



THE HARLEQUIN

York County Audubon

www.yorkcountyaudubon.org

Autumn 2015

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT ~ *Bill Grabin*

Fall is here and change is upon us once again. Our seasonal visitors, both human and avian, have departed - or are on the verge of doing so. But others, including beautiful Long-tailed Ducks, Snowy Owls, and our namesake, the Harlequin Duck, will be here before we know it.

It's been a busy season for York County Audubon. Several workshops and programs were tied to the season. In August, famed naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul presented a program on bird migration and the value that shade grown coffee provides to preserving critical habitat for songbirds. In September, we joined with the Center for Wildlife and the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region to provide two Hawk ID events atop Mount A. In October, our monthly program at the Wells Reserve will feature several organizations that we've been supporting for years: the Center for Wildlife, Hog Island, Stratton Island and the Natural Resources Council of Maine. Also this month, Louis Bevier will be presenting a workshop on Sparrow ID.

We've been delighted with the response and level of participation that our workshops and programs have been generating this year. Most of the workshops have been filled to capacity, and our programs and weekly walks have also been very well attended. Information on upcoming programs is always available on our website (yorkcountyaudubon.org) as well as on our popular York County Audubon Facebook page. The Facebook page features "hot from the field" photos of local sightings from



several talented local photographers. We also send out a monthly events email. If you're not on our email address but would like to be, please send a request to ycas@yorkcountyaudubon.org.

September, of course, is also back-to-school time. Each summer, YCA sponsors a local educator to attend a week-long camp on Hog Island to explore ways to strengthen nature education in York County. This year, Nathan Hall (Kennebunk Middle School) and Christine Caprio (York High School) were recipients of our June Ficker Hog Island Scholarships, and their reports are contained in this issue.

Another Fall event is our annual Bird Seed Sale. We work with the Wells Reserve at Laudholm to obtain high quality, freshly harvested seed. An order form is inserted in this newsletter, and can also be accessed via our website. Place your order in October for the best pricing; seed pickup is in mid-November. Keep your feathered friends happy and

support two of your favorite environmental organizations at the same time.

We hope you're able to get out and enjoy the wonderful Fall weather, and perhaps join us for some of our events.

YCA welcomes its New Members!

We're honored to have so many new members join us over the last few months:

Rebecca and Karl Hageman	Saco
Jeanne Sunny	Sanford
Airin Tridanarti	Saco
Lucy Baird-Stoddard and Owen Stoddard	Old Orchard Beach
David DeBlois	Eliot
Bruce and Margaret Grimes	Kittery Point
Hershey Hirschkop	South Berwick
Caitlin and James Lipert	Springvale
Mari T. O'Neil	Wells
Tracy Wood	Kittery Point
Wayne and Mary Bateman	Wells
Jacqueline C. Bell	Old Orchard Beach
Rhonda Brooks	Arundel
Carmelo Cruz-Diaz	Kittery
Ted and Roxanne Francoeur	Biddeford
Jan Garrity	Moody
Valerie Hale and Kevin Kennedy	Shapleigh
Melissa Hussey	Wells
Sandra and Richard Johnson	Kennebunk
Robert Krueger	Ocean Park
Maureen and Keith Loignon	Dayton
June and Russell Matson	Eliot
John McGuckin and Sheila O'Brien-McGuckin	Springvale
Douglas Nielsen	Dayton
Jane Orr	South Berwick
Diana and Justin Rice	East Waterboro
Julie and Keith Trefethen	Wells
Nancy Wise	Kennebunk
Ed Bellegarde	Wells
Doug and Jeanne Butler	Kennebunkport
Joan A. Carkhuff	Westerlo, NY
Jim Cummings	Lyman
Peter and Maureen Janelle	Manchester, NH
Al and Mary Moss	Eliot
Lee B. Wernick	Moody
Rebecca Abadie	Biddeford

Katherine Chaiklin	Porter
Scott Cormier	Sanford
Wendy Cote and Brian Wood	Cape Neddick
Brooke Ehlers	Buxton
Carina and Joshua Daniel Foley	Saco
Tamara and Jake Gallagher	Saco
Nancy J. Goodwin	Sanford
Dona Malin	Alfred
Audrey C. Metcalf	Wells
Michael and Michele Paige	Hollis Center
Jeff Smorezewski	Biddeford
Laura and Peter Barclay	Buxton
Irene Burke	Berwick
Cassie Cantara	Wells
Michelle L. Cline	Limington
Laura E. Eaton	South Berwick
Suzanne C. Faulkner	Sanford
Kenyon Karl	Saco
Kelly LaPierre	North Berwick
Carolynn and Allen Marsh	Kittery
Deborah J. McMillen	Eliot
Cheryl Dearman Mills	Wells
Mary Moon	Kennebunk
The Myatt Family	Saco
Laurie Pocher	Ogunquit
Leland and Sylvia Pollock	Kittery
Jenn and Tony Scavuzzo	Biddeford
Joan D. Searles	Old Orchard Beach
Errol and Terry Thomas	Eliot
Macy Tremblay	Biddeford
James and Ellen Wassell	Biddeford Pool
Mary Zachary-Lang and Dan Lang	Kennebunk

