



THE KESTREL

Onondaga Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon

Serving Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Counties and other areas of Central and Northern New York for 61 years.

The National Audubon Chapter of Central New York and the Eastern Lake Ontario Basin

New Series Volume 43 - Number 2

May / June / July 2012

PROGRAMS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note that the speakers and locations are subject to change. Please check our blog at www.OnondagaAudubon.com to confirm speakers and locations.

***BOTH programs in May and June will be at the Onondaga Free Library
4840 West Seneca Turnpike Syracuse, NY***

MAY 2012 PROGRAM MEETING

Wednesday, May 9, 7:00 PM

Environmental outreach

Paul Hai, SUNY-ESF Educator at the Adirondack Ecological Center, will discuss outreach and children's environmental education.

JUNE 2012 PROGRAM MEETING

Wednesday, June 13, 7:00 PM

Dave Figura, a columnist for the Syracuse Post Standard, he will talk about various topics relating to nature and conservation.

Mark the DATE!!

**ONONDAGA AUDUBON BIRD FESTIVAL
MAY 12, 2012**

Wanted!!

Short Order Cook for the Birdathon Compilation Picnic on Sunday, May 20, 2012 at Derby Hill.

Materials and food supplied. Task is about one-half hour of cooking & then clean-up afterwards.

Please contact Ken or Rose at the information found on page 5 if you would like to help!

A Derby Hill Operations Committee is in the process of being formed. If anyone would be interested in assisting, please contact
Ken Karwowski,
KKARWOWSKI@twcny.rr.com.

CONSERVATION

LOCAL ISSUE - IJC PLAN BV7

by Maryanne Adams, Conservation Chair

The International Joint Commission (IJC) was "established in 1909 to help Canada and the United States manage the waters shared by the two countries in a cooperative manner" (<http://www.ijc.org/loslr/en/index.php>). Since the 1950s, the Moses-Saunders Dam between Massena, NY and Cornwall, Ontario, has been used to control the water levels of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway in a way that stabilized extreme highs and lows. Unfortunately, over the years, there has been a negative impact on the environment, because, according to Frank Bevacqua, spokesman for the commission, "the current water regulation has left most wetlands with a mono-culture of cattails, instead of a natural diversity of plants" (<http://northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/19349/20120221/ijc-wants-water-levels-to-consider-eco-system-costs>). The current plan (Plan 1958DD), which tempered extreme high and low water levels, has been in place for sixty years. A 12-year study by the IJC of the effects that this plan has had on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence ecosystem has found measurable negative environmental impacts. The "entire class of



*Single Black Tern. Photo by Julie Covey
Conservation continues on page 3*

THE KESTREL

Vol. 43 - No. 2

May / June / July 2012

Editor Julie Covey

Officers, Chairs & Directors - 2011-2012

President	Gene Huggins
Vice-President	Paul Richardson
Secretary	David Nash
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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.com> 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 the membership chair.

Letters to the Editor may be sent to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201
Phone 315-696-8065
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>

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.

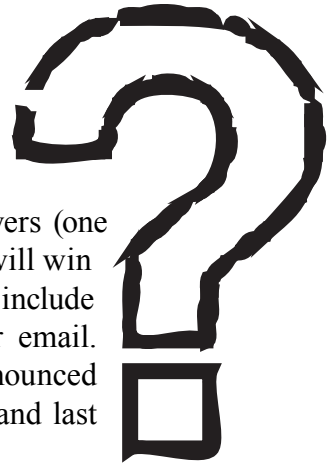
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deadline for submissions for the next issue is July 8, 2012.

ATTENTION SNOW BIRDS!!!!

Would you be interested in receiving the Kestrel online? We don't want you to miss the winter issues while you are enjoying the sun somewhere warm. Please send your email address to whitstrivia@yahoo.com so we can ensure that you are kept up-to-date.

Whit's Trivia



Rules: Email your answers to whitstrivia@yahoo.com by June 15. Two winners will be chosen at random from all correct answers (one for each question). The winners will win a bird related prize! Be sure to include your name and address in your email. Winners and answers will be announced in the next Kestrel (first names and last initials only).

