



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 2

April / May / June 2010

PROGRAMS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

APRIL 2010 PROGRAM MEETING

IN CONJUNCTION WITH BEAVER LAKE NATURE CENTER
Wednesday, April 21, 7:00 PM

OAS president and ornithologist Gerry Smith will speak on raptor migration at Derby Hill and other aspects of bird migration and OAS activities. A similar program will occur at the same site at 6 PM on behalf of the Beaver Lake Nature Center. Come and learn about the wonder of migration at Derby Hill.

MAY 2010 PROGRAM MEETING

IN CONJUNCTION WITH BEAVER LAKE NATURE CENTER
Wednesday, May 19, 7:00 PM

Come and meet Onondaga Audubon Society's Board and Officers and enjoy the evening at our Annual Meeting. Program as yet to be determined. Please check out our website in early May for an update.

JUNE 2010 - ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, June 12, Time to be determined.

Save the DATE! Onondaga Audubon's Annual Picnic at Derby Hill Bird Observatory, starting at Noon. More details will be available on our website in the coming weeks.

SAVE THE DATES!!

The Onondaga Audubon Society and the Montezuma Audubon Center will be hosting the 2010 NYSOA Annual Meeting, October 22-24, 2010. More details will be in the next *Kestrel* and on the Onondaga Audubon website of <http://www.onondagaaudubon.org>.

Please consider attending!

CONSERVATION

by Thomas Riley, Conservation Chair

SMELLS LIKE MONEY?

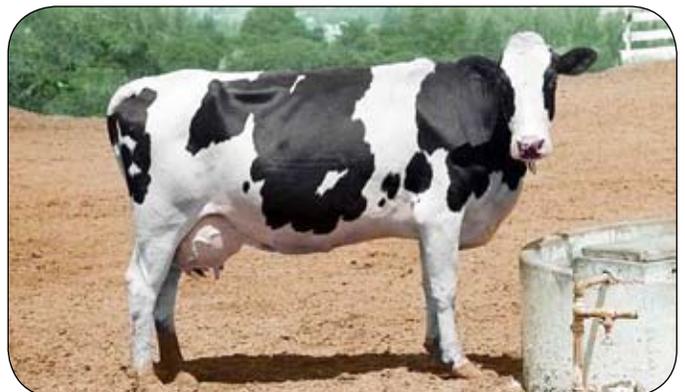
The Town of Schroepel in Oswego County has been approached by Bion Environmental Technologies as the site for a proposed 72,000 cow feed lot / bio-fuel operation. If completed this project would be the largest individual cattle livestock facility east of the Mississippi River.

We need to keep our eyes (if not our noses) open on this one. Peter Scott Swamp is located in the Town of Schroepel and the area has long been a highly regarded birding area. I am familiar with 1000 plus cow operations in Cayuga County. 72,000 cows boggles the mind. Apparently the developer claims that locating the operation near a port and highway (Oswego and I-481) will facilitate the importing of grain from the mid-west to support the operation. Does that make any sense to you? Why not locate this project where the grain and feedlot operations already exist.

Here are two web sites for more information:

<http://www.biontech.com/>

<http://www.citizensbionforum.org/>



*Holstein cow, typical of most dairy herds of the area.
Stock photo.*

Conservation continues on page 3

THE KESTREL

Vol. 41 - No. 2

April / May / June 2010

Editor Julie Covey
Distribution Elizabeth Chapman

Officers, Chairs & Directors - 2009-2010

President Gerry Smith
Vice-President Niles Brown
Secretary David Nash
Treasurer Libbie Messina
Membership Elizabeth Chapman
Conservation Thomas Riley
Education Maryanne Adams,
Programs Gerry Smith
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, Jason Mauro, David
Perrin, Paul Richardson, George
Spak, Thomas Riley.

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 June 15, 2010.

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.

