder of The Long Island Pine Barrens Society and served on its board for 26 years. He has held positions with The Nature Conservancy, Suffolk County Parks Department, and Defenders of Wildlife. Presently, John works for the Town of Brookhaven as Director of the Division of Environmental Protection.

The mission of the Huntington Audubon Society is to increase community awareness about the environment and to encourage others to enjoy and protect birds and other wildlife in their natural habitats.



killdeer

is the newsletter of the

Huntington Audubon Society
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Volunteers for Wildlife	(631) 423-0982
TR Sanctuary	(516) 922-3200

You can find us on the World Wide Web at

www.huntingtonaudubon.org

E-mail us at **has@huntingtonaudubon.org**.

Featured Volunteer - Lindy Nielsen

Some Audubon members are active in more than one chapter. We are lucky to have one such person. A resident of Bayville, Lindy Nielsen is presently officially listed as Belinda Nielsen, the Secretary of North Shore Audubon. But Lindy is active with Huntington Audubon as well.

If you attend membership meetings you've seen Lindy there for she attends virtually all our meetings, often bringing refreshments. She wrote an interesting article for the *Killdeer* telling how much she enjoys the presentations at membership meetings and has also contributed other articles to the *Killdeer*. For the last four years or so Lindy has gone on many field trips with us, specially those that venture off Long Island. She has enjoyed the birding, kayaking, and hiking. Since she does the Birdathon with North Shore, she doesn't go on our Birdathon, but has supported it financially. Of course she buys bird seed from HAS (North Shore doesn't sell birdseed any more.)

This year she volunteered to help out at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary on Sanctuary Day where members of both Huntington Audubon and North Shore shared duties.

A birder and conservationist, she practices what environmentalists preach. Besides using long lasting curly fluorescent light bulbs at home and using other energy saving tricks, she recycled and re-used bags for groceries for many years, long before supermarkets got on the band wagon. Many of her every day actions reflect a strong conservation ethic.

When vacationing, Lindy incorporates some bird walks in her plans whether visiting Costa Rica, Nova Scotia, or the Carolinas. As she says, if you love birds, you have to look for them everywhere you go.

Thanks, Lindy, your continued support and for sharing your time and talents with us as well as your "home chapter".

Notable Quote

"One means of sanity is to retain a hold on the natural world, to remain, in so far as we can, good animals. We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope" - Wallace Stegner



by Simone DaRos

Huntington Audubon proudly sponsored three elementary school classes with the Audubon Adventures Curriculum during the 2006-2007 school year. The lucky recipients were primary teachers at the Oakwood Primary Center in the South Huntington Union Free School District. Each teacher received an Audubon Adventures kit to use throughout the year. The kits contained a detailed resource manual along with four different packages of class sets of student newspapers. The newspaper topics were Bats, Native Bees, Birds' Adaptations, John James Audubon, and Backyard Birds. The resource manual provided teachers with background information and interesting hands-on lessons.

One second grade teacher, Mrs. Farkas, was thrilled to have extra non-fiction reading material for each child to read especially about bats. Having these quality materials was an added bonus to her pre-existing unit on bats, found in the second grade reading program. Mrs. Farkas' students ended up writing research reports about the Mexican free-tailed bats, creating bat diagrams, and collecting information about bat conservation. Mrs. Farkas thoroughly valued having the Audubon Adventures Program as supplemental science-based reading materials for her students.

Mrs. Tomasino, a first grade teacher, was very happy to expose her students to rich reading materials. The first graders used their Audubon newspapers for paired reading activities. Pairs of students shared the newspapers while taking turns reading together. Then they followed up by writing and drawing illustrations about birds and the various nests they construct. The students enjoyed presenting what they had learned to the class.