Question 1: When and where was the European Starling introduced to the U.S.?

Question 2: In the welcome center at N 43° 10.668 W 76° 24.281, there is a mounted fish. What species is the fish and when was it discovered at the location?

Onondaga Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

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

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:

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

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

**Onondaga Audubon Society Chapter Code:
RO5
7XCH**

CONSERVATION from pg 1

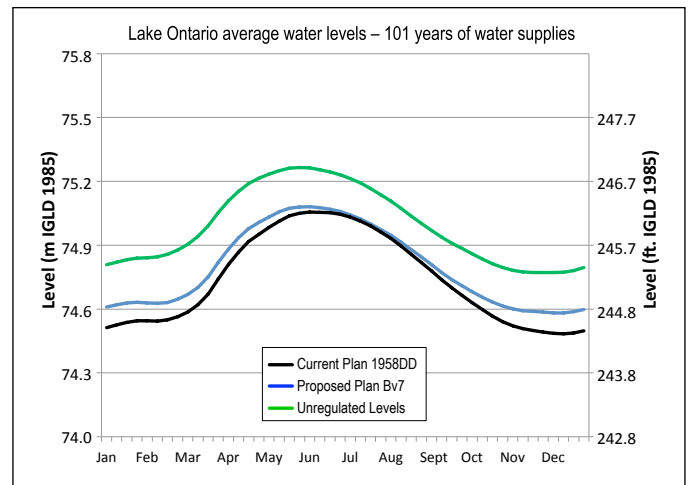
coastal wetlands has declined by over 50 percent and been replaced by dense stands of cattails” (<http://savetheriver.us/?cat=31>). In addition, Plan 1958DD water regulation has resulted in the disappearance of just about all of the muskrats that had lived in the coastal marshes of Lake Ontario before the water level was regulated. According to *The Connecticut Post*, when the water level in Lake Ontario drops in winter, muskrats are stranded in their lodges as access to underwater tunnels is cut off. Without muskrats to chew channels through the thick growth of cattails, there is less open water (needed for marsh-nesting birds) and spawning pike have no pathways. Northern Pike have declined by 70% and populations of Black Tern by 80% (<http://savetheriver.us/?cat=31>).

An article entitled “International plan to govern Lake Ontario levels” published in *The Connecticut Post* on January 30, 2012 made everything sound so simple. It states that the IJC “must balance many interests that often conflict” (<http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/International-plan-to-govern-Lake-Ontario-levels-2841845.php>). (We who live much closer to the waters whose optimal levels are being debated could interpret that phrase as an understatement.)

The *Connecticut Post* article summarizes the four conflicting areas of interest as follows:

- Hydroelectric power generation that relies upon predictable water flow in the St. Lawrence.
- Commercial shippers who want deep Seaway levels to allow passage of ocean vessels.
- Lakeside landowners who want to minimize erosion and thus prefer lower water levels with minimal fluctuation.
- The ecosystem that benefits from a natural cycle of seasonal highs and lows.

In order to begin to reverse the damage from the past 60 years of regulation and to restore the health and diversity of lakeside marshlands, the IJC has proposed Plan BV7. It “attempts to more closely follow natural patterns of water levels and flows than the current regulation plan” and “allows more variability in water levels from year to year on Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River” (<http://www.ijc.org/loslr/en/solution/>). The following figure illustrates how Plan BV7 compares to the current plan and to unregulated water levels. If implemented, Plan BV7 “would raise the monthly average Lake Ontario water level by 6 centimeters (2.4 inches) in April, 3 centimeters (1.2 inches) in June, and 5 cm (2 inches) in October using water supplies of the 20th century. Unregulated water levels would be significantly higher than the levels under either plan” (<http://www.ijc.org/loslr/en/solution/>).



The downside of the plan from the point of view of some is that residents and businesses will need to spend more on the maintenance and improvement of their shoreline protection structures if water levels will be higher. Organizations like Save Our Sodus feel that the IJC has not considered the economic impact of Plan BV7 in places where residents and businesses will need to spend about 12% more to protect their shoreline properties. (<http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org>). Supervisors in the towns of Ontario, Williamson, Sodus, Huron, and Wolcott are also concerned about the impact to the tax base if lake property values decrease (<http://www.thetimesofwaynecounty.com/community/new-town-of-rose-supervisor-kenan-baldridge-ready-to-hit-the-ground-running/>).