YCAS OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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Monica Grabin, Secretary	985-3342
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Pat Moynahan, Birding Challenge	284-5487
Bob Watson, Publicity	251-1135
Eileen Willard, Director	967-5118
Marian Zimmerman, Birding Trail	710-3015

For all upcoming events and general information, please visit our website:

www.yorkcountyaudubon.org

And for the latest news, photos and updates, please visit us on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/yorkcountyaudubon

New Board Member and Treasurer!



We're very pleased to welcome Kathy Donahue to our Board. Kathy lived in Boxford, MA for many years, bordering Boxford Open Land Trust property and enjoyed birding in her back yard. She was a Database Administrator spending most of her career in the banking industry. Most recently, she worked for several years as a DBA at BJ's Wholesale Club's corporate office. Last year, after having spending 7 years coming up to Kennebunk weekends, she decided to live life 'The Way Life Should Be' and moved full time to Kennebunk, Maine.

Putting the garden to bed, or not

from Monica Grabin

Gardeners tend to be a fussy lot. We like order, we like nature under control. And as the season winds down, we've always been told, we should clear out the old and put the garden to bed. But this advice does not take into account all the creatures, especially birds, who might like us to keep things a little messy. Dead flower heads such as echinacea (Coneflower) and rudbeckia (Black-eyed Susan) are little banquets of seed for birds, and they will feast on them through the winter. Dead foliage is cover for migrants and resident birds as they search for food. Seed eaters such as sparrows are built to take advantage of the bounty of fall seeds, and even some warblers, such as Yellow-rumped, change from insects to seeds. Fall berries bring in birds like

cardinals, waxwings, grosbeaks, and thrushes. Dead trees are favored nesting habitat for many species, and provide shelter in storms, so if no danger exists, let the old trees stand in your yard. When branches do fall, make them into a brush pile. Start with large pieces of wood and build it up. You can add your old Christmas tree to it, too. No, it's not the prettiest thing, but when the birds use it for cover, it will be well worth it. A little mess is natural, it's what birds are looking for, and if you can see your garden as a cooperative venture with birds, you might learn to love it. Come Spring, you can remove all the clutter and start again.

If you'd like more information on gardening for birds, just search online and you'll find resources from the National Wildlife Federation, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon, and Maine's Cooperative Extension Service.

Birding Challenge 2015

We're tremendously grateful to all who contributed their time, expertise and financial pledges, including our generous business donors:

Saco Valley Auto Care	Saco
Rogers & Hutchins, PC, CPA	Kennebunk
Bergen & Parkinson, LLC	Kennebunk
Nature's Gifts	Kennebunk
Buffleheads Restaurant	Biddeford
Chiropractic Family Wellness Center	Scarborough

Quest for 300

How many bird species can be seen in York County in a single year? We do our best to answer that question each year with our tracking of the "Quest for 300." We reached 300 once, with 301 in 2012. Last year the total was 284. As of early September, we're up to 278. To see what's been seen (and not seen) each year, you can scan the species checklist on the Birds & Birding drop down menu on our website. And certainly let us know if you've seen anything that we haven't!

Reports from Hog Island

Nathan Hall, Kennebunk Middle School

My week at Hog Island this summer was an amazing experience. There were people from all over the nation to share ideas with, great weather, puffins, and a wonderful feeling of community. But I feel that the idea which resonated most with me, among the many teaching strategies and ideas which I took away from my Hog Island, is that of diversity. A representative from the National Audubon Society gave a short presentation about an initiative of National Audubon's to, not only, accept people of diverse backgrounds but to actively seek them out and engage them in the work which Audubon Society does. Her point was simply that healthy natural communities are diverse and that we should also strive to have a diverse community of people around us.



I have spent a good deal of time thinking about the students I work with and this concept of diversity. Her presentation helped me to realize that a more diverse section of the population needs to be engaging with the environment. People of all ages, socio-economic classes, political parties, racial backgrounds, sexual identification, and religious affiliation need to be able to have meaningful experiences with the natural world around them. I believe this begins when they are children. Further, I believe that one of the most effective ways to be a teacher is to figure out what the obstacles to learning

are and attempt to remove them or get around them. It is the key to getting people engaged with the natural world. We need to figure out what the obstacles to students engaging with nature are and find ways to remove them.