Another first grade teacher, Ms. DaRos, utilized the Audubon Adventures materials as a kick off to setting up a classroom bird feeding station outside her classroom window. The students read learned about field marks and identification. The children even maintained a classroom journal describing the characteristics of visiting birds. One homework project was to observe backyard birds with an adult. Each afternoon the first grader recorded his/her observations along with making a detailed drawing of the bird he/she saw. One child, Paul, wrote, "Today I saw 1 crow. The whole crow was black. It was an American Crow. It had black eyes like the dark-eyed junco."

Tyler wrote, "A gull flew right past my window!!! It had white wings, an orange bill, a long body, and really long wings!!! But it flew past my window so fast I could only get a glimpse of it." Caity saw two mourning doves and six juncos from a distance, she said. The children shared the Audubon Adventures with their parents at home where families began sending in photographs from their own bird feeding stations and related newspaper articles about hawks and blue birds. Having Audubon Adventures sparked interest and enthusiasm in Ms. DaRos' students for which she was grateful.

The Oakwood Primary Center teachers thank Huntington Audubon Society for providing them with outstanding science-based reading materials. Using the Audubon Adventures Program helped to enrich the lives of young learners and certainly enriched the reading and science program. The teachers are eager to participate in the Audubon Adventures program again!

Birdathon Contributions Still Coming In



Many thanks to Doug Carracappa. He raised \$247 for Birdathon 2007. In addition to participating in many Birdathons, Doug is a regular at our membership meetings, field trips, and the Christmas Bird Count.

December Program

Wednesday, December 12
Cold Spring Harbor Public Library

7:00 PM Refreshments
7:30 PM Speaker

Asiatic Cheetah of Iran

The Asiatic cheetah is on the verge of extinction with small populations remaining only in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The total number is unknown, but is likely between 60 to 100 cats remain. With Iran so much in the news these days, this is a unique opportunity to see another side of this country, a country concerned with protecting its natural resources and wildlife. Come hear how Dr. Luke Hunter, Ph.D. and his team successfully radio collared this extremely rare animal for the first time ever, and what they have learned about Asiatic cheetahs since then. Luke Hunter is a conservation biologist with the New York based Wildlife Conservation Society where he heads their Great Cats Program.

Up-Country by Bill McAneny



This is the third a series of articles describing the pleasures of life among the Finger Lakes. We live just north of the border between Seneca and Tompkins Counties. Our street is the county line. Shirley and I moved here from Huntington seven years ago.

Long Island birders are blessed to be surrounded by a wealth of watery habitats. There is the saltwater marine environment, of course, but there are freshwater ponds and swamps that birds (and other critters) seem to love. The water attracts many species that seek food, safety, and breeding places. Conversely, large bodies of water can be a barrier to migrating species, resulting in very interesting concentrations of birds at the jumping-off points where they choose to cross the barrier.

Well, I am here to tell you that upstate NY has its own version of the watery habitats. There are migration routes along the Finger Lakes, where we live, and barriers at the Great Lakes, the nearest of which is Lake Ontario. A particularly popular spring migration route goes up Cayuga Lake to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to Lake Ontario, then over or around the lake into Canada and beyond.

Montezuma NWR was the first Important Bird Area (IBA) in our state, and it richly deserves the honor. It is the site of the first breeding record in NY for Sandhill Cranes, it is home to breeding Bald Eagles, and it has the largest breeding population of Cerulean Warblers in the state. That's just for starters. Shorebirds of many species stop off in both directions of migration and some stay to breed. Trumpeter Swans are making a comeback, with a little help from man. Hundreds of Common Loons and Tundra Swans, thousands of ducks such as Redheads, and tens of thousands of Snow and Canada Geese spend considerable time here during migration. The annual Muck Race at Montezuma hosts numerous teams that record well over 100 species in just 24 hours.

We get our share of unusual birds. I know that some HAS birders have made the trip to see some rarities. We have enjoyed brief visits from a Pacific Loon, a Yellow-billed Loon, a Little Gull, a Wilson's Phalarope, and many others. When you long to see an Upland Sandpiper, a species that once graced the Hempstead Plains, just come to our home county, Seneca, and visit one of several sites where they spend the summer. I have photographed a Hudsonian Godwit at Montezuma, and Shirley and I reported a half-dozen Red Knots at the same marsh. We also had a Western Tanager in our back yard. There are so many reports of rare visitors that we don't get to see many of them. We did make a trip to see

the Wood Storks a couple of years ago, but we passed on the Hawk Owl.

