



# THE KESTREL

Onondaga Audubon Society  
A Chapter of National Audubon

*Serving Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Tompkins Counties and other areas of Central and Northern New York for 58 years.*

*The Audubon chapter for the Eastern Lake Ontario basin.*

New Series Volume 41 - Number 4

Oct / Nov / Dec / Jan 2010-11

## PROGRAMS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**OCTOBER 2010 PROGRAM MEETING**  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH BEAVER LAKE NATURE CENTER  
Wednesday, October 13, 7:00 PM

Come and listen to SUNY ESF junior wildlife science major Jennifer Ma conduct a talk about Plovers.

**NOVEMBER 2010 PROGRAM MEETING**  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH BEAVER LAKE NATURE CENTER  
Wednesday, November 17, 7:00 PM

Come join us for a presentation by State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry professor Dr. William Shields. Dr. Shields will be talking about the birds of Australia.

## SAVE THE DATE!!

The Onondaga Audubon Society and the Montezuma Audubon Center will be hosting the 2010 NYSOA Annual Meeting, October 22-24, 2010. More information may be found at <http://www.nybirds.org/Articles/AnnMtg2010-details+RegForm.pdf> Field trips are listed on page 7 of this newsletter.

*Please consider attending!*

## MEMBERSHIP CHAIR NEEDED!

Onondaga Audubon is in need of someone to step up to take over the position of Membership Chairperson. If interested, please contact OAS president Gerry Smith at 771-6902 or [goshawk@gisco.net](mailto:goshawk@gisco.net) if you would like to help! Responsibilities are listed in the ANNOUNCEMENTS section on *Page 2*.

## CONSERVATION

by Thomas Riley, Conservation Chair

### FOREST VOICES

Without making the slightest sound the coyote emerged from the brush. Beautiful in its mottled grey and brown pelage, it was not aware of my presence 40 feet across the south end of a woodland pond. Gracefully it walked out on a partially submerged log, nosing for coyote news as it went, stopped at the end of the log, lapped a couple of tongues of water, pirouetted and exited stage left.

On the hike out to my parked car a Goshawk cacked at me, flew in, circled around from tree to tree. I suspected a nest nearby but felt I was causing disturbance enough and did not pursue the possibility of locating it. Altogether, the day had provided a couple of excellent wildlife experiences at a state forest within an hour of Syracuse and less than three miles from home.

Imagine my dismay, when a couple of years later driving through the same State Forest I could see what turned out to be a 15-20 acre clear cut adjacent to the area described above. Stopping my car I walked back along a fringe of trees left along the road to the log



*State Forest clearcut with 2-3 years regeneration.*

*Photo by Thomas Riley*

*Conservation continues on page 3*

## THE KESTREL

Vol. 41 - No. 4 Oct / Nov / Dec / Jan 2010-11

Editor Julie Covey  
Distribution Elizabeth Chapman

### Officers, Chairs & Directors - 2010-2011

President	Gerry Smith
Vice-President	Niles Brown
Secretary	David Nash
Treasurer	Libbie Messina
Membership	Elizabeth Chapman
Conservation	Thomas Riley
Education	Maryanne Adams
Programs	Margaret Tzen & Tim McCoy
Sanctuary Committee	David G. Muir
Birdathon	Ken & Rose Burdick
Invasives	George Spak
Field Trips	Paul Richardson
Communications	Laura Hand Wright
Webmaster	Stephen Boss
Directors	Maryanne Adams, Gene Huggins, Robert Long, Tim McCoy, Jason Mauro, David Perrin, Paul Richardson, Thomas Riley & Margaret Tzen.

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc. is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Meetings will be held at various sites primarily within Onondaga County on different dates during different months from September to May, excluding January and February. Please check *The Kestrel* and/or <http://www.onondagaaudubon.org> for details on each monthly meeting's date and time. Meetings usually run approximately two hours long. Field trips are held year round to observe birds, and other interesting aspects of nature. All programs and field trips are free and open to the public.