The Derby Hill Bird Observatory land that borders Lake Ontario is a prime example of vulnerable lakeshore property. For years the bluff has been whittled away by wave action while groundwater seepage worked to accelerate the erosion process from within. Plan BV7 won't save our bluff, but it will repair some of the damage that has been done to shoreline wetlands. In the long run, improving the health of lake and river wetlands will benefit all who live in the region. If habitat improves, populations of native fish and wildlife will increase and this will strengthen the recreational economy.

Beginning on May 15, the IJC will begin holding public information sessions about Plan BV7. New York sessions will take place in Massena, Olcott, Clayton, Hilton, Oswego, and Williamson. Visit http://www.ijc.org/rel/news/2012/120328_e.htm for details about these events and for information about submitting written comments to the IJC. The next step will be the development of a proposal, with formal public hearings. It is only after this occurs that a decision about water level regulation will be made.

Further thoughts on this issue are found on page 4.

BV7: MY VIEW by Gerry Smith

In this issue of *The Kestrel*, Conservation Chair Maryanne Adams presents a balanced reasonable view of why the OAS supports implementation of this plan to manage Lake Ontario water levels. As one who has been deeply involved in this issue for many years, I would like to add a few thoughts. As the former senator and Governor of Florida, Bob Graham remarked about Everglades restoration "now is the time to act." Graham said his grandfather has been instrumental in schemes to drain the Everglades while he was helping restore them. Thus we learn over time what terrible mistakes our species has made in managing our environment and seek the wisdom to fix those we can. The implementation of plan BV7 in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River represents an opportunity to begin repairing the ecological mess that was made 55 years ago. BV 7 will not solve all problems instantly but it is a start toward a better future.

In the public debate over this plan bear in mind:

- At one time the water levels on the lake fluctuated up to 6.5 feet but were reduced to 4 feet by plan 1958-D.
- Lack of greater fluctuation has had catastrophic ecological impacts of lake and river associated wetlands.
- The proposed changes will allow for a few extended high and low water periods in a century cycle.
- This cycle could have limited increased erosion at times while reducing erosion at other times.
- As owners of an eroding drumlin on Lake Ontario (Derby Hill) and other lakeshore (Noyes Sanctuary) the OAS believes that any limited increased risk is more than balanced out by gains toward healthier ecosystems.

At age 63 this core baby boomer finds him most annoyed by the whining of many shoreline property owners regarding BV 7. Most of those landowners I meet range in age from their mid-fifties to their 80s. They have lived years on an artificial, badly managed reservoir and wish no change even if it has benefits for them. I can but wonder, noting the probable high and low water periods, how many of these folks expect to be around in half a century to witness 2-3 cycles. It is time to set personal selfishness aside and think of the long-term health of the system. On behalf of future generations, I will be telling my federal and state representatives to encourage IJC implementation of BV7 and I hope you will, too.

MARK THE DATE!!

ONONDAGA AUDUBON BIRD FESTIVAL MAY 12, 2012

Families and friends are welcome at Derby Hill Bird Observatory on Saturday, May 12, for the first Onondaga Audubon Bird Festival. Activities like Hawk Talks, Birding/Nature Walks, and raffles have been scheduled throughout the day. In addition to this, Ron Walker from Friends with Feathers will be there with some of the non-releasable birds of prey that live at their facility. Ron will talk about individual birds and share insights about the species that are represented. Items can be bid on in a Silent Auction and there will be a vendor with lovely hand-crafted jewelry. Delicious food prepared by Chomppers Smokin' Barbeque will be available all day long. And, of course, the star performers, hawks and vultures, will be gracing the skies. Visit www.onondagaaudubon.com for the schedule of events. A basic list is shown below. Join us on "the hill" and find out how much fun hawk watching can be. Admission and parking are free.