Shorebirds are tough to identify, but gulls are the worst. Most birders don't even try. They treat them as "junk birds" and lump them with the Starlings and House Sparrows. The birders in the Cayuga Lake basin regard gulls as a challenge and spend hours taking photographs and making field notes about degrees of gray, color of feet and eyes, and other minutiae that separate one gull from another. Rare gulls are tracked from the lake to favorite scavenging sites and back again so more photos can be taken and more observations recorded. This past winter was notable for the presence of several Iceland Gulls and Glaucous Gulls as well as Thayer's and the previously mentioned Little Gull. If identifying gulls is your thing, come to Ithaca and you will get plenty of advice and not a little controversy.

The popularity of digital cameras has led many of the local birders to try "digi-scoping". All you need besides your camera is a spotting scope, a sharp eye, and a steady hand. You locate your bird in the scope, hold the camera to the scope's eyepiece, get the image you want on the screen of the camera, and click your shot. Some remarkable photos have been taken this way to confirm the presence of rare or unusual birds, and to help in identifying distant birds through the magnifying capability of the digital process. More details on this technique can be found in recent birding publications.

It is almost essential these days to submit digital photos with any report of rare birds. Why am I telling you this? Because after decades of shooting slide film, and thousands of slides, and several SLR film cameras, I recently switched to a Canon EOS-type digital camera. I love it and recommend digital to all of you who haven't made the leap yet. I haven't begun to use all the features of this camera (and it has many) but it has simplified my basic photography, provided instant gratification, and permitted - nay, encouraged - the taking of many more pictures than I could justify with expensive film. Some poor photos? Just delete 'em. Make room for more good ones. Download to your computer or printer. Make prints. Send by e-mail. Make a CD. So much versatility!

Well, I still have a few more things to say about life in the boonies, but they can wait until next time. Good birding!

Editor's Note: Bill McAneny was an active member of HAS for more than 35 years. During that time he served two terms as president, was editor of the Killdeer, coordinator of Armchair Activist from its inception, and HAS representative to numerous local, state, and national committees. We welcome him back to the Killdeer.

Out on a Limb by Alex McKay

In birding, as in life, chance encounters often provide us with pleasant and lasting memories. Recently, a couple of such experiences has gotten me thinking about the role of chance, serendipity, and dumb luck in our experiences.

It all started a couple of weeks ago with a visit to the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake in the Adirondacks. My wife and I were in the gift shop when I recognized two old Audubon friends queuing at the admissions desk. I walked up behind them, and, imagine the astonished look on Sue Taylor's face, when I greeted them with a, "Welcome to the Adirondack Museum." Sue and Dave have recently moved to New Hampshire after many years in Huntington and being involved with Huntington Audubon, the T.R. Sanctuary, and the Conservation Board and Open Space Committees of the Town. They were doing a brief tour of the Adirondacks after visiting friends near Sacandaga, and just happened to arrive at the museum as we were leaving. After a visit to bring one another up-to-date, we went our separate ways. I had never dreamed of seeing them so soon after their departure from Huntington and I bring their good wishes to all. A few minutes either way and our paths would not have crossed.

A few days later, Ruth and I were at the Visitor Center in Newcomb, walking the Rich Lake trail along the lake shore. Ruth noticed a bird feeding at the edge of the exposed sandy bottom and called my attention to it just as it flew with a "peet weet" call and landed on a rock not 10 feet from us. I hardly needed binoculars to notice the greenish legs and bill, the eye ring, the clear white underparts, and the nervous bobbing as it stood there. "A Solitary Sandpiper!" my mental computer proclaimed. We had hoped to see a loon or two on the lake, so this was a serendipitous discovery - looking for one thing, you find, perhaps not totally by chance, another. It takes a prepared mind that had studied bird books and field guides to recognize the unexpected. The check list for sightings inside the center did not list the Solitary, so our chance encounter was a first which we gladly wrote in with the Sharpie pen provided. Had we taken a different trail that day, the Solitary may have gone unnoticed and unrecorded.

