

The Rivertown Naturalist

NEWSLETTER OF THE HUDSON RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY



May / June 2015, Vol. 42, No. 5

The 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, wildlife, and habitats, and to be an advocate for a cleaner, healthier environment.

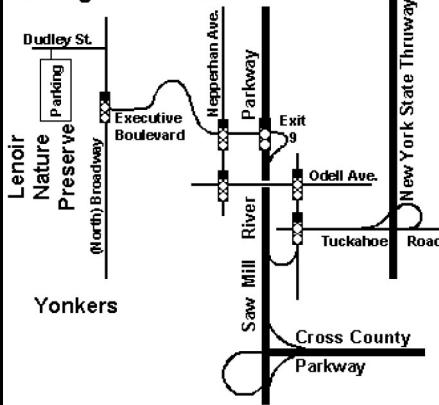
www.hras.org

Directions to Lenoir Preserve

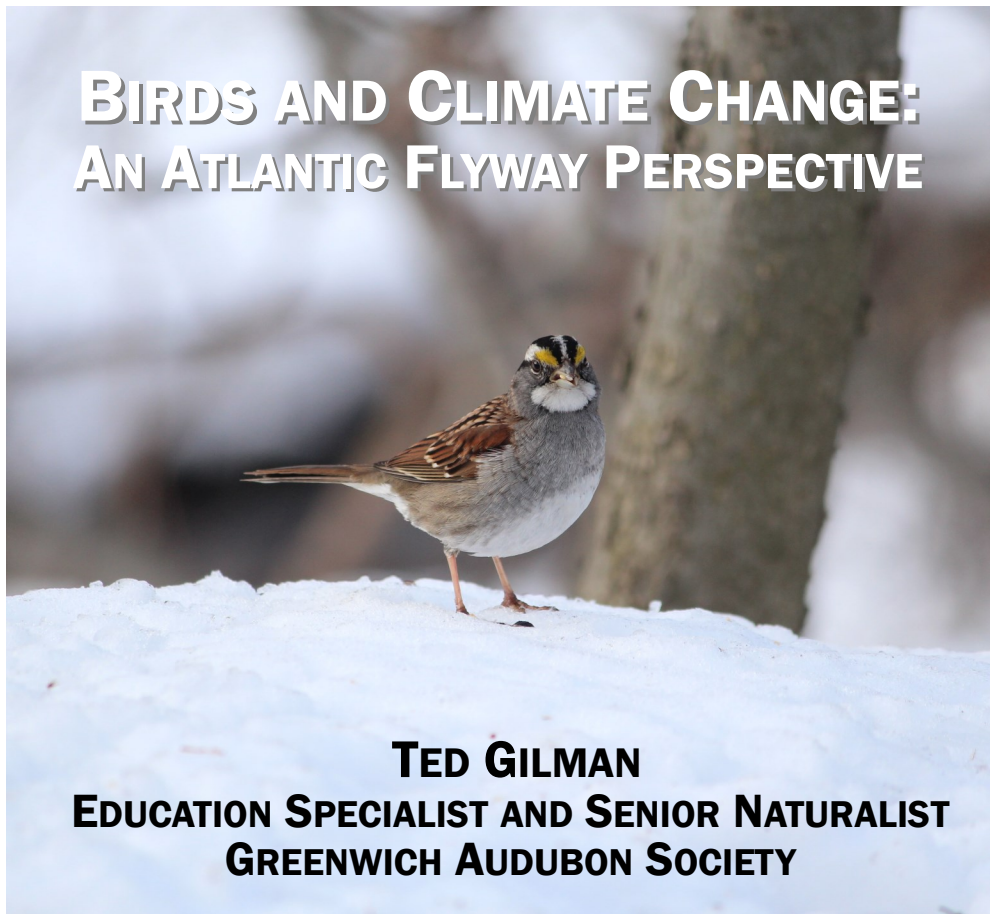
The Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester meets at Lenoir Nature Preserve on Dudley Street in Yonkers, NY, (914) 968-5851.

By car: Take Saw Mill River Parkway to Exit 9, Executive Blvd. Cross over Nepperhan Ave and continue to follow Executive Blvd to its end at North Broadway and turn right. Dudley Street is the first left. Entrance and parking lot are on the left.