There are a number of ways in which I am planning on doing this moving forward. First, with the generous support of York County Audubon I will be starting a naturalist club at the Middle School of the Kennebunks. With this club I plan on having the students get outside and engage with the natural world through placing feeders around the school, naturalist rambles, and more involved birding trips. Obviously this club will not reach everyone so I am also planning on having students construct a naturalist field guide as a way to help all of my students have experiences in nature. This field guide will be as diverse as my students, with some students creating more traditional informational pieces, some writing poems, others creating drawings, and still others finding their own way to engage with the natural world. Finally, we will have some activities around the feeders around the school which any and all students can engage with.

To build a diverse community of people who are engaging with nature, we have to help people get out into nature. We need to remove the obstacles which stop them from getting outside and experiencing the world. The belief that diversity in our human population, as well as our natural world, is key. My experience at Hog Island, thanks to the York County Audubon, has only reinforced and grown my passion for sharing the natural world with as many people as possible.

Christine Caprio, York High School

Despite these recent hot days, perhaps summer's reluctance to let go, the seasons are in transition, and I am moved to reflect on all of the abundance of this past summer and to look ahead with eager anticipation. I had the extreme privilege to attend the remarkable Audubon program, "Sharing Nature: Educator's Week" on Hog Island in July. This empowering experience was made possible by the generosity of the York County Audubon's "June Ficker Scholarship". This brief article of my

experience is just one attempt to express my gratitude for the opportunity; I hope to continue to share what I have learned with present and future students in my classroom.

I am an English Language Arts teacher for York High School in York, Maine. In my work with literacy, I recognize the importance of helping my students explore the idea that understanding does not come from a vacuum. Learning in isolation may help reach some academic goals, but broader experiences that engage and enrich can push students even further on their paths of success. This is why I was particularly interested in attending the program at Hog Island. I, personally, am passionate about the environment, and I wanted to use this foundation to be able to better reach my students.

One specific workshop during my time on Hog Island was presented by Dr. Stephen Kress, Director of the Seabird Restoration Program and VP for Bird Conservation of the National Audubon Society. His compelling talk outlined the efforts and perseverance necessary in his career in order to fulfill his goal (and dream) of bringing puffins back to America. He was candid about the ups and downs he and his research teams endured, and how all of these efforts kept the project in sharp focus. There was no giving up. I am eager to bring this back to my students. In a culture of instant gratification and a sometimes over-dependence on technology to facilitate our efforts, my students need more stories of resilience and of seeing your dream through.

I also attended a grant-writing workshop, which was immensely helpful. In order to bring some of my long term dreams of a campus greenhouse to supplement our culinary program and cafeteria menu, a maintained trail system around campus to encourage nature writing courses, birding and bird language workshops, I will need to look into outside funding sources. My time with the group on Hog Island helped me brainstorm articulating what I was looking to do and how to go about locating potential resources to approach.

Finally, my experience tide pooling at Hog Island is something I will definitely bring back to my school. Our campus is within walking distance of the

intertidal, and I often bring my students to the beach for writing activities. I also teach work by Rachel Carson, including excerpts from her book, *The Edge of the Sea*. Now, I can help my students not just see the diversity of the tidepools, but also to identify the various species with whom we share this valuable resource. I am confident that this field experience will enrich their appreciation of Carson's work and influence their own reflection and writing about the place they call home.

It is hard to refine my experience into a few, brief moments. The time I spent on Hog Island continues to resonate with me. In conversations with colleagues, in studying the various literacy competencies and connecting environment as part of the paramount social literacy skills set, in relationships with teachers from around the country that I am fostering and maintaining with collegial discussion... I know I am not finished applying this experience to my craft of teaching. and as I look forward to what lies ahead, I am perhaps most excited about being able to connect with my students by sharing my own learning experience with them and the joy I got from challenging myself to try new things and consider a wide lens of perspectives on a shared concern for our environment.



Sparrow Workshop with Louis Bevier



American Tree Sparrow – photo by Louis Bevier

Want to learn more about the many sparrow species that breed in and migrate through Maine? Want to know the difference between a sparrow and a finch? How can one bird be both a bunting and a sparrow? Why are longspurs no longer sparrows? Often skulking, elusive, and confusingly similar, sparrows can make any birder prefer fall wood-warblers. As part of this workshop, you will learn how to find and observe sparrows in their preferred habitat. We will learn through classroom and field time useful foraging behaviors, flight characteristics, and vocalizations helpful for identification and appreciation of Maine's sparrows. The workshop will feature some of the rare species that have turned up in Maine, and some that might yet so you'll be prepared! The marsh sparrows, Le Conte's versus Grasshopper, who was Henslow, and the tricky Spizella are some of the featured sparrows.

