Prior to the 1900, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt”. They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition – a "Christmas Bird Census" – that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Thanks to the inspiration of Frank Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

Today the Christmas Bird Count is conducted from the high arctic of Canada, throughout North America and Hawaii, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Last year 71,531 observers in 2,369 counts tallied 64,133,843 individual birds. Data from the CBC provides a database on bird population trends that is essential to understanding how bird populations are doing and the conservation efforts needed to protect them.

HOBAS in partnership with North Shore Audubon will be conducting the Northern Nassau CBC on Saturday, December 20. To join the count, call Charlotte Miska (516-922-9710). If you can’t spend the whole day, come for part of it. After a day in the field, a compilation supper will be held at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary. Come enjoy some good food, the camaraderie of your fellow birders, and hear the results of each group’s count. There are always some interesting surprises.

Please visit National Audubon’s website for more information on the count’s history, objectives, and data – [http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count](http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count).

Bird Seed Sale
Saturday, November 8, 2014
Huntington High School
9:00AM – 2:30 PM

Don’t forget to pick up your birdseed!
Adopt-A-Highway Program

HOBAS has adopted a one-mile stretch of Pulaski Road in Huntington. If you have always dreamed of wearing a florescent safety vest and are interested in helping us keep this road clean, please join us! Afterwards, take a stroll through Froelich Farm Preserve and top the morning off by stopping by Kerber's Farm for one of their delicious signature egg sandwiches or a tasty piece of pie! For more information please send an e-mail to Simone (s.daros@aol.com).

Cleanups are conducted at 8:00 AM (new time) and usually take about an hour and a half. Meet at the WPW Growers parking lot across from Wicks Farm.

The next cleanup days are:
- Saturday, November 1
- Sunday, December 7

There are no cleanups in January and February. Cleanups will resume in March.

Shu Swamp
Invasive English Ivy Pull

Join the Shu Crew to help restore one of the finest preserves on Long Island. Come to the swamp for this fun and worthwhile effort. Wear clothes and shoes you don’t mind getting muddy. If you have garden gloves, please bring them. Snacks will be provided. Call 516-695-0763 to register.

- Saturday, November 15 at 10 AM
- Saturday, December 6 at 10 AM

Directions: From Route 25A in East Norwich, take Route 106 north to Oyster Bay. Make left on to Lexington Ave then left on to West Main Street. At the Mill Pond (on the left), bear to the right as if to go to Bayville. At first traffic light (water will be on your right) make a left onto Cleft Road. Take Cleft Road to Frost Mill Road, make a left. (If you wind up on the causeway going over Beaver Dam, you have gone too far.) Shu Swamp will be on your right after you go under the train trestle.

DO NOT USE YOUR GPS!
Your GPS will get you lost and if you call, reception is spotty in the area.
From the President
Stella Miller

On September 20, 2014, I, along with seven other HOBAS members, marched in the People’s Climate March in New York City. This was not my first march for the environment, but it was the most electrifying one I have attended due to the sheer number of participants. An estimated 400,000 people took part in this historic event. That is an incredible number! Some came to be heard on behalf of human health, others marched to protect their homes and heritage, while some participants, including myself, were there to represent the voiceless: wildlife.

