

THE RIVERTOWN NATURALIST

Newsletter of the Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester



March 2011, vol. 38, no. 5

Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, Inc. is a non-profit chapter of the National Audubon Society serving the communities of Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington and Yonkers.

Our mission is to foster protection and appreciation of birds, other wildlife and habitats, and to be an advocate for a cleaner, healthier environment.

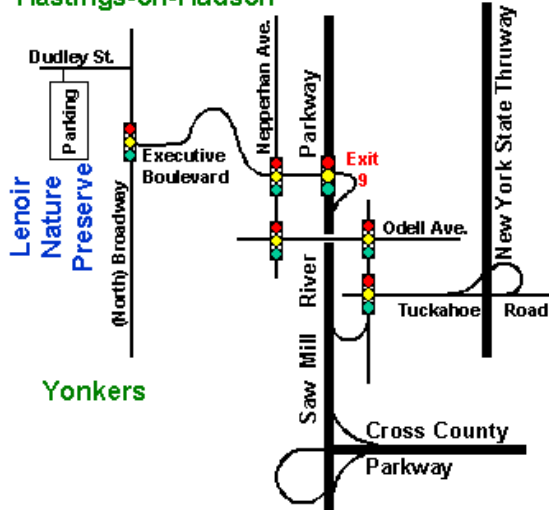
www.hras.org

DIRECTIONS TO LENOIR PRESERVE

Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, Inc. holds its meetings at Lenoir, a Westchester County Nature Preserve, on Dudley Street in Yonkers, New York (914) 968-5851.

By car: Take Saw Mill River Parkway to Exit 9, Executive Blvd. Take Executive Blvd. to its end at North Broadway and turn right. Go ¼ mile on North Broadway and turn left onto Dudley Street. Parking lot is on the left.

Hastings-on-Hudson



Wednesday, March 23, 2011
7:00 pm Lenoir Nature Preserve

The Wonderful World of Seaweeds

By Mickey Maxwell Cohen

Refreshments 7:00 – 7:30
Meeting and Program 7:30 PM

Mickey Maxwell Cohen will present a slide-illustrated discussion on the Wonderful World of Seaweeds.

We have all seen seaweeds that have washed up on the beach, but few of us realize that these "simple" plantlike organisms embody a special beauty and grace of their own. Still fewer folks are aware that every day each of us consumes food products derived from seaweeds; that most men shave with seaweed products; that seaweeds provide the basis for much of the life in the sea, just as they provide about 75% of the world's atmospheric oxygen.

This discussion will be supplemented by a display of live seaweeds and a demonstration of how seaweeds can be prepared as beautiful, permanent artwork.



10th Annual

Seasons at Lenoir

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

Opening Reception

Saturday, March 5th

11:00 am Lenoir Nature Preserve

The exhibit opens from March 5 to April 1, 2011. Come visit the nature center and view dozens of pieces of art and photos celebrating the beauty of the Lenoir Nature Preserve.

There will be a "Kids' Corner" for the creations of children involved in our education programs.

The gallery will be open to visitors on Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00.

Artwork must be picked up on Saturday, April 2

In case of inclement weather, please call Michael Bochnik: 914-237-9331.

ScienceWatch – An Alien Invader

“The Asian Longhorned beetle is the most serious insect threat the city has ever faced – one that if left unchecked could kill half of our trees.”– A. Benepe



An alien invader arrived here over a decade ago and has already claimed thousands of victims. No space ship was needed for the invasion, just a wooden packing crate.

In 1996 the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB), (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) arrived unceremoniously as larvae residing in the wood of a packing crate bound for Brooklyn from China. Since then the beetle has spread throughout New York City and parts of Long Island, New Jersey and Chicago. More recently infestations have occurred in Boston and Worcester, MA.

Fourteen years later the continued seriousness of the invasion is underscored by the fact that a monograph on the ALB appeared in the *Annual Review of Entomology* (2010). Written by an international team led by Robert Haack, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, E. Lansing MI, the paper provides a worldwide perspective on ALB range, ecology, outbreaks and eradication.