This workshop will be led by well known Maine birder Louis Bevier. Since the 1960s, birds have drawn him to explore most of North and South America, leading to months at sea off Alaska and California, backcountry surveys in the high Sierra, plant and bird expeditions to several countries, and many other adventures. He has worked as a tour guide for Field Guides, as an editor for The Birds of North America series, as Associate Editor for the journal North American Birds, and is past Chair of the Maine Bird Records Committee.

The workshop will be held on Sunday, October 18th at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm from 8 a.m. till 3 or 4 p.m. The cost is \$10/person, payable by check or cash at the workshop. But **space is limited and advance reservations are required at our website: yorkcountyaudubon.org.**

We'll meet at 8 a.m. and take a short walk. Then we'll move to the Mather Auditorium for a talk on "all things sparrow." We'll break for lunch (you'll need to bring your own), after which we'll head to Mile Rd. to try for Saltmarsh or Nelson's Sparrows, or anything else, at high tide, and then continue on to Beach Plum Farm and possibly Ogunquit Beach. At least that's the plan!

This workshop is proudly sponsored by York County Audubon. We hope you can join us.

Annual Bird Seed Sale Coming Up *Early Bird Pricing through 10/30*

Keep your feathered friends happy this winter by treating them to high quality bird food *and* help support two of your favorite environmental organizations at the same time. Each fall, York County Audubon joins forces with the Wells Reserve at Laudholm to offer this sale.

The seed from Blue Seal is fresh from the 2015 crop. There's a broad selection of seed and suet, and great prices, especially if you order by 10/30. There's easy access pickup at the Wells Reserve November 12-14th.

Please use the order form enclosed with this newsletter. It's also available on the York County Audubon and Wells Reserve websites.

Order today, and thanks for your support. Your birds will thank you too!

*** Upcoming YCA Events at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farm ***



Tuesday, October 20th, 7:00pm

An Evening with a Few of Our Friends

Over the years, York County Audubon has worked with and sponsored a number of outstanding organizations. As a special treat, we'll let these friends share their work with brief presentations, which will include: **The Center for Wildlife** in Cape Neddick focuses on wildlife rehabilitation, treating over 1500 injured animals every year. In this program, they will share "Hawk Eye" with a special winged guest. **The Natural Resources Council of Maine** has been working to protect Maine's environment for over 50 years. Executive Director Lisa Pohlman will discuss the proposed Northern Maine National

Park and Recreation Area. **Hog Island Audubon Camp**. Each year, YCA sponsors a local educator to spend a week at this famed camp. One of the recipients of this year's June Ficker Hog Island Scholarship will present "Implementing Nature Lessons in Our Schools." **The Stratton Island Audubon Sanctuary** in Saco Bay, is a key nesting refuge for a variety of threatened seabirds, and has the highest diversity of nesting waterbirds of any Maine island. Two hundred and forty species of birds have been seen on and around the island. We'll get an update on this summer's activities there.

Sunday, October 18th - ***Sparrow Workshop with Louis Bevier*** - see description on opposite page



Tuesday, November 17th, 7:00pm:

Saw-whet Owls and Veery Migration.

Understanding the annual cycle and movements of species is critical for implementing effective conservation strategies. Patrick Keenan, Outreach Program Director at the Biodiversity Research Institute in Gorham, will present a program about Saw-whet Owl monitoring at coastal and island sites in Maine and about the use of geolocators to track Maine Veery migration.

The 116th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count Every year, from mid-December to early January, thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave inclement weather and pre-dawn jaunts to gather data for the CBC, the largest and longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations. YCA sponsors two local counts. If you're interested in participating or finding out more, please contact:

- Pat Moynahan (284-5487) for the Southern York County on Monday, December 14th
- Marie Jordan (799-1408) for the Biddeford/Kennebunkport Count on Saturday, January 2nd



Our Facebook page has experienced a steady increase in activity, rewarding visitors with "hot off the digital camera" photos of local unusual birds and other treats. Please visit the page, "like" us if you wish, and post a photo, sighting or comment of your own.

And visit our website - YorkCountyAudubon.org - to see the photos in this newsletter magically transformed from Black & White into Color!

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Maine Audubon

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York County Chapter



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