OAS owns and operates two sanctuaries on Lake Ontario: Derby Hill Bird Observatory and Richard A. Noyes Sanctuary. Derby Hill is an important site for spring hawk migration. Noyes Sanctuary provides a variety of scenic and birding opportunities in all seasons. Both sanctuaries have maintained trails and are free and open to the public, dawn to dusk.

Chapter only members receive *The Kestrel* newsletter. Joint members with National Audubon receive *The Kestrel* plus Audubon Magazine. Onondaga Audubon encourages membership in both National Audubon and the local chapter. Members are encouraged to actively participate as volunteers in all functions of Onondaga Audubon.

Problems with subscriptions should be referred to membership chair, Elizabeth Chapman.

Letters to the Editor may be sent to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201  
Phone 315-771-6902  
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.org>

**The mission of the Onondaga Audubon Society is to engender in the people of the Central New York Community a greater appreciation of wildlife, land, water, and other natural resources. The members of Onondaga Audubon believe this will lead to the wiser use of these resources and encourage this result through our programs, field trips, sanctuary management and environmental education.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Deadline for the next issue is January 15, 2011.*

### PLEASE, CONSIDER TAKING THE KESTREL ONLINE!

Help Onondaga Audubon Society save money by taking your *Kestrel* online. Those taking the *Kestrel* online receive an email with the link to the latest *Kestrel* when it becomes available.

An added bonus is that all the pictures in the electronic, online version are in gorgeous full color!

Please contact newsletter editor Julie Covey at [birdeditor@tds.net](mailto:birdeditor@tds.net) for more information. In the email, please include your postal mailing address, so we may be certain of whom we are taking off the postal mailing list. *THANKS!*

### Membership Chair responsibilities:

1. Send out annual notice of membership renewal requests to local only members
2. Maintain local membership database (Excel) re: adding new members, address changes, renewals, membership status for *Kestrel* ie mail vs e mail
3. Remit payments received to chapter treasurer or national as appropriate
4. Process change of address notices from *Kestrel* mailings to national via e mail
5. Prepare most current local and national online monthly database files for *Kestrel* editor and separate out e mail vs postal mail members
6. Prepare brief annual report on membership activities for chapter President's review.

### Onondaga Audubon Society

#### Chapter Membership Application

For information on National Audubon Society membership please visit the OAS website:  
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.org>.

#### IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN:

To enroll as a member of the Onondaga Audubon Society chapter only please send your name, address, and a check for \$15, made payable to the Onondaga Audubon Society, to:

Elizabeth Chapman  
250 Oarlock Circle  
East Syracuse NY 13057

You will receive *The Kestrel* newsletter several times per year.

#### Onondaga Audubon Society Chapter Code:

RO5  
7XCH

## CONSERVATION from pg 1

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landing to survey the damage. Nailed to a tree at the landing was a printed notice describing the project and the purpose of the cut. It also gave contact information for the regional forester.

Our State Forest system is younger than the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves. Created in 1929 the first reforestation site was in Cortland County. Planted with over 1,000,000 tree seedlings that first site, now known as Hewitt State Forest, straddles the highland east of the southern head of Skaneateles Lake.

At that time, 75% of the forest land in New York State had been cleared for agriculture. Farming on marginally suitable land, combined with the use of poor farming practices resulted in many farms failing and often being abandoned. The purchase of land and the reforestation process that started at the Hewitt site was repeated across the state over the next twenty years and continues, albeit less intensely, up to the present day with the latest inclusion of the Hemlock/Canadice State Forest in June 2010.

While not all the objectives of the original reforestation movement were accomplished, we are now the fortunate owners of 442 forest units located in every region of the state. The 786,329 acres of State Forest in New York provide habitat for wildlife, recreational access to the outdoors, sustainable forestry and watershed protection.

