



THE HARLEQUIN

York County Audubon
www.yorkcountyaudubon.org

SUMMER 2012

FOR THE SAKE OF THE BIRDS

Marian Zimmerman

Have you ever noticed that how we experience time depends upon our perspective? When I began my term as president, two years seemed like an eon. When I look back on it, it seems like it began only last week. What a difference perspective makes!

Over the course of the last two years York County Audubon Society has important accomplishments to its credit, thanks to the work of the Board and its members. We also have several initiatives that are still unfolding.

As we have for many years, we have continued to offer a full complement of evening programs and field trips to provide members and the public at large with opportunities to learn about nature, current research, and conservation efforts close at home and farther afield. These also allow us to experience the glories of our own wonderful piece of Maine. We have annually coordinated two Christmas Bird Counts, quarterly bird census at Laudholm Farm/Wells Reserve, and monthly bird surveys of Biddeford Pool which add to our knowledge of our local avifauna. We have also led bird walks for Laudholm Farm and several of the land trusts in York County. Further, we have contributed our expertise and resources to the planning and development of several land trusts and the Saco River Walk.

Through our two fund raisers, the Birding Challenge and the Bird Seed Sale in partnership with Laudholm Farm/Wells Reserve, we have been able to extend our educational programs with the help of the Center for Wildlife to reach children as well as adults. Two new programs that have been very successful are the Winter Wildlife Day jointly sponsored with the Center for Wildlife and Laudholm Farm and Piping Plover workshops co-sponsored with Maine Audubon. We have continued our support of the Stratton Island

Seabird Research, our collaboration with the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust, and our leader scholarship to Hog Island.

Did I mention our quarterly newsletter that brings you some of the latest news related to birds and conservation? Or what about our newly revised web page? And then there was the eBird Workshop to help us keep up with new developments. There is talk of another one, in case you missed the first one.

Members have also worked with local Conservation Commissions on the State's Shoreland Zoning and with City Councils regarding Fireworks Ordinances, both with an eye to protecting coastal habitat and shorebirds. We also have several Power Point programs that are available for use with community groups who want to learn more about York County and the bird resources we have. We initiated the Quest for 300 as a way to help us become more aware of the diversity of birds and the habitats that support them right here in our own backyard. Sometimes the grass is greener at home!

In addition, we have begun to work on a York County Birding Trail to identify the many fine birding spots in the county. Building upon some of the work that was previously published about the big hotspots, we have been searching out the smaller, lesser known places that are convenient to get to and that have birds that might be harder to find or less abundant. We hope to connect the "Birding Patches" described in the *Harlequin* as a handy resource. It is a work in progress, so stay tuned.

As you can see, we have accomplished much and can rightfully be proud of our efforts. They have all been done by our dedicated Board and other active members. Each person may contribute only a portion, but each piece makes a difference and, when combined with the other portions, adds to the sum. And yes, the sum is greater than the parts.

Continued on Page 2



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The Harlequin, the newsletter of the York County Audubon Society, is published in spring, summer, autumn & winter. Autumn deadline: September 10, 2012.



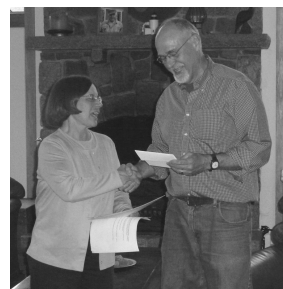
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As I leave the role of president I can honestly say that York County Audubon Society is a vibrant and exciting group. It is well positioned to continue making important contributions to natural resource education and conservation on the local scene. A special thanks is due to the Board who faithfully come and offer their time, energy, and expertise to make all these things happen. It could not happen without them.

I also take this opportunity to thank Gard Thompson and Al Hodson for their years of service on the board as they take their leave. Gard was treasurer for many years, has helped bird banding at Laudholm, various educational workshops, the bird seed sale, and any number of hands-on projects. Al has pitched in with leading bird walks and the Birding Challenge. We wish them the very best and look forward to their continued efforts in new capacities.



Anne Watson, Doug Hitchcox
& Pat Moynahan



Marian Zimmerman &
Paul Wells, new President

Photos by Marie Jordan

We are blessed to have Doug Hitchcox joining the Board with his energy and tech savvy know how. He conducted our eBird workshop, set a Big Year record of 314 birds seen in the state in one year, and has worked at the Maine Audubon Scarborough Nature Center leading trips and nature walks. We welcome his enthusiasm and expertise.

Our accomplishments are the result of many people pitching in to do their part. With more help we can do more. So please, won't you consider how you can make a contribution and come join us. You will be rewarded by making new friends, enjoying opportunities to experience the beauty of southern Maine, and feeling the satisfaction of making a difference. Please, lend a helping hand. Do it . . . for the sake of the birds.