As of this newsletter, more than 90% of the OAS membership is STILL getting the print version of the newsletter. Help make a difference - help Onondaga Audubon save money and trees!

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 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!*

PHOTOS NEEDED!

If you have pictures you would like to have shown in *The Kestrel* or on the OAS website, please send them to *The Kestrel* editor at birdeditor@tds.net or to Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc., P.O. Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201



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:

**R05
7XCH**

CONSERVATION from pg 1

Remember the waterfowl flights off of Derby Hill?

It has been possible to watch from the bluff at Derby Hill and on days with the right conditions see a continuous stream of waterfowl migrating north in the spring and south in the fall. Sometimes you get great close in looks but often the birds are just specks over the waves to the west. Days of 5-10,000 birds going by happen annually. Red-breasted Mergansers, Brant and Canada Geese can easily number in the thousands on a flight day. Goldeneye, scaup, scoters and Bufflehead are found in the hundreds. You do not know how many others could be flying across the lake beyond your binocular view.

The Power Authority of New York has asked for proposals for off-shore wind power at the eastern end of Lake Ontario (as well other sites on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie). We should be getting an indication of who will be proposing projects, where those projects would be sited and the scope of those project in the next few months.

We will need to follow this development closely. The Power Authority rather glibly states that the turbine towers would be far enough offshore to not impact avian migration. They base their assurances on studies done in Europe. We will need several years of field study to know with any certainty that wind turbines can be placed along the eastern end of Lake Ontario and not negatively impact birds and their migration patterns.

Here are two web sites for more information:

<http://www.nypa.gov/NYPWindpower/GreatLakesWind.htm>

http://www.preservethegoldencrescent.com/breaking_news.htm

If you would like to kept aware of either or both of these issues send me an email – tsriley@hughes.net



*Looking out from the bluff at Derby Hill.
Photo by the editor.*

FOR THE BIRDS!

by Gene Huggins

For the Birds! Program was held at the Montezuma Audubon Center near Savannah, N.Y. on March 5th. It is an elementary education program for grades 2-5 that teaches environmental awareness and appreciation of nature through the study of birds. The students learn about the natural environment through classroom lessons, outdoor field trips, a live bird presentation, and a conservation project designed to provide bird habitat in their local communities. The curriculum was first started in New York City 13 years ago and has since spread to other cities and villages across New York State. Recently, 5th graders in the Trumansburg Middle School had an opportunity to build bird boxes to improve nesting habitat for American Kestrels and Eastern Bluebirds.

Mary Hartigan from Baldwinsville and I along with two other participants attended a volunteer training program at the center. Presentations on Basic Bird Identification, Adaptations, and Migration were several of the many items covered from the curriculum outline. We learned what environmental education is and the process by which we interpret the subject matter to children. A half hour field trip on snowshoes became the highlight of our day. Walking through an open grove of Black Walnut trees, we noted the presence of a Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees and a White-breasted Nuthatch. Our goal will be to assist the lead teacher in presenting For the Birds! Program and to lead bird-watching trips.

To learn more, please visit

http://ny.audubon.org/CentersEdu_ForTheBirds.html

STATE OF THE BIRDS

Recently Audubon and its partner groups released *The State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change*. Please take a look at this report. Evidence is pointing to the fact that “climate changes will have an increasingly disruptive effect on bird species in all habitats (excerpt from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology press release).”

To view this report please check out the following link:

<http://www.stateofthebirds.org/>

Sign up now for this exciting bird watching event and help support Onondaga Audubon's LOCAL education and bird sanctuary priorities.

Onondaga Audubon Society's 52nd Annual



BIRDATHON



Saturday, May 15, 2010

Don't be shy, give the Birdathon a try!

Birders and bird watchers at all levels of experience are invited to participate in this year's Birdathon quest. Timed to take place at the peak of spring migration in CNY, this is a great reason to go out and find some great birds as they pass through. This event is an opportunity to document the occurrence of birds in Region 5, provide financial support for the important work of Onondaga Audubon, and to just get out and enjoy birding. So, mark it down on your calendar, contact your bird watching teammates, and start making your plans for Birdathon 2010.