But to get back to the 15 acres in discussion, I called the forester. We chatted. He sent a copy of the forest management plan for the Cayuga Highlands State Forest complex and directed me to more information on the DEC web site. He explained that the plan was almost twenty years old and that new plans were under consideration across the state. I left the experience with a better understanding of how that state forest is being managed and I believe the forester was appreciative of my interest and input. The land that was clear-cut was a mature stand of a non-native conifer. The intent was to let the plot come back in native hardwoods through the use of "seed trees" left standing across the site. Some mature conifers stands will remain in the forest unit. That was important to me, as that was where I go to find Red-breasted Nuthatches and Crossbills during invasion years. I have since birded the clear cuts. Within a year they were adding diversity to the birding in this forest. It should make for interesting birding as the cuts go through stages of succession.

If you value our State Forests I encourage you to weigh in on their future. The state has issued a Draft Strategic

Plan for State Forest Management. Our forests face a future filled with many challenges; invasive insect species like Asian Long-horned Beetles, Emerald Ash Borers, invasive plants like honey-suckle and pale swallow-wort, drilling for natural gas, bio-fuel harvesting, and pressure for access from noncompatible user groups like ATV riders. The original plantations are now 60-80 years old. They have accomplished the purpose of stabilizing and restoring the soil. Our needs for and the potential benefits from State Forests have changed. Your voice will be valuable to help the DEC plan for the best future for our State Forests.

You can see the plan at [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/64567.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/64567.html).

Be a voice for the forest.



## CRISIS IN THE GULF CONTINUES – *Read the Latest*

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Since last May, Drew Wheelan, the American Birding Association's Gulf Coast Conservation Coordinator, has been posting information about the aftermath of the Gulf oil spill on [birding.typepad.com/gulf](http://birding.typepad.com/gulf). Even though mainstream media coverage has died down to a whisper, it is important to remember that the oil and its effects are as real as ever. If you want to stay updated about the status of shoreline ecosystems in the Gulf Coast, please visit Drew's blog.



## HOG ISLAND AUDUBON CAMP SCHOLARSHIP

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We are pleased to announce that the OAS will again offer a scholarship to an educator who wishes to attend camp next summer on beautiful Hog Island in Maine. The program, Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week, will be offered from July 14 – 19, 2011. Look for more details and for the application form on the OAS website.

# SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

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A number of projects at Derby Hill were completed recently. The first was the repainting and repair of the picnic tables. I had planned to get a group of volunteers to tackle that project, but our “super volunteer” Ken Hodgson took on the project by himself and did a wonderful job repainting all of the tables and repairing the one that had recently broken.

The other three projects were all completed on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Dianne Emord and I took on the task of cleaning out the basement of the Derby house. We moved everything out onto the lawn and cleaned up all of the shredded insulation in the walk-in part of the basement. We then loaded the trash items onto Ken’s trailer, with Ken and Gerry Smith helping out later.

Dianne and I also helped Bob McNamara mount the new beautiful Kestrel Display that Bob designed and built. This task involved digging two one-foot square, three-foot deep holes for the support posts. We were cursing the many rocks in the soil as we dug and then found that those stones were only minor annoyances compared to the “boulder” we encountered. Determination (or perhaps stubbornness) then took over. Not wanting to start digging all over again, we tried to find the edges of our obstacle, which seemed to go on and on until we had dug through and connected the two holes. Bob’s ingenuity then took over. Using good old-fashioned principles such as the lever and the inclined plane and Bob’s chains and hitch on his van, we got the stone out, about three cubic feet of it! The rest was easy and the display is now mounted next to the kiosk.



The final project was to put new screening on the upper slotted beams of the kiosk to keep starlings from nesting there. Ken and I finished off that task.

Ken also continues to mow and trim the trails on the

sanctuary regularly and Bill Purcell did his second annual weed whacking of the boardwalk in early August.

I want to thank Ken, Dianne, Bob, and Bill for all their work.