BIRDING CHALLENGE 2012

Linda Eastman

At 5:00pm on May 18th, eight eager teams spread out over York County to begin searching for as many bird species as possible, over a 24-hour span. Our weather was pleasantly cooperative throughout the event, with May 19th's temperatures reaching the low to mid-seventies. As is often the case, some of us met with friendly competition in a few areas where teams overlapped; everyone was very willing to share the birds we were seeing, right on the spot. After an arduous but fun day, ten of us met at the Wells Reserve for our compilation, enhanced by delicious, hot pizzas from Alfredo's Italian Pizzeria. Although there were no unusual species, except for a Brewster's Warbler, we acquitted ourselves with a decent count of 158, for this year's total. As of May 31, we've received \$1,425 in donations, but don't despair – it's not too late! If you have not already helped with our fundraiser, please consider doing so. Your dollars will be supporting good works right here in York County.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Vivian E. Hussey School in Berwick

Dear Audubon,

We think the packets you send us are great! We love the colorful pictures and the amazing facts about birds, animals, insects and science. It is fun to do current events about such interesting things. Mrs. Ficker is generous to us. Does she know she is inspiring us to think more about the earth and to be better to all of earth's creatures? If not, please tell her for us! She must be very, very nice. We love the Audubon magazine a ton! It has so many amazing pictures and they are so realistic! (I explained they were real!) you have tons of great stories about sea creatures, animals and insects. We like the birds, penguins and waterfalls the best.

Sincerely,

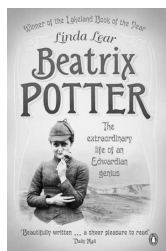
Ms. Morin's Third Graders

Dear Monica,

I use the packets you send for current events, buddy reading (we share the stories with our kindergarten buddies) as well as science, reading and writing units. We have learned about how seeds travel, bees pollinate plants, the water cycle works for the planet and all its inhabitants, recycling and how amazing hummingbirds are. The materials you donate to my classroom allow my students to have access to quality, up to date information that they normally would not have access to at home or school due to budget restrictions at both places. Please know that your materials mean a lot to us and we thank Mrs. Ficker and The York County Audubon Society from the bottom of our hearts!

Sincerely,

Nan Morin



I'VE BEEN READING . . .

Pat Sanborn

"Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature"

by Linda Lear

Many of us of a certain age grew up with the Beatrix Potter children's books, and with her delightful, well-dressed animals. Peter Rabbit, Jeremy Fisher, and a host of others peopled our childhood. But there were other sides to Beatrix Potter. One side was hinted at by her beautiful, accurately drawn details of the natural world. Linda Lear, in her carefully documented biography, takes us through the complexities of

Potter's life. Potter was one of the accomplished amateur naturalists of the late Victorian era. Some of her research on fungi, along with her sketches, still stand up well today. In fact, Potter's fame as a children's author eclipsed her remarkable career as an environmentalist, farmer, and successful sheep breeder. Without her support, much of England's Lake District would have been given over to development. Her canny purchases and land donations became a bulwark of the National Trust properties in that district. Lear portrays Potter as a strong willed, occasionally ornery soul, a bit like some of her animal characters. This book shows her to be a multi-faceted person, a pioneer in conservation and enlightened land management.

BIRDING PATCH: WELLS RESERVE AT LAUDHOLM

June Ficker

A visit to Laudholm Farm is not to be overlooked! This is a restored salt water farm having existed over three centuries. When the Lord family considered selling in the 1970's, Mort Mather, the citizens of Wells, and some others in York County undertook a concerted effort to permanently protect Laudholm. Maine's only National Estuarine Reserve was established.

You may tour the beautiful main farm house: the Visitor Center, restored barn with auditorium, the Coastal Resource Library, and the Maine Coastal Ecology Center with research lab, teaching lab, and interpretive exhibits.

The seven mile trail system is well marked and trail guides are available. You will be amazed at the diversity of habitats. For instance, on the Knight Trail you will pass through grassland to woodland to freshwater wetlands to salt marsh and end up on sandy beach.

The diversity of birds is reflected in the diversity of habitats on the property and good birding can be found in all seasons. A few species encountered during spring and summer can be American Woodcock, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown Thrasher, Veery and Eastern Bluebirds, a variety of warblers, sparrows, and flycatchers, Ruff Grouse, Canada Geese, herons and egrets, shorebirds including Piping Plover, Least and Common Tern, as well as a

number of gull species. In fall and winter, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, House and Purple Finches, Hairy, Downy, and Pileated Woodpeckers, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Common Loon, Common Eider, and Red-breasted Merganser may be seen.