**Onondaga Audubon
Bird Festival at Derby Hill**

Mexico, New York
Saturday, May 12, 2012
10AM - 5PM

Family Fun!

Hawk Watching and ID
Birding/Nature Walks
Raffles
Silent Auction
Vendors
Friends with Feathers - Live Birds of Prey
Chomppers Smokin' Barbeque

Enjoy the view!

Free Parking!

Free Admission!

www.onondagaaudubon.com - Derby Hill Bird Observatory

Map Data ©2012 Google

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 54th Annual

BIRDATHON 2012



Saturday May 19, 2012

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, this is the perfect opportunity to go out and find some great birds. Through your participation, you can help document the occurrence of birds in Region 5 and provide financial support for the important work of Onondaga Audubon, all while enjoying a day of birding. So, mark your calendar, contact your bird-watching teammates, and start making plans for Birdathon 2012.

How Birdathon Works

Date and Time: On Saturday, May 19, go afield for as many (or as few) hours as desired between midnight and midnight. — no rain date!

Boundaries: Bird within Region 5 — Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, Oneida and Herkimer Counties, plus 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 20, at 4:00PM.

Final Bird Results: Full birding results will appear in the summer 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 for a team – \$1422 (2011)

Most Species for a team – 152 (2009)

Most Money Combined – \$7,500 (2001)

Most Species Combined – 209 (2011)

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 East Lake Street

Skaneateles, NY 13152

The Causes

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



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

One year later, I am happy to announce significant progress for the Onondaga Audubon Society. In my last report, I outlined four major goals for the chapter to strive for. Those goals included the following: publicity, education, innovative ideas at Derby Hill and miscellaneous.

Publicity - Recently, our communications director Tom Riley has broadened our message through the introduction of a blog. OnondagaAudubon.com which gives committee chairs an opportunity to bring forth content in a timely manner and allows visitors feedback. Information can also be found here about field trips, public programs, chapter events and environmental issues. Knowledge about our monthly programs is now reaching a wider audience, resulting in higher attendance. My sincere thanks to Stephen Boss for maintaining our web site and Facebook page over the last several years.

Education - Last summer, our educational committee awarded two recipients with the Ruth Engelbrecht Memorial Scholarship to attend an Educator's Week at the Audubon Camp on Hog Island, Maine. Additional support was provided by Ruth Engelbrecht's daughter Judith Lockwood. The winner's were Tracey Laszlo and Chris Lajewski. Tracey is a second grade teacher in the Onondaga Central School District and Chris is an education manager at the Montezuma Audubon Center near Savannah, N.Y. At the present time, we are awaiting applications to choose this year's scholarship winners.


Derby Hill - On Saturday, May 12th, Derby Hill will host its first Bird Festival in over 10 years. The chapter's intention will be to raise money for education, conservation and advocacy. Activities may include raptor identification seminars, bird walks, ongoing raffles and raptors from "Friends with Feathers." This year we have been very happy to have Kyle Wright back as our official hawk-counter. As I write this, 1,482 raptors have flown pass Derby Hill with a new record of five Black Vultures since the end of February. Our new board member Ken Karwowski has graciously provided his own time and effort to improving the physical condition of the cottage. Improvements include an upgrade to R-49 insulation for the attic which has reduced our heating costs by 20-25%. Two 4 pound fire extinguishers, one in the cottage and one in the garage were installed. Ungrounded electrical wall outlets were replaced with grounded receptacles in the cottage. When you come, please notice the new sign on the right side of Sage Creek Road directing visitors to the north lookout. The design and creation of this sign comes through the efforts of our talented editor, Julie Covey.

Miscellaneous - Although, we haven't found a central place for our program meetings, it is our goal to eventually

establish a permanent location. The colorful O.A.S. membership brochure has been revised with an update on the services that we provide. They are currently available at Derby Hill, Montezuma Audubon Center and program meetings. The checklist on birds found in central New York has been revised by Bill Purcell. Part of this project has been paid through a collaborative grant with New York Audubon. The checklists will be finished by early summer.