This reminded me of my first Prothonotary Warbler. It was in early April at Fuch's Pond in Crabmeadow. I had gone over to look for early migrants, perhaps a Phoebe or Brown Creeper, when I spotted this golden flame working through the shrubbery at the opposite side of the pond. Although I had never seen one, I knew immediately it had to be a Prothonotary. It turned out, when checking my John Bull, that it was also at the time an early date for the Prothonotary on Long Island. A day or two earlier or

later and I would have missed the bird - chance, serendipity, or dumb luck?

A final example from a New Year's Eve many years ago will have to suffice for now. We had left the front door open to allow the warm sunlight through the glass of the storm door. Passing through the hall, I noticed movement on the front steps and froze. A pair of Bluebirds were sunning themselves on the warm concrete of the landing. No kidding. Had the door been closed, I probably would not have seen them. Dumb luck, serendipity, chance - you call it.



To Ginger Mahoney, Our Outgoing President by Stella Miller

I would like to say a special thank you to our wonderful outgoing president, Ginger Mahoney. Since I joined the HAS Board of Directors in February 2006, Ginger has mentored, supported, and encouraged me. She was our president for four years and will be a tough act to follow. If I can be just half as effective a president as she was, I think I will do a pretty darn good job! Ginger will still be a very active part of HAS, and for that we are grateful. Thank you Ginger Mahoney, for all you have done to make HAS the terrific organization that it is!



Membership Application

Chapter No. RO2

Membership in National Audubon includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine and all the benefits of being a local chapter member. As a member of the Huntington Audubon Society, you will receive our newsletter and an open invitation to all our meetings, field trips, and events.

- New National Audubon Society member for \$20 (includes *Audubon* magazine)
- Huntington Audubon Society member for \$20 (does NOT include *Audubon* magazine)

Name _____

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**Send your check and application to:
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Huntington, NY 11743-073**



MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Meetings and activities of the Huntington Audubon Society are free to members and nonmembers. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at the **Cold Spring Harbor Library** except for the months of July and August. Our refreshments will be set up and ready for you at 6:45 so that you will have ample time for socializing, meeting Board members, and perusing the printed materials available. We're doing this to be sure the program can start promptly at 7:30 and end early enough for us all to exit the building by its 9:00 PM closing hour. Our cooperation and compliance will allow the library staff to close the gate on schedule.

November 2007

Saturday, November 3, 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM – Bird Seed Sale at Huntington High School. Our only Bird Seed Sale this year. Top quality seed! This is our biggest fund raiser. Please continue to support us by ordering and picking up the birdseed. If you can help on the day of the sale, contact Cathy Fitts (631 427 8623).

Wednesday, November 14, 7:00 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. *The Island's Winter Waterfowl* presented by John Turner. During the winter, Long Island hosts many species of waterfowl. Common Mergansers, Redheads, Loons, Long Tailed Ducks, and Common Eiders are just several of a long list of species. Our speaker tonight will discuss the various species that call Long Island home during the winter. John Turner has a long history of environmental service to Long Island. He is a co-founder of The Long Island Pine Barrens Society and served on its board for 26 years. He has held positions with The Nature Conservancy, Suffolk County Parks Department, and Defenders of Wildlife. Presently, John works for the Town of Brookhaven as Director of the Division of Environmental Protection.

Friday, November 30 - Deadline for the January-February *Killdeer*.

NOTE: There is no Board of Directors meeting in November because the Cold Spring Harbor Library is closed on our regular meeting day.