The Reserve has also been the site of unusual bird species including White-eyed Vireo, Connecticut and Mourning Warblers, American Avocet, Ruff, Caspian, Royal, Forster's, and Sandwich Terns, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Lark Sparrow. Expect to find a surprise.

Wells Reserve at Laudholm is located off Routes 1 & 9 near the Wells-Kennebunk Line and takes approximately 35 minutes from either Portland or Portsmouth (via I95). It is open to the public year round and has ample parking space. During the summer you may find a volunteer collecting an entrance fee, but if you become a member of the Trust, you may enter free. Pets and smoking are not allowed.

There are public restrooms and you can have a picnic lunch at one of the table/benches situated close by the Visitor Center. Pick up more information at the Visitor Center where you can inquire about bird walks and the weekly Wednesday morning bird banding demonstrations. This is also the site for York County Audubon Society program meetings the third Tuesday of the month as well as a variety of other programs and events. See you there!

LAUDHOLM SUMMER BIRD WALKS

June 9 & 23, July 14 & 28, August 11 & 25

QUEST FOR 300 UPDATE

Scott Richardson

The 2012 "Quest for 300" species reported for York County is well on its way. As of June 1, 244 species were on the list, including three not seen at all last year: Redhead, Sandhill Crane, and Kentucky Warbler. The spring migration has largely concluded at this point, but summer promises to add several gulls and terns along with some "fall" shorebirds. A pelagic trip would do wonders for the quest. Last year, about 10 species were picked up at sea that surely would have been missed otherwise; fulmar, shearwaters, storm-petrels, jaegers, and puffin aren't reliable from our coastal lookouts.

Visit our website to check our collective progress and be alert for unusual or common-but-unreported species in your travels or in your yard. Remember, this challenge is just for fun. We welcome your reports on the Maine-birds email list, eBird, or at yorkcountyaudubon.org



Highland Farm ~ Photo by Carolyn Vail

HIGHLAND FARM PRESERVE FIELD TRIP

Bill Grabin

On Saturday, April 14th, about a dozen birders were delighted to join York Land Trust Stewardship Director Dave Mallard for a walk along some of the trails of YLT's Highland Farm Preserve. We were treated to great views of first a female and then a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Soaring overhead were 3 Red-tailed Hawks, 2 Kestrels and several Turkey Vultures. A Great Blue Heron was flushed from the marsh that runs down to the York River, a first of year for many of us. A lone Turkey climbed a hill to avoid us. Pine Warblers called from the cover of several tall pines. In all, we tallied a total of 27 bird species. And there was one memorable mammal: what seemed like the largest porcupine that any of us had ever seen.

YLT has done a wonderful job of developing this property (after first saving it from development). Working with a crew of volunteers, they've created a trail system that covers 2.5 miles. Part of the preserve is being restored to early successional shrubland with the hope of reestablishing a population of the endangered New England Cottontail. The "NEC" trail circles this area, and provides lots of great views of both birds and landscapes. The Ridge Trail also provides great views and winds through excellent young hardwood and mixed forest habitat.

The Highland Farm Preserve is open daily from dawn to dusk. It's located along Route 91 in York, just three miles from Route 1. Stop by, explore and enjoy it anytime.

INTERVALE MARSH FIELD TRIP

Bill & Monica Grabin

On Saturday, May 5th, veteran Maine naturalist Bill Hancock led a group of birders on an exploration of the Intervale Marsh in New Gloucester, Maine. It's an area of exceptional habitat, much of it protected by the Royal River Conservation Trust. While we were a little too early for many of the migrants, we still saw a good number of birds. Our highlights were great up close visits with a couple of Virginia Rails and a couple of Marsh Wrens. Afterwards, at Bill's suggestion, we continued our birding up the adjacent Woodman Road, and were delighted to be greeted by the calls of several Sandhill Cranes. Our great thanks to Bill Hancock for leading the trip and introducing us to this great habitat.

ROTARY PARK WARBLER WALK

Linda Eastman

Eight of us met at the baseball field in Biddeford's Rotary Park on May 15th, to see what species we could scare up. We were treated with a little fallout of warblers, early in our walk, and spent some time sighting them, despite a very white sky. Ultimately, we were able to actually see nearly all the species we heard. Perhaps the highlight of the day was a Green Heron, spotted on the other side of the estuary that runs along the path behind the baseball field; we also had great looks at a very vocal Ovenbird, defending his territory. Unfortunately, notably absent was any sign of our traditional Blue-winged Warbler, but several of the group ended the walk with displaying Eastern Kingbirds and Warbling Vireos. The rain held off, and we counted 34 species on our walk.