Hastings-on-Hudson



BIRDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: AN ATLANTIC FLYWAY PERSPECTIVE



TED GILMAN
EDUCATION SPECIALIST AND SENIOR NATURALIST
GREENWICH AUDUBON SOCIETY

LENOIR NATURE CENTER

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015

REFRESHMENTS: 7:00 PM PROGRAM: 7:30 PM

A study by the National Audubon Society has predicted that more than half of the approximately 650 bird species in North America could be severely affected by climate change. David Yarnold, president of the National Audubon Society, said that while birds are resilient, climate change will test their limits.

Ted Gilman, in his talk, will focus on the content of Audubon's Birds and Climate Change report, the "Climate Envelope" concept and changes in food supplies and habitats. He will use a series of specific examples of species which either breed in New York or overwinter here. He will also stress what each of us can do in our daily lives to make a difference on this issue.

On the Wing: Upcoming Field Trips, May - Jun 2015

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.

All Hudson River Audubon Society field trips are free. Non-members and newcomers are welcomed.

Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Some are available for loan for those who need them. Dress appropriately for the weather. Car pooling for field trips may be arranged in advance by calling Ruth DeFord Kotecha at 914-478-3695, or by email at rdeford@hunter.cuny.edu.

For more information call Michael Bochnik at (914) 237-9331.

Saturday, May 9, 2014

Sterling Forest

In Search of the Golden-winged Warbler

Meet at 8:00 AM at the end of Ironwood Road, Tuxedo Park, NY. Spring migration will be in full swing. Any or all of the colorful spring warblers might be seen, as well as breeding birds such as Golden-winged Warbler, Prairie and Blue-winged Warbler, both Cuckoo species, Scarlet Tanager and more. Note: wear long pants and bug spray, ticks can be common here.

<http://www.hras.org/wtobird/strelingforest.html>

Sunday, May 10, 2015

Mother's Day Warbler Walk

Meet at Lenoir Nature Preserve, 19 Dudley Street in Yonkers, at 8:00 AM. This will be the 24th year of this Audubon tradition. Spring migrants will be searched for; followed by refreshments at the nature center.

<http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html>

Saturday, June 6, 2015

Marsh Birds and More

Meet at 8:00 am at the Marine Nature Study Area, Long Island. We will search the marsh over a series of boardwalks for herons, egrets, shorebird and may see Sharp-tailed and Seaside Sparrows. This location can be good for the uncommon Gull-billed Tern.

<http://www.hras.org/wtobird/marinenature.html>

June 27, 2015

== To Be Determined ==

A weekend birding expedition to the Adirondacks has been rescheduled for next year. Please refer to the Hudson River Audubon website for information on a replacement trip.

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

MEMBERS' NIGHT and Nature Slide Show

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

7:00 pm

- Selected volunteers will be recognized for their special contributions to HRAS during the year. **We owe our success to our volunteers, who devote their time and energy to maintaining a strong, vital, and active chapter.**
- Officers of the Hudson River Audubon Society will be elected.
- HRAS members are encouraged to share favorite nature photos of the past year. Please bring **no more than 10 to 20 images**, and prepare a five-to-ten minute presentation. Digital images can be brought on a CD, USB thumb drive, or memory card: contact Michael Bochnik for format. You may expect to see photos from HRAS field trips, as well as members' nature and birding trips.



ScienceWatch: Evolution in Action: Adaptive Anoles

Charles Darwin thought that evolution is a slow process taking millions of years. But modern genetics has shown that mutations, the driving force of evolution, can spread in a population over just a few generations. So why shouldn't evolutionary changes occur quickly too? Now a study published in the October 24, 2014 issue of *Science* provides a clear example of rapid evolutionary change.

“The evidence for evolutionary change surprised me; the pace at which the change was happening surprised me even more.” – Y. Stuart.