December 2007

Wednesday, December 12, 7:00 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. *The Asiatic Cheetah of Iran*, with Dr. Luke Hunter, Ph.D. The Asiatic cheetah is on the verge of extinction with small populations remaining only in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The total number is unknown, but is likely between 60 to 100 cats remain. With Iran so much in the news these days, this is a unique opportunity to see another side of this

country, a country concerned with protecting its natural resources and wildlife. Come hear how Dr. Hunter and his team successfully radio collared this extremely rare animal for the first time ever, and what they have learned about Asiatic cheetahs since then. Luke Hunter is a conservation biologist with the New York based Wildlife Conservation Society where he heads their Great Cats Program.

Wednesday, December 19, 7:30 PM – Meeting of the Board of Directors at the Cold Spring Harbor Library.

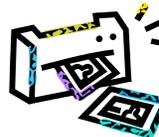
January 2008

Wednesday, January 9, – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. *The Mysterious Snow Leopard*, with Dr. Patrick Thomas, Ph.D. Dr. Thomas of the Wildlife Conservation Society will discuss the biology, behavior, and threats facing snow leopards today in the wild, what WCS is doing to conserve the species, and his trip last year to Pakistan's Himalayas to bring an orphaned cub back to New York. Dr. Thomas has been with the Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx (WCS) Zoo's Mammal Department since 1979. He is currently the general curator and is responsible for supervising the care and management of over 4,000 animals from nearly 500 species, and manages a staff of over 130 people. Many of you will remember Dr. Thomas from our terrific May program about African Wild Dogs.



Help reduce waste by bringing your own reusable cup or mug for coffee and tea to the membership meetings. In appreciation of your effort, everyone bringing a reusable cup will get a free raffle ticket.

AND



Bring your used ink cartridges to the meetings to be recycled.

Thanks for your support!



FIELD TRIPS

Field trips organized by Huntington Audubon are free and open to the public. Birding with a group is a wonderful way to share your interests with like-minded people to learn more about birds and nature, and to enjoy many preserves and natural areas. Newcomers are most welcome. Binoculars and field guides are strongly advised, but leaders usually have some field guides to share. Field trips begin at 9:00 AM at the birding site and end around noon unless otherwise specified. Directions to the site are published below and on our website. Carpooling is possible, gas and tolls are shared. Contact the trip leader for details. The trip leader is not responsible for arranging carpools, but will provide names of others who are interested in carpooling. Registration is necessary. Call the trip leader by 9:00 PM Thursday for a Saturday trip and by 9:00 PM Friday for a Sunday trip. Be sure to leave your phone number. You may participate if you didn't register, but we will not be able to notify you of any changes or cancellations without your phone number. Dress for the weather realizing you'll be outdoors for long periods of time. Bring water and if the trip is for a full day, bring a bag lunch. Rain or temperature below 20° F cancels. For the comfort and safety of all participants there is no smoking on field trips.

November 2007

Saturday, November 17, 9:00 AM – Pelham Bay Park. Look for owls, ducks, and permanent residents. In the past, Barn, Screech, Long-Eared, Saw-whet, and Great Horned owls have been sighted there. Leader: Blair Broughton (516-692-2980).

Directions: Hutchinson River Parkway to the Pelham Bay Park/City Island/Orchard Beach exit. Continue east farther into the park past the traffic circle then veering left to the parking area on Hunters Island. Meet the group there.

December 2007

Saturday, December 1, 9:00 AM – North Shore Ponds and Harbors. Meet in front of the Heckscher Museum in Huntington to visit several ponds and harbors on the North Shore. See Mergansers, Pintails, Green-winged Teal, Scaup, Canvasbacks, Buffleheads, and other ducks as well as permanent resident land birds. Always a fun trip. Leader: Maria Kelly (631-673-0937).

Directions: Take 25A to Huntington and go north onto Prime Ave. to the Museum parking lot. The Museum is in Heckscher Park.