HAMILTON HOUSE FIELD TRIP

Scott Richardson

Magnificent weather encouraged 17 people to arrive at Historic New England's Hamilton House property in South Berwick on June 9th for our second annual bird walk at this tranquil and beautiful site. Barn Swallows coursed over the field as we climbed a gentle rise to get the sun at our backs, but songbirds were a bit of a

challenge to see in tall grass and thick foliage. With a mix of experienced birders and novices, we slowly but surely introduced various species to the beginners. For many, the highlight was discovering male and female Bobolinks carrying food for nest-bound young. Our disturbance kept the caterpillar-carrying male cautious enough for folks to enjoy a scope view, then we moved past so the couple could feed their young. As soon as they were left behind, a Baltimore Oriole appeared in front of us and sang brightly in full view. Neighboring Vaughan Woods State Park beckoned, so we skirted its edge to pick up a few forest species including a singing Winter Wren. Soon after, we braved a mucky path back to the Hamilton House, where a scan of the Salmon Falls River shore revealed a Spotted Sandpiper. In the tidy gardens, a hide-and-seek Indigo Bunting and a cooperative Ruby-throated Hummingbird capped off our 2-hour stroll, which put 34 species in the notebook. Donuts and coffee in the gardener's cottage were a welcome treat offered by our hostess for those who had a few minutes to spare.

BROWNFIELD BOG TRIP

Marie Jordan



Prothonotary Warbler ~ Marie Jordan

You must be wondering what these pictures have to do with the Brownfield Bog field trip. Let me tell you! After checking the weatherman's prediction, we expected to be able get at least a couple hours of dry birding in at the bog. Well, the weatherman's prediction was not very accurate because as we gathered at the corner store in Brownfield at 7:00am a steady rain began to fall. The morning was cold, wet and damp - not conducive to birding the bog. So what to do? When someone suggested we go inside, get a hot beverage, and share some stories from our most recent birding trips, it was a no brainer. In we went to warm up and enjoy hearing some of the highlights of each others' recent birding adventures.

Marie and Pat Sanborn shared stories about their wonderful experience at Magee Marsh in Ohio observing three pairs of nesting Prothonotary Warblers. These birds were right beside the boardwalk providing great close up views as they sang and went about courting and building their nests totally ignoring the many birders who were just a few feet away staring at them and clicking cameras. This beautiful warbler is rarely seen in Maine so this was a special treat for them.



Short-tailed & Laysan Albatrosses ~ Doug Hitchcox

We could see the excitement in the eyes of Pat Moynahan and Marian Zimmerman as they told us about the large number of Albatrosses they encountered on their trip to Attu. Imagine a large number of these magnificent birds following and swooping around your boat? And then finding that one very rare Short-tailed Albatross among all the Laysans? WOW! Having seen "The Big Year," it was not hard to picture them riding their bikes on Attu in search of Siberian strays.



Gray-crowned Crane & Grevy's Zebra ~ Lisa Thurston

Lisa Thurston related stories about the wonderful experience she had seeing large herds of elephants and having close encounters with many other large mammals like a stunning Grevy's Zebra on her trip to

Kenya. Viewing them was equally as exciting as observing the many beautiful and unique birds Kenya holds for birders to enjoy. The Gray-crowned Crane was one of those birds. She found words hard to come by when trying to describe to us how beautiful and animal rich Kenya's National Parks are.

We will schedule a birding trip to the bog next year. Please plan to join us and put in an order for clear skies! Then we can all enjoy this unique gem that we are so fortunate to have right here in Maine.



LUMPS & SPLITS OR HOW LISTS CAN CHANGE

Pat Moynahan

We birders love our lists. And we all know that bird lists are dynamic, ever changing entities. These treasured lists potentially morph every year. Some years we lose species and some years we add species. This year, 2012 is a year of splits. The North American Classification Committee (NACC) update will be published in August and will split three species.

One, Galapagos Shearwater, is already recognized as a species. No change to our lists!

The second, Gray Hawk, is geographically limited. In the American Birding Association area only Gray Hawk, *Buteo plagiatus*, is possible. No change to our lists!

But the third split, Xantus's Murrelet can give us a new bird. Xantus' Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*) will be split into Scripp's Murrelet (*S. scrippsi*) and Guadalupe Murrelet (*S. hypoleucus*). Both birds can be seen on Southern California pelagic trips, and are identified in current field guides.

eBird users must identify their records to reflect either *S. scrippsi* or *S. hypoleucus* as anything entered as just Xantus's Murrelet will "not count" on life lists, state lists, and county lists in the eBird system.