Dave Muir, Sanctuary Chairperson



*From left to right: David Muir, Sanctuary Chairperson, Robert McNamara, panel designer & Diane Emord. Both photos by Gerry Smith.*

## PLEASE NOTE!

Folding chairs are currently needed for the Derby Hill Bird Observatory. If you can help, please call Sanctuary Chair David Muir at 673-4875.

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## BIRDATHON UPDATE

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### *Birdathon Fundraising Takes Flight!*

Each Birdathon has something exceptional to remember. This year, it was great fundraising!

With an economic crisis and a weak economy in 2009, event income last year was below par. Heading into 2010 with the economy on the mend, all we could hope for was a slight improvement. Happily, when the last check was in, we were pleased to see that it was much better. In fact, it was the third best fundraising year ever. What a difference a year makes!

Twenty-four teams raised money, up 40 percent year on year, putting us back to where we were in 2008. The dollar amount was even better, up an amazing 83 percent. Most teams did much better than last year, making it a true group effort.

# BIRDATHON 2010 FUNDRAISING RESULTS

Region 5 2010 Birdathon Fundraising			
Team Name	Team Members	Funds Raised	Notes
24 Teams combined		<b>\$6,906</b>	<b>Total Donations</b>
<b><i>The Blackburnians</i></b>	<b><i>Janet Needham McGraw, Jane Needham</i></b>	<b><i>\$1,100</i></b>	<b><i>Top Fundraising Team</i></b>
Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher	Rosemary Hanagan	\$50	All-new Team
Bombycillidae	Jerry Case	\$50	
Crazy Celt	Michele Neligan	\$2	
Derby Hill Diurnal Raptors	Seth Cutright	\$103	All-new Team
Gray-crested Flakcatchers	Sue Boettger, Bill Gruenbaum	\$529	5th Place Fundraising Team
Hooded Warbler	Marge Rusk	\$4	
Kauffman guide to Toms and Jays	Jason Mauro, Tom Meier , Matt Kauffman	\$170	Top New Team
<b><i>King David's Heron</i></b>	<b><i>Lin Garrepy, Nancy Bridges, Barb Reuter</i></b>	<b><i>\$1,085</i></b>	<b><i>2nd Place Fundraising Team</i></b>
Loonatics	Deb & Emma Rahalski	\$270	
Mad Cowbirds	John H Moore, Dave Baldrini, Peter Moore, John P Moore	\$50	
Oran Station	Kyle Buelow	\$20	
Osprey Can You See	Dave Nash	\$125	
Piranga	Gene Huggins	\$25	
Redstart to Finish	Judy Thurber, Catherine Landis	\$275	
Solitary Sandpiper	Paul Richardson	\$200	
Team Ovenbird	Dave & Jeanne Ryan	\$920	3rd Place Fundraising Team
Three Blind Titmice	Ken Hodgson, Maryanne Adams, Juanita Willson	\$475	
Til the Bittern End	Lewis Grove, Steve Campbell, Sara Hansen, Natasha Karniski, Scott Warsen, Meredith Atwood	\$70	All-new Team
Timberdoodle	Dick Askeland	\$125	
The Tweet Party Movement	Tom McKay, Jim Stacey	\$89	
Two Owls and a Hen	Ken & Rose Burdick, David Graham	\$793	4th Place Fundraising Team
Woodcocks	Kevin McGann, Bill Purcell, Andrew VanNorstrand, Chris Spagnoli	\$225	

Crossing the finish line first in their usual great form, *The Blackburnians* team of Jan Needham McGraw and Jane Needham set an all-time overall team record of \$1100. Congratulations for a job well done! Ever so close behind them was the *King David's Heron* team of Lin Garrepy, Nancy Bridges and Barb Reuter performing admirably with the third-best dollar total ever at \$1085. Also in the winner's circle, for at least the seventh time in a row, was the *Ovenbirds* team of Jeanne and David Ryan. We are greatly indebted to these three teams for making the coordinators' jobs so easy!