The ALB is 1-1.5 inches long and glossy black with 10-20 white spots on its back. The black-and white antennae are typically 1.5-2.0 times the length of the body and together with the body provide a striking appearance for such a destructive pest. Although adults feed on host tree leaves, the real destruction occurs in the larval stage. Adults mate in the summer and the female chews a tiny hole under the bark of a tree where she lays an egg. Each female can lay up to 90 eggs. The larvae (grubs) hatch in a week or two and begin tunneling into the cambium, the living part of the tree, which they eat. This tunneling can severely damage and eventually kill the tree by disrupting the tree's vascular system. They also tunnel into the hardwood, which causes structural damage. The larvae overwinter, pupate the following spring and then emerge as adults by boring a circular pencil-sized hole through the bark.



The beetles will attack and kill over 25 species of hardwood trees, including ash, birch, elm, horsechestnut and sycamore. But maples of any kind are their favorite hosts. According to Haack, *et al.*, that makes the Worcester infestation especially troubling because that town lies in the middle of a large forest dominated by maple trees. Many fear that if the beetles spread through New England, they could cause severe economic damage. According to NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYCDPR) Commissioner Adrian Benepe, “It could wipe out the maple sugar industry and related tourism.” The USDA projects that the economic impact could reach \$650 billion.

To prevent these potential losses severe measures have been instituted. For example, in 1996 NYCDPR along with the NYS Department of Conservation and the USDA immediately began an aggressive inspection program to find infested trees. Once located, they are cut down, chipped and burned. In 1998 the USDA banned all non-heat-treated (160°F, 75 min.) wood packing material from China. In addition, importation into New York State of non-heat-treated firewood has been banned since 2006 and campers cannot move firewood within the state that lacks a source label. More recently the USDA banned importation of untreated firewood from Canada.

In order to protect uninfested trees, Illinois began a vaccination program in 2000, while New York started a year later, and Massachusetts, which first detected beetles in 2008, began treatment in 2009. Healthy, uninfested trees within ¼ mile of any infested location are injected with a solution of imidacloprid, which kills both adults and larvae. The insecticide is either directly injected into the trunk or applied to the base of the tree where it is taken up. These strict measures can eradicate the beetle before it spreads. In August 2009 the beetles were declared eradicated from Illinois and Jersey City.

Everyone who uses the outdoors can help by reporting possible infestations. Signs to look for are the round pencil-sized exit holes and coarse sawdust created by beetle larvae as they bore into the main tree stem and branches. There may also be oval pits in the tree bark that are egg-laying niches. Sap may flow from these niches, especially from maple trees, as the larvae feed inside the tree. You can also assist in the eradication efforts by allowing project officials access to your property to inspect your trees. To report a sighting of this pest, call 311 in NYC or (877) STOP-ALB.

National Audubon's 2011 Bird-a-thon

Now is the time to form a team to help raise funds for our chapter. A team can be just yourself or a small group that will seek out pledges from friends, neighbors, strangers and family to support the Hudson River Audubon Society. Then, on Saturday May 14, instead of walking or biking a set of miles, the team tries to see as many bird species for the day. You can collect pledges for a standard amount or they can pledge a certain amount of money for each bird seen.

You don't have to be a great birder or see a long list of birds to form a team. You can collect pledges based on just the birds in your backyard, or maybe your local park. Then let your pledges know what you found! It is a great way to raise funds and teach people what birds are around them.

Of course, we will have the returning teams who will try to see over 100 species for the day. The Raven Loon-a-tics and Team Eagle will challenge each other to see who will see more, and collect more donations. These team will start in the early morning, well before sunrise and bird all day, traveling through a number of counties from Sullivan, through Westchester and out to Queens and Nassau.

Our pledge form will also be in our April and May newsletters. Make copies for your friends and neighbors. Don't forget to make your own pledge too!

For more information call our Bird-a-thon coordinator Michael Bochnik at (914) 237-9331 or contact him at bochnikm @ cs.com. The pledge form can also be found on our web site at www.hras.org/trips/birdathon.html

National Audubon Birdathon Pledge Card

- I am happy to pledge \$ _____ per species in support of your bird-a-thon.
 I prefer to pledge the enclosed gift of \$ _____ .
 I will give you an additional \$ _____ if the _____ team spots a _____ (bird species).