The timing of this event could not have been better. On September 9, Audubon issued a groundbreaking climate change report. (See article on page 4.) The numbers are disturbing and potentially staggering. Take the Bald Eagle. While our national symbol has made a tremendous comeback, delisted from the ESA in 2007, by 2080 this species could potentially have just 26% of its summer range left, due to climate change. The Common Loon is another iconic bird in trouble. By 2080 its haunting call could be eliminated in 56% of its summer range and 75% of its winter range. Extreme weather will threaten waterfowl across the county as floods and droughts increase, severely degrading habitat for these birds, especially in the critical Prairie Pothole Region. In addition to birds, many species of wildlife will be impacted by climate change due to each species’ dependence upon healthy and stable habitats which include water and food sources, suitable sites to raise young, and specific temperatures. Rising ocean temperatures will impact coral reefs, which have an extremely narrow temperature tolerance range. Salmon attempting to spawn are impacted by the decrease in snowmelt which reduces stream flows. We all have heard about melting arctic ice which is threatening polar bears and other northern animals, but there are others that will be just as severely impacted by shifting temperatures and decreasing snowpack. One of these is the wolverine, one of my favorite animals. These fierce and charismatic members of the mustelid (weasel) family live in extremely rugged conditions and need deep snow cover in early spring to protect and shelter their young. As future rising temperatures melt snowfields in the higher elevations that serve as their habitat, populations will dwindle as wolverines become increasingly unable to locate suitable habitat needed to breed successfully. In addition, average summer temperatures are increasing beyond what the animals are able to tolerate. Another high elevation animal, the American pika, a small mammal of the west, is being forced to move to ever higher elevations to find the cooler temperatures needed for survival. What happens when they reach the tops of these mountains? Where will they go? A majority of our current wetlands, essential breeding habitat, could dry up. Trees are being impacted by pests which are surviving milder winters and taking advantage of warmer summers with population explosions. The list of potential and already occurring wildlife and natural catastrophes is a very long one and there is not enough space in this article to include them all.

I encourage you to research wildlife and climate change as well as to visit the Audubon Climate Change website (www.climate.audubon.org) for more information. Please keep an eye out for updates to the HOBAS website, which will have a special page dedicated to climate change and the actions you can take to help combat it.

Current climate change is not occurring naturally. It is not occurring over thousands or millions of years as it has done in the past. It is occurring over just decades, accelerated by the actions of humans. Species simply do not have the time to adapt to these impacts, especially species with specialized needs and requirements.

On September 20th I was proud to march besides hundreds of thousands of people from all over the United States, as I demanded action on behalf of wildlife. Animals don’t have a say in any of this, they are not masters of their own destiny. They are not the ones messing things up, we are. Because of this, we have a tremendous responsibility to do whatever it takes to protect wildlife and preserve habitat. We are the caretakers of wildlife and it is up to us to ensure that these animals have a future, and one that includes healthy and suitable habitats for survival and successful reproduction. Unfortunately, wildlife has no voice and cannot take action. Only we can do that, and the time to start taking action is now, before it’s too late. Think about it. What environmental legacy do we want to leave our children and the generations that follow? Your actions can make the difference between leaving our future generations ecologically rich and diverse ecosystems, or barren and scarred landscapes. The choice is ours. Which will you choose?
Reading Wildlife Track & Sign

These courses are taught by George Leoniak, one of the six CyberTracker evaluators in North America, and provide participants the opportunity to pursue Track and Sign Certification from CyberTracker Conservation, a globally recognized non-profit that established the international standard for assessing wildlife tracking and sign skills.

Participants in the one-day course will have the opportunity to test for Level I certification; those in the two-day can test for Level I through Level IV.

In wildlife research and monitoring, natural sign surveys are an effective means of collecting data on the presence, range, and distribution of animal species. However, there are concerns about the integrity of the data from these types of surveys. In response to these concerns, the CyberTracker Conservation Evaluation System was designed to establish reliable, standardized tracking skills.

These workshops are open to naturalists, environmental and outdoor educators, amateur trackers and citizen scientists, professional biologists, and students (minimum age of 16) seeking to increase their wildlife tracking and observation skills and sign knowledge. Over 50 naturalists took this popular program on Long Island last spring.

When: Friday, November 7, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM or Saturday & Sunday, November 8-9, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Instructor: George Leoniak, www.leoniaktracking.com
Location: The Oyster Bay – Cold Spring Harbor area. Exact locations to be determined
Fee: $120 for Friday; $220 for Saturday & Sunday ($108 and $198 for Long Island Nature Organization members).
For more information or questions contact Mike Bottini at mike@mikebottini.com or 631-267-5228.

Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report

Audubon scientists have used hundreds of thousands of citizen-science observations and sophisticated climate models to predict how birds in the U.S. and Canada will react to climate change. Their work defines the climate conditions birds need to survive, then maps where those conditions will be found in the future as the Earth’s climate responds to increased greenhouse gases. It’s the broadest and most detailed study of its kind, and it’s the closest thing we have to a field guide to the future of North American birds. This comprehensive, first-of-its kind study predicts how climate change could affect the ranges of 588 North American birds. To read about the study, its implications and how it affects birds in your neighborhood, please visit the Audubon Climate website, http://climate.audubon.org/.

Birders’ Box

August 31 – East Pond, Jamaica Bay. Blair Broughton led 4 participants through the muck and the mud to view migrating shorebirds and it was worth it. Plenty of Semi-palmated Plovers and Sandpipers as well as Least Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers were seen. There were also Black-bellied Plovers, Lesser Yellowlegs, Northern Shovelers, a Northern Waterthrush, but the birds of the day were a Baird’s Sandpiper and a Hudsonian Godwit.

September 6 – Trailview and Bethpage State Parks. Sharon Brody led 6 participants on a ramble along various trails in the parks. It was a wonderful day in a peaceful setting, but not many birds were encountered. However Blue Jays were abundant.

September 14 – Jones Beach. On a glorious late summer day, Blair Broughton and a handful of birders enjoyed a delightful morning searching for early migrants. Encountered were American Oystercatchers, Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderling, Merlin, Tree Swallows, and a few local resident birds. A lot of time was spent studying the various plumages of the various gulls found at the beach.

October 5 – Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch, Greenwich Audubon. A crisp, sunny fall day had Blair Broughton and 5 others scanning the sky for migrating raptors. Sharp-shinned Hawks, Kestrels, Merlin, Osprey, and Turkey Vultures were spotted. A walk on one of the numerous trails yielded woodpeckers, House Finch, and Eastern Bluebirds.

Species seen on 2014 HOBAS trips: 161
Out on a Limb
Alex McKay

The State of the Birds 2014 was released on September 9, 2014, a bit more than a week after the centennial observance of the demise of the last Passenger Pigeon, Martha, at the Cincinnati Zoo on September 1, 1914. In the century since, despite education, awareness, and conservation efforts, the results of this review of long-term trend data for U.S. birds were termed “unsettling” with a “watch list” of 230 species in need of conservation action and to highlight the species most in danger of following the Passenger Pigeon without significant intervention.

The foreword to the report pays homage to the Passenger Pigeon and reviews significant achievements in preserving species such as Bald Eagles, Brown Pelicans, and Peregrine Falcons – all species once headed the way of the pigeon – and concludes, “Today we have the science, the technology, and knowledge to prevent extinction.”

The report summarizes the work of the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, a 23-member partnership review of population data from groups such as Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ducks Unlimited, National Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Smithsonian, and the National Park Service. The review identifies birds as indicators of ecosystem health. Seven habitats are examined in detail: grasslands, forests, wetlands, oceans, arid lands, islands, and coasts.

Arid lands show the steepest decline in birds due to habitat loss from development and fragmentation, although conservation initiatives are spreading to restore and protect habitat. With steep declines nevertheless continuing, grasslands species numbers have stabilized at low levels. Henslow’s Sparrow and Uplands Sandpiper have benefitted from Farm Bill programs for grazing management on working grasslands. There are ongoing declines in species dependent on forest habitats, such as Eastern Towhee and Wood Thrush showing steepest declines. However, wetlands show strong population gains reflecting habitat investments with 87 freshwater breeding birds with a more than 40% gain since 1968, although there are long term declines in southeastern marsh species such as King Rail and Purple Gallinule.

It is a different picture when the report turns to coasts, oceans, and islands. Long distance migrants among shorebirds are steeply declining and need international conservation. Many seabirds face severe threats from changing ocean temperatures, pollution, reduced fish populations, and rising sea levels in breeding areas. Immediate help is needed for many island birds making their last stand. One third of all American federally endangered species are Hawaiian species. Hawaii is called “the extinction capital of the world.”