Congratulations to all who gained a new bird.

HELP YCAS GO GREEN!!!

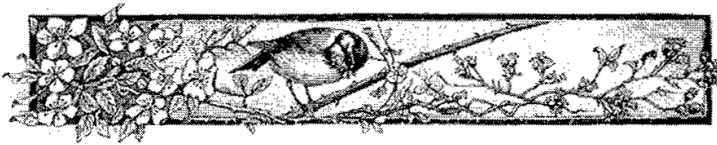
Can you help us Go Green? Receiving your copy of *The Harlequin* by email will eliminate our postage and printing costs. We will send you an email alert so you can download the new issue when it is posted on our web site (yorkcountyaudubon.org). Please contact Linda Eastman at islndr@myfairpoint.net

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

email: _____



FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, August 11 at 7:00am: Early Migration at Scarborough Marsh & Pine Point.

Leader & Contact Person: Doug Hitchcox 671-0815.

Friday, September 7: Field Trip to Popham Beach (Phippsburg). Leader: Mike Fahey. Meet at the Popham Beach parking lot no later than 4:30pm. After the toll booth, go to the right side of the lot. There is restroom nearby. The plan is to go birding for around 3 hours. Note that barefoot is the most sensible footwear for this trip. Plan on a drive-time of 100 minutes from the Biddeford/Saco area.

Contact person David Doubleday 207 205-4041.

EVENING MEETING PROGRAM:

Tuesday, September 18: The Joy of Birding . . . Why Birds Do What They Do.

Speaker: Mike Shannon

Naturalist, educator and registered Maine Guide Mike Shannon will illustrate ways that the knowledge of basic bird behavior enhances our understanding of birds and aids us in identification. Mike is retired from Unity College where he taught ornithology. A former director of

the Audubon Ecology Hog Island Camp in Maine, he has also served as master naturalist for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Mike has a long history of sharing his passion and enthusiasm for things natural.



NEW MEMBERS:

Nancy H. Barrett	Kennebunk
Leah Beane	Saco
Phyllis Benson	Moody
Daniel T. Bonville	Porter
Patricia Bright	Buxton
Larry F. Burke	Saco
Amy Elie	Dayton
Ann Gallop	Ogunquit
Katherine & R.J. Keene	Kennebunk
Annie F. Levine	Saco
Darlene & Norman Levesque	Biddeford
Sheila McNeil	Hollis Center
Amy & Michael Paquette	Kennebunk
Mr. & Mrs. Milton Ryder	Ocean Park
Cheryl Sarto	Lyman
Maureen Schnellman	Kennebunk
Jennifer Squires	Saco

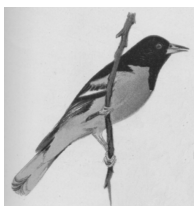
WELCOME BACK:

Doris C. Adams	Wells
John R. Andrews	Scarborough
Diana Bell	Fryeburg
Kevin Couture	South Berwick
Norman DesRochers	Hollis Center
Charlotte G. Fullam	Porter
Jane Funkhouser	Saco
Kate Gaudet	York
Ann E. Hastings	Biddeford
Sheila M. Kilgore	York
Audrey Lemieux	Kennebunkport
Ernestine M. Lyman	Cape Porpoise
Gail Neal	Bar Mills
Joyce Stobo	Kennebunk
Donald H. Thompson	Gorham
Kathleen Waugh	Saco
Vladimir J. Wormwood	Kennebunk

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

ETYMOLOGY

Baltimore Oriole ~ *Icterus galbula*

"*Icterus*" is from a Greek word meaning "jaundice." While some orioles have yellow in their plumage, this derivation may refer to a legend that seeing an oriole could cure jaundice. "*Galbula*" means a small yellow bird. The common name "Baltimore" comes from George Calvert, the Irish Baron Baltimore. He eventually left Great Britain and settled in Baltimore. His livery was black and yellow!

Maine Audubon Membership Form

Yes, I would like to join Maine Audubon & the York County Chapter of Maine Audubon (this also includes membership in National Audubon Society). I want to help promote environmental education and advocacy in our communities, and protect and conserve wildlife habitat. I understand that membership benefits include Maine Audubon's *Habitat: The Journal of Maine Audubon*, *The Harlequin* newsletter, and discounts on field trips and tours, children's programs, and at Audubon nature stores and sanctuaries nationwide. For a subscription to *Audubon*, the magazine of the National Audubon Society, please add \$10.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Volunteer \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Director's Circle \$1000 |

I wish to receive *The Harlequin* newsletter by email instead of by mail. (Make sure to give us your email!)

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