HOW THE BIRDATHON WORKS

Date and Time: On Saturday, May 15, go afield for as many (or as few) hours as desired between midnight and midnight, — no rain date!

Boundaries: Bird within Region 5 - the counties of Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, Oneida, Herkimer, and that half of Cayuga County north of Route 31 — more than 5,000 square miles.

Teams: Join another, form you own, or go solo. No assigned territories. Please car pool, and bird one place at a time — no splitting up!

Count: Carefully identify species by sight and/or ear — the honor system please!

Fund-raising: Lining up sponsors (flat donations or so much per species) is optional, but definitely encouraged!

Bird List Deadline: Get your information to the Day-After Compilation Picnic at Derby Hill Sunday, May 16, at 4:00PM.

Final Bird Results: Onondaga Audubon will report all in its July/August/September issue of *The Kestrel* newsletter.

Dollars Deadline: Turn in to Birdathon Coordinator by June 15.

RECORDS TO BEAT

Most Participants - 43 teams, 116 members (1999)

Most Money Combined - \$7,500 (2001)

Most Money for a team - \$1089 (2003)

Most Species Combined - 200 (1999)

Most Species for a team - 152 (2009)

FOR FULL DETAILS AND MATERIALS

Contact: Ken or Rose Burdick, Birdathon Coordinators

Phone: 315-685-5571

Email: OAS.Birdathon@verizon.net or KenBurdick@ieee.org

Mail: Birdathon c/o Ken Burdick
5 E. Lake Street
Skaneateles, NY 13152



The Causes:



Proceeds will be used to support the mission of OAS, specifically the sanctuaries, education and conservation.

REGION 5 2009 BIRDATHON FUNDRAISING

| Team Name | Team Members | Funds Raised | Notes |
|---|---|----------------|----------------------------|
| Bedraggled Catnappers | Tony Shrimpton, Sue Adair, Dave Wheeler & Lisa Welch | \$20 | |
| Beleagured Birder | Dick Askeland | \$100 | |
| Blackburnians | Jan Needham McGraw & Jane Needham | \$600 | 3rd Place Fundraising Team |
| Bluebirds | John Rogers, Pat Burns & Larry Linder | \$80 | |
| Bubble Dudes & Dudette | Pete Davidson, Anita Sokal-Davidson & Phil Taylor | \$124 | |
| Demented Dendroica Denizen of Derby Hill | Kyle Wright | \$100 | New Team |
| Get Seiurus! | Ken & Rose Burdick & David Graham | \$534 | |
| Gray-crested Flakcatchers | Sue Boettger & Bill Gruenbaum | \$655 | 2nd Place Fundraising Team |
| Hooded Warbler | Marge Rusk | \$5 | |
| Loonatics | Deb & Emma Rahalski | \$160 | |
| Mad Cowbirds | John H Moore, Dave Baldrini, Peter Moore & John P Moore | \$50 | |
| Oran Station | Kyle Buelow | \$20 | New Team |
| Osprey Can You See | Dave Nash | \$125 | |
| Red Wings | Rick Barrett & Mary Hane | \$135 | |
| Redstart to Finish | Judy Thurber | \$163 | |
| Scarlet Tanagers | Gene Huggins, Paul Richardson & Ruth Florey | \$50 | |
| Team Ovenbird | Dave & Jeanne Ryan | \$858 | Top Fundraising Team |
| 17 Teams | | \$3,778 | Total Funds Raised |

2009 BIRDATHON FUNDRAISING RESULTS

Seventeen teams participated in the fund-raising effort for the 2009 Birdathon, bringing in a grand total of \$3777.75 to support our scientific and educational activities. This amount was down from 2008, but it was encouraging to note that most of the teams matched or exceeded their results from recent years. We heartily thank each of these groups for coming through with great results in financially challenging times.