In fourth place another personal best record was set by *Two Owls and a Hen* (Ken & Rose Burdick and Dave Graham). And also in the big money category, honorable mention goes to two teams – Sue Boettger and Bill Gruenbaum's *Gray-crested Flakcatchers* and *Three Blind Titmice* team of Maryanne Adams, Ken Hodgson & Juanita Willson.

Many thanks go out to these folks and all the others who made Birdathon 2010 a huge success!

# ONONDAGA AUDUBON ANNUAL REPORT 09-10

**Beginning Balance: \$17,883.25**

<b>Income:</b>	Received	Budget
Audubon Together Green	0	0
Audubon NY Grants	500	2000
Birdathon	8175	3500
Book Sales	50	500
Contributions	9114	7000
	Annual appeal	1524
	Audubon Dues & Memberships	760
	Derby Hill Donations	6278
	Donations from DH box	273
	Other contributions*	278
Honeywell Grant	10750	10750
National Audubon Dues	4223	4300
NYSOA Annual Meeting	1500	1500
Onondaga Lake Grant	0	700
Transfer from Reserves	0	1725
<b>Total</b>	<b>34311</b>	<b>32975</b>

**Expenses:**

Audubon Together Green	4880	0
Birdathon	83	100
Communication	0	100
Conferences	300	600
Conservation	0	100
Derby Hill Maintenance	167	750
Derby Hill Sanitation	627	600
Derby Hill Utilities	1707	2000
Education	274	300
Fundraising	150	0
General Operations	1165	1050
Honeywell	4796	10000
Insurance	3583	3500
Membership	0	100
Membership & Dues	250	150
Newsletters	5683	6000
NYSOA Annual Meeting	750	1500
NOYSE Maintenance	0	100
Ornithologist & contracted services	4500	4500
Programming	100	600
Scholarship	0	500
Taxes & assessments	150	325
Travel	0	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>29165</b>	<b>32975</b>

Vanguard Funds: \$5,106.82

**Ending Balance: \$23,031.12**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Messina

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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As the OAS continues to pursue its mission into the 21<sup>st</sup> century events cause me to reflect on the past. In recent months we have witnessed the passing of several individuals who have contributed to the organization's accomplishments in our 60 year history. Bill Minor was one of the founding members in 1951, a past president and sanctuary manager. Ed Henckel of Pennsylvania banded hawks at Derby Hill in the early 1980s and contributed to a better understanding of migration in that era. Last week Ruth Knight passed at age 91. Ruth was a longtime active birder that I remember fondly for her energy and enthusiasm. Never one to linger when birds were to be found, Ruth would arrive at Derby Hill looking for her nemesis bird, a Merlin. Merlins were much less common then than now, and patience was required to see one at Derby Hill. Patience and sitting still were not Ruth's style, thus the Merlin usually appeared 5-10 minutes after her departure from the lookout. We shall miss all these good folks in future Derby Hill springs.

Any volunteer organization needs an ongoing supply of people to help out. As the OAS enters its 60<sup>th</sup> year the torch has passed from founding generations to those born after the late 1930s. Our board contains folks born between 1938 and 1982 and I hope that we can contribute as much as those who have gone before. Every spring day I spend watching migrants at Derby Hill I give thanks for the foresight of those who created this organization, protected these sanctuaries and furthered so many other aspects of conservation, education and enjoyment of the natural world. I hope that OAS members will find the time to contribute your skills and interest to furthering the organization's programs. Take the time to get involved.

Gerry Smith

Onondaga Audubon President

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## NYSOA FIELD TRIPS

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*All field trip participants will meet the trip leaders in the lobby of the Holiday Inn (Auburn) 30 minutes before the start time of the trip.*

**Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>** 3 PM - 5 PM  
A FIELD TRIP TO THE HAPPY BEE HEIRLOOM FARM (a year round sustainable organic farm), sponsored by the Owasco Valley Chapter of the Audubon Society  
Leader: Jean Siracusa.