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Send to: Hudson River Audubon Society, P.O. BOX 616, Yonkers, New York 10703

Make Donations Payable to HUDSON RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY.

Remember, if you're not participating, please pledge to the Bird-a-thon to make our efforts worth it.

FeederWatch

Please join us at the following FeederWatch sessions at Lenoir. We will be sitting inside, looking out and counting the birds at our feeders. These sessions are also fun social events, usually with refreshments! For the actual times, please contact Carol Lange at 668-5101 or CarolLange@aol.com. We hope to see you there.

Sat., Mar. 12 -- Paul Oehrlein

Sun. Mar. 13 -- Judi Veder and Saul Scheinbach

Sat., Mar. 26 -- Hilary and Alan Soiefer

Sun., Mar. 27 --Kelli and Michael Bochnik

Thurs., Apr. 7 -- Carol Lange

Fri., Apr. 8 -- Yvonne Lynn

Gardening through the seasons with a Master Gardener

Volunteers needed for our Butterfly Garden

Come and learn about the needs of a garden throughout the seasons by helping in the maintenance and care of the Beverly Smith Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden at Lenoir Nature Preserve. Planting, transplanting, types of plants, history of medicinal and edible plants of the garden, soil, addressing microclimates are some of the topics that will be addressed during the maintenance.

Join us in the garden between 11 Am and 3 PM on the following dates

Sundays April 17, May 1, May 22, June 26, August 7, September 25 and October 23, 2011

Contact Mary Harrington at tctallon@aol.com for more information



Outdoor activities such as birding and hiking with a group are a wonderful way to share your interests with like-minded people to learn more about nature, and to enjoy many preserves and natural areas. Hudson River Audubon Society field trips are free. Non-members/ newcomers are welcome

Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Some are available for loan for those who need them. Dress appropriately for the weather. For more information call Michael Bochnik at (914) 237-9331 or contact him at bochnikm@cs.com.

Directions for most trips can be found on our website at www.hras.org.

Sunday April 3, 2011

Edith G Read Preserve

Meet at 8 AM in the Playland Parking lot next to Playland Lake

Edith G. Read Preserve is one of the top places to birdwatch in Westchester County. Spring may be in the air and both lingering winter birds and the first vanguards of spring should both be seen. We will explore the lake, inlets, marshes, shoreline, woods and ponds. An abundance of waterfowl should still be on Playland Lake. Rafts of both Lesser and Greater Scaup along with American Wigeon should be there. Redheads and Northern Pintails may be present. The rock jetties may hold Ruddy Turnstone and Purple Sandpipers. The sound may hold Loons and Grebes and possibly distant Northern Gannets. The woods may yield Red-winged Blackbirds, Wild Turkey and Red-tailed Hawks. The feeders may hold Fox Sparrow and Purple Finch. We will start at the far end of the Playland Amusement Park parking lot, where the lot meets the water. After searching this end of Playland Lake we'll enter Edith G. Read Preserve.



Directions: The sanctuary adjoins Playland Amusement Park off U.S. Route 1 in Rye. To reach Playland Park, take Exit 9 from Interstate-95 (New England Thruway) and go east on the Playland Parkway approximately 1.6 miles. Go around traffic circle and drive through the large parking lot and go to the far right corner. We'll start here for a quick look at the lake before working our way into the preserve.

Future Trips

Saturday May 7, 2011

Celery Farm, Allendale, New Jersey

Meet at Celery Farm at 8 AM

Sunday May 8, 2011

Mothers Day Warbler Walk

8 AM Lenoir Nature Preserve

Sunday May 15, 2011

Doodletown Road, Rockland County

Meet at the trailhead at 8AM, Bring lunch, drinks.

Sunday June 5, 2011

Walkkill NWR and the Black Dirt Region of Orange County

Meet at Liberty Marsh on Oil City Road at 8 AM

Audubon New York Testifies on Governor Cuomo's Budget Proposal

On Tuesday February 8th, Audubon New York Director of Government Relations, Sean Mahar, testified before joint legislative hearings on Governor Cuomo's inaugural Budget for 2011-2012 – which maintains funding for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) at \$134 million.