Lastly, I want to thank Libbie Messina for her devoted service to our chapter as treasurer. She came in as a draftee to be confronted with a not-for-profit agency's budget. Libbie deserves our highest praise and commendation for a job well done. The board and I will miss her.

Sincerely,

Gene Huggins, President, O.A.S. 

Volunteers Needed!

Several people are needed to help in mapping and removing invasive shrubs and weeds from grasslands at Green Lakes State Park this summer. Please e-mail Gene Huggins at gwren70@aol.com or call (315) 696-8065. if you are interested.

Several people are needed to help in a point count of birds for the summer. This will be conducted in the north section of the grasslands at Green Lakes State Park. Please e-mail Paul Richardson at vireo2@verizon.net or call (315) 488-5022 if you are interested. 



Sensational Spring Programs @ the MAC

To register or for more information about the Montezuma Audubon Center or its programs please call 315-365-3588 or e-mail montezuma@audubon.org.

Space is limited. Registration is required.

The Center is open Tuesday-Saturday 10 AM - 4 PM.

Selected programs are listed below. Please check <http://ny.audubon.org/montezuma.htm> for more information.

**5/5 - 10 AM-3 PM 6th Annual Wildlife Festival:
Celebrating Important Bird Areas!**


5/17 - 8AM-11 AM Montezuma Birding Van Tour

5/26 - 1:30-4:30 PM Birding and Boating Series

6/9 - 2-3:30 PM Nature of Montezuma: Richard Marx will talk about Purple Martins & monitor their nest boxes

6/16 - 1:30-4:30 PM Birding and Boating Series

6/23 - 8-11 AM Montezuma Birding Van Tour

*50% Discount for Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex applies to programs with an asterisk. 

ONONDAGA AUDUBON PROXY BALLOT, 2012

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

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

Gene Huggins – President

Paul Richardson – Vice President

Dave Nash – Secretary

Anne Grugal – Treasurer

Board members:

Maryanne Adams

Niles Brown

Kim Farrell

Ken Karwowski

Jason Mauro

Tim McCoy

David Perrin

Thomas Riley

Gerry Smith

Executed by _____ Date: _____

Signature

Please send to: Onondaga Audubon, PO Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201 **by May 4, 2012.**

Thank you for participating in this process.

In honor of volunteers...

In March, Bob and Ellie Long received the Norman I. Stotz Award from the Audubon Council of New York State for extraordinary volunteer service on behalf of the Audubon Society and the environment.




With over 40 years of active participation in the chapter Bob and Ellie have been recognized for their exemplary leadership and dedication.

Bob served four terms as Vice-president and three terms as President of Onondaga Audubon. In addition he served as editor of *The Kestrel* newsletter for eight years. His leadership was instrumental in establishing the first Walk-a-thon for Save the County in 1972; the establishment of a board of managers for Derby Hill Bird Observatory in 1981; and the organization of a

management committee for Noyes Sanctuary in 1994. Ellie served as President of the chapter from 1987 to 1989.

As editor of *The Kestrel*, Bob initiated a series of birding hot spot articles and conservation issue editorials that ranged from local waste management challenges to the need for protection of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

Both Bob and Ellie served on the board of directors for years and were always willing to take on any number of tasks running a chapter required. Bob and Ellie continue to provide guidance and inspiration to the chapter. We applaud them for this honor, it is well deserved. 



Photos of the Kestrel Project panel located at the rest area in Preble. Photos by Timothy Baker, NYS DOT.



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.com>.

DERBY HILL

April 28, Saturday
Gerry Smith 315 771 6902
Gerry will lead a field trip for hawks, early migrant songbirds and the ambiance of Derby! Call Gerry for details.

WHISKY HOLLOW & VICINITY

May 26, Saturday 3/4 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 *Mourning 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.

THREE RIVERS WMA

June 2, Saturday about 3/4 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 *Osprey* nests. Easy.

CAMILLUS FOREST UNIQUE AREA

June 9, Saturday
Paul Richardson 488-5022

This forest contains some of the tallest and oldest trees in Onondaga County. Although it is a forest, many parts of the hike will be 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 (possibly longer depending on what trails we take). Moderate to difficult due to some steep trails.

Happy Birding!!