Saturday, December 8, 2007, 9:30 AM – Elizabeth A. Morton National Wildlife Refuge. Morton NWR is famous for its tame Chickadees, who will eat right out of your hand! We will provide birdseed. You are almost guaranteed to have Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, and White-breasted Nuthatches feeding from your hands while we explore the trails of this lovely refuge. Children will love this experience and so will adults. Leader: Stella Miller (516-695-0763).

Directions: Take Sunrise Hwy. (27) east past Shinnecock Canal. Look for North Sea and Noyack sign and bear left on CR52. Stay on CR52, then turn left at light onto CR38. After 1.4 miles on CR38, turn right onto Noyack Road. After 5 miles, turn left into refuge. Parking fee.

Saturday, December 22 – Northern Nassau Christmas Bird Count. Join Audubon members in the oldest continuous citizen science project. Data is used to determine

patterns of increases or decreases in winter populations throughout the U.S. All members are encouraged to participate, but it is very important that as many experienced birders as possible join the count! Contact Bill Reeves (631-266-4309). He will explain the time and place.

January 2008

Saturday, January 12 – Bronx Zoo. The topic of our January membership meeting is Snow Leopards and in conjunction with this, we will visit the Bronx Zoo to visit their resident big cats. This is a wonderful time to visit the zoo since the crowds are gone and the leopards are quite active. Zoo entrance and parking fees apply. Please see the January *Killdeer* for more details.

Saturday, January 26, 9:00 AM – Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. Explore the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. Possible stops also at Connetquot State Park or in Sayville. Leader: Pat Aitken (516-921-2337).

Directions: LIE Exit 68S or Sunrise Hwy. (Rte.27) Exit 58S to the William Floyd Pkwy. (CR46S). From the junction of William Floyd Pkwy and Montauk Highway (Rte. 27A/CR80) proceed west on Montauk (CR 80W) for approximately 1 mile, turn south onto Smith Road. Go 1/4 mile to the refuge entrance on the right. Meet at the entrance.

Birders' Box

Since May we've added Great Horned Owl and Common Raven from the trip upstate to Rheinstrom Sanctuary, Ramshorn Preserve, and Minnewaska State Park. At Constitution Marsh in September, the people in the first canoe got to see a Least Bittern, a first on our list for the year. At Jamaica Bay on a dreary September day, American Avocet, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Red-necked Phalarope were added.

Number of species seen this calendar year on HAS trips is 165.



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Huntington Audubon Society
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The Comeback Kid - American Bald Eagle

by Stella Miller

On June 28, 2007, the Interior Department announced that the American Bald Eagle was being delisted under the Endangered Species Act. The Bald Eagle, our national symbol, was once almost wiped out by DDT poisoning and hunting. At the time of the European settlements, there were possibly up to half a million nesting pairs in the U.S. By 1963, this number had drastically dropped to 417 pairs. This amazing recovery has been four decades in the making, but it is now confirmed that the bird's populations are continuing to increase in the lower 48 states, with estimates ranging from 7,000 - 11,000 pairs. This amazing recovery would not have been possible without the protection of the Endangered Species Act, perhaps the most important conservation law in existence.

The Bald Eagle was made our national symbol in 1782, although Benjamin Franklin pushed the wild turkey as a candidate, calling the eagle a "bird of bad moral character" due to the eagle's predatory and scavenging behavior. Ranchers and farmers, believing the birds were preying on livestock, considered it a nuisance and routinely killed them. Habitat destruction has contributed significantly to

the eagles decline, but it was DDT poisoning that brought the eagle to the edge.

DDT was banned in 1972 and the Bald Eagle was placed on the Endangered Species List. Since then, the bird has made a slow, but steady comeback. Although delisted under the ESA, the Bald Eagle is still protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

As conservationists, we now have something to celebrate and can feel hope for other species in peril. Let's hear it for the Endangered Species Act! Without it, our national symbol could have perished. Instead, we are now celebrating the comeback kid, the American Bald Eagle.



Be sure to visit us on the web

www.huntingtonaudubon.org