### **Saturday Trips:**

**Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 7 AM - 9:15 AM.  
DELEGATES' FIELD TRIP: Montezuma NWR Main Refuge: Duck and shorebird habitat behind refuge headquarters, developing habitat north of Main Pool along the Wildlife Drive, Tscache Pool and May's Point.  
Leader: Paul Richardson

**Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 7:30 AM - 12 PM  
NON-DELEGATES' FIELD TRIP: North Montezuma WMA: Knox Marcellus Marsh on East Road, Towpath Road for sparrows, Vandyne Spoor Road for passerines & raptors, Muckrace Flats, Carncross Road, Marten's Flats-(Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, possible), and the Audubon Center.  
Leader: Joe Brin

**Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
NON-DELEGATES' FIELD TRIP  
Montezuma Refuge: Waterfowl, late warblers and sparrows.  
Leader: Bill Purcell

**Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
NON-DELEGATE'S FIELD TRIP  
Esker Brook Trail, South Spring Pool Trail and north end of Cayuga Lake.  
Leader: Dave Spear

**Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
NON-DELEGATE'S FIELD TRIP  
Cayuga County Trail: Starting Point - Rt. 370 in Cato north to Dalton Rd., (a distance of 1.5 miles with a side trip to the marina at Cross Lake).  
Leader: Bernie Carr

**Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
NON-DELEGATE'S FIELD TRIP  
Fair Haven Beach State Park and Little Sodus Bay: Waterfowl and Shorebirds.  
Leader: Kevin McGann

### **Sunday Trips:**

**Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>** 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM  
CONCLUDING FIELD TRIP  
Derby Hill: Waterfowl with the possibility of pelagic and Cave Swallow. (Alternate- Noyes Sanctuary).  
Leader: Gerry Smith

**Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>** 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM  
CONCLUDING FIELD TRIP  
Onondaga Lake: Loons, Grebes, Waterfowl and Fish Crow.  
Leader: Gene Huggins

Onondaga Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse NY 13201

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## THE KESTREL



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## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are free and open to the public. Novice birders (and non-birders too!) are welcome. If you are planning to join us on a field trip, you should notify the leader whose telephone number is listed with the trip details. Please call at a reasonable hour as most birders turn in early. Carpooling from the meeting place is encouraged. If your schedule allows you to join the carpool, do remember to offer to help the driver with the cost of gas.

Occasionally changes in published field trips and/or additional trips are announced on the OAS website <http://www.onodagaaudubon.org>.

### ONONDAGA LAKE YACHT CLUB – BIRDING IN STYLE

October 16, Saturday 10am-1pm About 1/2 of a day  
Co-leaders: Catherine Landis 445-1760  
Judy Thurber 383-8878

Catherine and Judy will lead a trip to the Onondaga Lake Yacht Club. This trip will be in three parts. Birding over the lake will be done from inside the Yacht club building along with a brief tour of the facilities.

Catherine will talk briefly about the historical flora and fauna of Onondaga Lake. There will also be a hike along the lakeshore (weather permitting). Please contact either Catherine or Judy for details.

### FAIR HAVEN BEACH STATE PARK

November 20, Saturday About ¾ of a day  
Gene Huggins 696-8065

Mid November is a traditional time to look for Purple Sandpipers along the Lake Ontario shoreline. If they don't show, there should be many ducks and geese on Little Sodus Bay and the Pond. Also a few other lake shorebirds and Snow Buntings, and possibly some interesting raptors like Snowy Owl. Easy to moderate. Contact Gene for details.

### DEWITT FEEDER CANAL/ MEADOWBROOK

December 5 Sunday  
Bill Purcell 382-2871  
wpurcell@tweny.rr.com

Bill will lead a trip to the Dewitt Feeder Canal, Meadowbrook and surrounding area to look for waterfowl and late songbirds. Beginners welcome. Trip should last up to 4 hours. Contact Bill for details.

***NYSOA Field Trips are listed on Page 7!!***