Special congratulations go out to our three top teams. Year after year, this intrepid group has consistently made a huge contribution to OAS, and this year was no exception. Securing the most donations was the *Team Ovenbird* duo of Dave and Jeanne Ryan. They bettered their result from last year with an outstanding total of \$857.75. Also in the upper echelon, Sue Boettger and Bill Gruenbaum's *Gray-crested Flakcatchers* raised \$654.50 in donations, and just behind them, the *Blackburnians* team of Jan Needham McGraw and Jane Needham brought in \$600.00. Special

thanks again from the coordinators to this spirited trio of teams for their continuing support!

Coming in right behind the top three, *Get Seiurus!* team of Ken & Rose Burdick and David Graham had another good year. Also, honorable mention goes out to the *Loonatics* (Deb & Emma Rahalski) as well as *Osprey Can You See* (Dave Nash) for setting new personal bests in the fundraising department.

This was a challenging year, with high gas prices and a falling economy. More than ever, we thank everyone who participated, fundraised, or donated to this unique and important effort.

--- Ken & Rose Burdick,
OAS Birdathon Coordinators

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At this writing, spring is rapidly coming with many March migrants passing Derby Hill. In this fortieth anniversary year of the first Earth Day we can reflect on the ever changing migration patterns since 1970. Many changes are apparent in my 45 years of birding, including the rapid advance in the spring migration timing of northbound Snow and Canada Goose populations. The rapid increase in both species numbers, combined with other factors, probably including global climate change, has advanced major movements of these species from April to March. These and many other changes in our natural world make the monitoring efforts of birders through Christmas counts and other efforts of great value. These efforts are providing valuable data on our bird populations so keep birding and contributing.

During the last couple of months the OAS has:

- Continue our efforts with Audubon New York on the Together Green funded American Kestrel Restoration and Education Project. These efforts will result in a new interpretive panel on this species to be located at Derby Hill. This panel will also be available for adaptation to other sites by Audubon New York and other chapters. OAS is placing nest boxes at several sites that will be monitored by volunteers. The New York State Department of Transportation has been erecting these boxes including one on the back of the east facing "Derby Hill Bird Observatory" directional sign on New York State Route 104 B.
- Continued efforts with Honeywell Corporation and the Montezuma Audubon Center at Onondaga Lake.

These efforts will include workshops for teachers as part of the Honeywell Institute for Ecosystems Education. We are excited about this program and urge interested teachers to check out information on the Montezuma Audubon Center website.

- Please send us your proxy form from this *Kestrel* or attend our annual meeting in May and thus participate in your chapter's elections.
- As noted in this *Kestrel*, National Audubon and several agency and NGO partners have released *The State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change*. I suggest that interested birders read this interesting report.

This is the season when the twin jewels in the OAS crown, Derby Hill and Noyes Sanctuary, shine brightest. Come visit and enjoy the spectacle of spring migration along Lake Ontario. May the wild creatures of the world bring joy and peace to your life.

Gerry Smith, OAS President

SANCTUARIES

DERBY HILL

The hawk migration season has begun and our hawk counter for this season is Seth Cutright. Seth is a native of Wisconsin and comes to Derby Hill after having been the primary hawk counter at Cape May (Fall, 2008), Sandy Hook (Spring, 2009), and Detroit River (Fall, 2009). We are very happy to have Seth join us this spring.

We also must give a very special thank you to Garr Owens who very graciously volunteered his time and expertise to fix a broken water pipe that had hampered our opening of the Derby Hill house.

Volunteers Needed

While there are no specific projects at this time, I would like to find out if there are any interested volunteers for the following general areas:

Derby Hill: 1. House maintenance
2. Grounds and trail maintenance
3. Assisting newcomers to the Hill and providing raptor education

Noyes: 1. Trail monitoring and Trail maintenance

If you are interested in any of these areas or if you would like further information, contact me at (315) 673-4875 or at dmuirg@gmail.com.