In addition to the habitat assessments, the report contains sections on prevention of extinctions, preserving abundance, and lessons of the Passenger Pigeon. The Watch List of 230 species lists those most in need of conservation action to prevent them joining the family of extinct American birds. Watch List birds meet criteria for a combination of high rate of population decline, small population size, small geographic range, and significant future threats to sustainable populations. Thirty-three species of common birds do not meet these watch list criteria yet are rapidly declining in many areas. Among these are familiar birds such as Northern Bobwhite, Common Nighthawk, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark.

The lesson of the Passenger Pigeon was the ushering in of a new era of conservation. The report concludes, “We have developed deep scientific knowledge, built a strong network of protected habitats, and designed the world’s best model for adaptive management of wildlife populations. Our charge today is to protect these investments with policies that rise to the threats that wildlife face in the 21st century.” Despite the troublesome data, the outlook for the state of the birds is optimistic. The overall theme throughout the report is that “conservation works.” The Foreword concludes, “When we have the will to conserve, we can make a better future for birds, for ecosystems, for everyone.”

The full report and Watch List with its charts, photos, and detailed findings merits reading. It can be easily accessed by googling state of the birds.org. An excellent summary with some fine photographs can be found at smithsonianscience.org.

The pigeon was no mere bird, he was a biological storm.

—Aldo Leopold
Meetings and Events

Membership meetings and most activities of the Huntington-Oyster Bay 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 PM so that you will have ample time for socializing. The program starts promptly at 7:30. For full program descriptions as well as speaker biography, please go to www.hobaudubon.org.

Wednesday, November 12, 7 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. Make Room for Wildlife: Effects of Exurban Development on Wildlife and Lessons from the Adirondacks with Michale Glennon, Ph.D. Research in the Adirondacks has demonstrated that exurban development is a quickly-growing development pattern, but until recently the precise ecological impacts in this ecosystem were poorly understood. Join us tonight as we learn about direct impacts to songbirds and other wildlife from exurban development. Dr. Michale Glennon is the Science Coordinator for the Adirondack Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society, and serves a leading role in the ecological research conducted in the Adirondacks.

Wednesday, November 19, 7:15 PM – Meeting of the Board of Directors at the Cold Spring Harbor Library.

Monday, December 8 – Deadline for the Jan-Feb Killdeer.

Wednesday, December 10, 7 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. Tigers: Can We Save Our Most Charismatic Species, with Peter Clyne, Ph.D. Wild tigers are down to a historic low of 3,200 compared to 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century. These 3,200 are now found in scattered fragments across tropical Asia and Russia. Of these fragments, only 42 of them are large enough to hold viable populations of tigers (defined as enough land to hold at least 25 breeding female tigers). Called Source Sites, these 42 fragments hold 60% of the remaining tigers. These Source Sites are the last realistic hope for wild tigers. But although it may sound bleak, the reality for tigers in most of these Source Sites is considerably more optimistic, provided high-quality protection is given to them. Join us tonight as Dr. Clyne discusses the specifics of these tiger conservation efforts in these 25 Source Sites. Dr. Peter Clyne is an Assistant Director in the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Asia Program. An avid birdwatcher, Dr. Clyne joined WCS five years ago, working on conservation efforts in India, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Field Trip Leaders Needed

Are you interested in sharing your knowledge of birds, nature, and birding hotspots with others? HOBAS is looking for new field trip leaders to join our team. You do not have to be an expert to lead a trip and field trips can cover any aspect of the natural world – not just birds. Volunteer to lead a field trip by sending an e-mail to info@hobaudubon.org.

HOBAS Membership Form

For $20 a year you can be a member of Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society. Your membership will help support conservation efforts, and educational and youth programs. As a member you will receive our newsletter, an open invitation to our monthly guest lectures, field trips, and events, along with special member’s only discounts and events.

Please fill out this form and mail with your check payable to:
Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society
P.O. Box 735
Huntington, NY 11743-0735

Name
Address
City
State Zip
E-Mail

HOBAS never sells or shares your personal information.