“Audubon New York is relieved that finally a Governor has recognized that environmental investments are actually critical to the state's economic recovery. In particular, we are grateful that the Cuomo Administration has stopped the disproportionate assault on environmental spending that plagued the past administration, and has maintained investments in critical projects that put people to work protecting our environment.”

Audubon At Home in New York

The personal decisions that we each make everyday can have significant impacts on bird conservation. From the coffee we drink to the clothing we purchase, every decision we make can effect bird populations in our local communities and abroad, and we should all strive to minimize our impact on the environment. Nowhere is this concept more apparent than when we look at our backyards. With 80% of all wildlife habitat in private ownership, and with more than 2 million acres a year converted to residential uses, our personal green spaces are becoming increasingly more important to the survival of birds. And the choices we make on how we take care of our lawns and backyards can have lasting impacts on populations of many bird species that depend on these places to nest, breed and feed.

When it comes to the lawn care products and plants you use, many can have a deleterious effect on the environment. However a majority of homeowners do not think about the consequences of the products they use on their lawns, and in some cases homeowners don't even know they are applying toxic chemicals. The reality is that non-native plant species, pesticides, herbicides, and other lawn chemicals don't create a healthy backyard habitat for birds, wildlife, plants, and people.

Through the Audubon At Home campaign, we are working across the state to inspire homeowners to embrace a new “lawn ethic”. Instead of looking at one's lawn as just a grass patch, we seek to encourage homeowners to see their lawns as a backyard habitat that can and should support a wide variety of birds and other wildlife. A healthy, bird-friendly backyard habitat consists of a diverse range of native plant and grass species, which naturally require less maintenance and care as they are already adapted to the local environment.

You can be on the Front Line of this Campaign!

Visit the National Audubon Society Audubon At Home website at <http://www.audubonathome.org/> for information on this program and tips on how you can turn your backyard into a bird-friendly habitat. You can also take the Backyard Pledge

Visit http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/pdf/LawnFlyer.pdf to download our two page flyer “Lawn Pesticides, An Unacceptable Risk” for more information on the negative environmental and human health effects of lawn pesticide use.

For more information on this program:

Sean Mahar
smahar@audubon.org
Associate Director of Conservation
Audubon New York
(518) 869-9731

HRAS BOARD MEMBERS and VOLUNTEERS

President Saul Scheinbach	judisaul@aol.com 718-884-4740
Vice-President Michael Bochnik	BochnikM@cs.com 914-237-9331
Treasurer Paul Oehrlein	paul200bea@optonline.net 914-693-2569
Secretary Judi Veder	judisaul@aol.com 718-884-4740
Membership/Conservation Michael Bochnik	BochnikM@cs.com 914-237-9331
Education Walter Chadwick	mrcnaturally@optonline.net 914-237-5791
Publicity Jeanette Johnson	JNTT3456@aol.com 914-965-7541
Programs/Seasons Lynn Shaw	Lynnshaw@gmail.com 718-549-2380
Butterfly Garden Mary T. Harrington	TCTallon@aol.com 914-968-8407
Science Saul Scheinbach	judisaul@aol.com 718-884-4740
Circulation William Van Wart	914-376-2401
Hospitality Kelli Bochnik	kellimike@verizon.net 914-237-9331
Feeder Watch Carol Lange	carollange@aol.com 914-668-5101
Board Member Francis Greenberg	
Board Member Jackie Bruskin	
Board Member Yvonne Lynn	
Lenoir Liaison Danniela Ciatto	dac4@westchestergov.com 914-968-5851
Rivertown Naturalist Editor Sandra Wright	tralac@verizon.net 914-974-9147

Join the Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, other wildlife and natural habitats. Membership includes a subscription to Audubon magazine and affiliation with National Audubon. As a member, you will also receive our chapter newsletter, *The Rivertown Naturalist*, and an open invitation to all our guest lectures, field trips and events.

**SIGN ME UP AS A NEW MEMBER.
ONE YEAR FOR \$20**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ Zip: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

CHAPTER NO C9ZR200Z

Please make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Send check and this application to:

National Audubon Society
P.O. BOX 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WHITE PLAINS, NY
Permit 7312**

DATED MATERIAL
Please Expedite

HUDSON RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
OF WESTCHESTER, INC
P.O. Box 616
YONKERS, NY 10703