Dave Muir, Sanctuaries Chairperson

ONONDAGA AUDUBON PROXY BALLOT, 2010

I the undersigned _____, a current member of Onondaga Audubon,
Print Name

cast this proxy vote for the slate of officers and directors presented below:

Gerry Smith – President

Niles Brown – Vice President

Dave Nash – Secretary

Libbie Messina – Treasurer

Board members:

Maryanne Adams

Gene Huggins

Robert Long

Jason Mauro

Tim McCoy

David Perrin

Paul Richardson

Thomas Riley

Margaret Tzen

Executed by _____ Date: _____

Signature

Please send to: Onondaga Audubon PO Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201 *by May 11, 2010.*

Thank you for participating in this process.

FIELD TRIPS *continued from page 8*

WHISKY HOLLOW & VICINITY

May 22, Saturday ¾ day
Joe Brin 638-8309

Traditional Spring migrants and breeding birds trip to the special gorge which is an Important Bird Area and partly protected by Save the County. We'll look for several vireos, *Cerulean*, *Hooded*, and *Morning Warblers*; *Scarlet Tanager*; *Barred Owl*, which nests there; and *Acadian Flycatcher*, found only a few places in Region 5. Moderate to difficult due to a few steep, muddy trails.

FISH GULF ROAD & VICINITY

May 23, Sunday Ken and Rose Burdick 685-5571

Ken and Rose will lead a field trip to Fish Gulf Road and nearby spots in the Town of Otisco and Marcellus. Should be able to pick up Louisiana Waterthrush, plus other warblers, Meadowlark, Bobolink, and maybe some late waterfowl on Otisco Lake. Trip could be 3 - 4 hours, or more if people want to continue. Approximately 2 miles walking along dirt roads. Easy.

THREE RIVERS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

May 29, Saturday, about ¾ day
Joe Brin 638-8309

Level hike which passes through woods and brushy fields. Good for many warblers and sparrows. There may be both *Bald Eagle* and an *Osprey* nest. Easy.

CAMILLUS FOREST UNIQUE AREA

June 5, Saturday Paul Richardson 488-5022

This forest contains some of the tallest and oldest trees in Onondaga County. Although it is a forest most of the hike is through meadows and along open fields. Location is good for Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, as well as Hooded, Blue-winged and Mourning Warblers. Trip should be 2-3 hours. Moderate to difficult due to some steep trails.



Yellow-throated Warbler. Noted for the last three weeks of January at Bob & Mary Burdick's peanut and suet feeders. Photo by Bob Burdick.

**Check out the NEW
Onondaga Audubon
website!!**

We have an all-new format. Thank you to our webmaster Stephen Boss for the new format and to Reza Gorji for the beautiful pictures.

<http://www.onondagaaudubon.org>

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.onondagaaudubon.org>.

DERBY HILL FOR HAWKS, WATERFOWL AND APRIL MIGRANTS

April 17, Saturday Gerry Smith 771-6902

Gerry will lead a field trip at Derby Hill to see what there is to see for hawks that day. If the weather conditions do not permit this, we will look for waterfowl and April migrants. Binoculars are a must for this trip.



American Tree Sparrow. Photo by Joy Swenson.

BALTIMORE WOODS

April 25, Sunday Jason Mauro 474-3778

Jason will lead a beginner bird walk at Baltimore Woods in Marcellus. Possibility of early warblers, vireos, flycatchers and Scarlet Tanager. Contact Jason for details. Easy

VERONA WOODS

May 1, Saturday Brenda Best 363-2906

Brenda will lead an early May trip to Verona Woods. We'll look for warblers and waterfowl. Red-headed Woodpeckers have been in the area in the past couple of years. Easy walk, but there will be wet areas. Please contact Brenda for time and meeting place.

Field Trips continue on page 7