THANK YOU!
FIELD TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Go to [hobaudubon.org](http://www.hobaudubon.org) for detailed trip descriptions.

Field trips are free, unless otherwise specified, and open to the public. Newcomers are welcome. Binoculars are advised. Carpooling is possible, gas and tolls are shared. 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. 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. Call the leader if in doubt about the weather. For the comfort and safety of all participants, there is no smoking on field trips.

**Pelham Bay Park**

**Sunday, November 16, 9 AM.** Today we will look for resident and visiting owls, as well as waterfowl and late migrants. **Leader:** Blair Broughton. Call 631-885-1881 to register. **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.

**Montauk Point and the South Fork**

**Saturday, December 6, 9 AM.** Winter waterfowl abound including scoters, eiders, loons, gannets, and numerous pond ducks. In addition we will keep an eye out for gulls and other birds. **Leader:** Sharon Brody. Call 516-433-5590 to register. **Directions:** Take the LIE to exit 70, Manorville. Go south on Route 111 to Route 27. Take Route 27 east all the way to Montauk Point Lighthouse. There may be a parking fee. Meet by the restaurant opposite the parking lot.

**Sunken Meadow Park**

**Sunday, December 7, 9 AM.** We will investigate the trails, ponds, and seashore to see what birds are leftover from the fall and which birds have arrived for the winter. **Leader:** Blair Broughton. Call 631-885-1881 to register. **Directions:** Take Sunken Meadow Parkway north to the end. Meet in the southwest corner of the main parking lot.

**Northern Nassau Christmas Bird Count**

**Saturday, December 20.** Join Audubon members in the oldest continuous citizen-science project. If you can’t spend the whole day, come for part of it. A compilation supper will be held at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary. Contact Charlotte Miska (516-922-9710) if you want to join this fun and important activity. (See article on page 1.)

**Capri Lake and Captree State Park**

**Sunday, January 11, 9 AM.** An assortment of winter waterfowl and maybe even some Monk Parakeets should be found at this little known hot spot in West Islip. Later, we will take a short drive to Captree to see what winter visitors await in the State Park. **Leader:** Blair Broughton. Call 631-885-1881 to register. **Directions:** Take either Robert Moses Causeway or Route 231 south to Montauk Highway. Capri Lake is about a mile west from Robert Moses or a mile east from Route 231. We will meet in a small office parking lot on the northwest corner of Montauk Highway and Barberry Road.

**River Otter Adventure**

**Sunday, March 29, 10 AM.** Join us today as biologist Mike Bottini leads us on a field trip to look for evidence of one of our most elusive creatures, and Long Island’s favorite comeback kid, the river otter! The location to be determined, but it will be somewhere on the North Shore between Fort Salonga and Oyster Bay. Please check the January issue of the *Killdeer* for more details. **Co-leader:** Stella Miller. Call 516-695-0763 to register.
Winter Offerings for the Birds: Pinecone Bird Feeder Workshop

When: Monday, December 29, 2014, Noon
Where: Bailey Arboretum
Who: For kids of all ages

With winter here, our feathered friends are going to be seeking extra food to help them survive the colder weather. We will start by reading, Animals in Winter, by Henrietta Bancroft, a story of how our wild neighbors prepare for the winter's cold; then turn crafty and use pine cones, suet, dried fruits, and birdseed to make bird feeders. We'll hang them on a tree in the Children's Habitat at Bailey Arboretum, and then take a winter’s ramble in the woods! When we return, we will quietly observe the birds that have arrived to enjoy their treats. Note that most birdseed is processed in plants that also process peanuts if allergies are an issue.

To register, please call 631-903-5556. Group size limited to 15.

Directions: LIE to exit 41 North or Northern State Parkway to exit 35 North. Proceed north on Route 106 towards Oyster Bay. Make left onto Northern Boulevard/Route 25A (west). By the police booth, make a right onto Wolver Hollow Road. Make a right on to Chicken Valley Road. Continue to Oyster Bay Road. At Bayville Road (Barney’s restaurant is on corner), make a right. Continue to Bailey Arboretum.