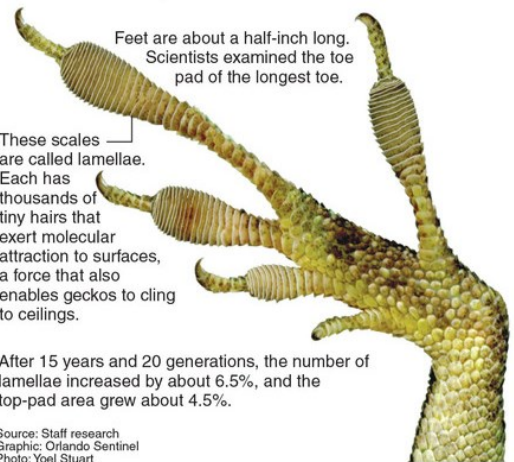
The research team headed by Yoel Stuart University of Texas, and Todd Campbell, University of Tampa, FL, looked at what happens when two closely related species of arboreal lizards that do not interbreed, the Carolina or green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)—native to the southwestern United States, and the brown anole (*Anolis sagrei*)—native to Cuba and the Bahamas, occupy the same space. An important tenet of biology states that no two species can occupy the same ecologic niche* at the same time. If they do, then either one species will outcompete the other, or one (or both) will change in some way to decrease competition for the same resources. Such a change is called *character displacement*.

The Carolina anole normally occupies its home tree from ground to crown. In 1995, Campbell observed that where brown anoles had invaded Carolina anole territory, the Carolina anole lost some habitat, and became relegated to the upper, thinner branches of its home tree.

No one knew exactly why this happened and Campbell designed a doctoral thesis study to find out. He selected six small artificial islands just off the Florida coast, which contained only resident Carolina anoles. He measured the height at which the lizards were usually perched and did the same after introducing (with federal permission) the brown anole to three of the six islands. After just three months, perching heights for the resident Carolina anoles on the “invaded” islands had increased by a statistically significant margin, and remained so throughout the four years of the study. Perching heights on the islands without brown anoles did not change.

In 2009 Stuart came on the scene and suggested they go back for another look. The scientists predicted that the Carolina anoles would develop a character change (*i.e.*, character displacement); namely, they would grow larger toepads in order to better grasp the narrower, smoother branches they now had to deal with. Over a study period of two years, they measured the toepad size on the longest toe of the Carolina anoles on the two sets of islands.

They also counted the lamellae, grooves on the toe that enable better gripping. They found that after only 15 years, the Carolina anoles living among the invaded islands had toepads that were 4.5% larger, and the number of lamellae had increased by 6.5%—important changes that took only 20 anole generations!



After 15 years and 20 generations, the number of lamellae increased by about 6.5%, and the top-pad area grew about 4.5%.

Source: Staff research
Graphic: Orlando Sentinel
Photo: Yoel Stuart

These changes could have been caused by harder gripping of the thinner, smoother branches. Such a change, like muscle building, is known as *phenotypic plasticity*. It is not genetically based and does not result in evolution. To show that phenotypic plasticity was not occurring, the team took gravid female Carolina anoles off invaded and non-invaded islands and raised their offspring under identical outdoor conditions without any brown anoles. They found that the Carolina anole offspring from the invaded islands retained the larger toepads, indicating that the change was indeed genetically based and not a result of building up their toepads simply by harder gripping.

“This elegant study adds to a growing body of evidence that evolutionary changes can occur very rapidly, on time scales that we once regarded as far too brief for significant adaptation,” said Rick Shine, an evolutionary ecologist not involved in the study.

Darwin would be pleasantly surprised.

—SAUL SCHEINBACH

*In biology *niche* not only refers to the area where an organism lives, but also its role or function in the ecosystem, including its interaction with all other species in the ecosystem.

2015 Spring and Summer Programs at Lenoir Nature Preserve

Animal Adaptation Series: 1:00 to 2:30

Animals have all kinds of adaptations to help them survive. Learn how...

Beaks and Diet, May 23

...how birds have different beaks according to their diet.

Camouflage, June 6

...how species use camouflage.

Thorns & Threats, June 13

...how animals & plants protect themselves.

Keeping Cool, June 27

...how species keep cool in the summer heat.

May Day Flowers, May 2, 1 pm

Celebrate May Day by making your own May Day basket to give away! We will then take a walk to discover what flowers are in bloom at the preserve.

Nature Photography for Beginners, May 16, 1pm

Bring your camera (point and shoot, DSLR, smartphone) and learn how easy it is to take great pictures of nature.

Butterfly Garden Volunteer Day, May 17, 11am-3pm and June 28, 11pm-3am

Join Mary Harrington, Master Gardener, get your hands dirty and learn about what plants/flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Edible & Healing Uses of Common Spring Weeds & Flowers, May 24, 1 pm

Join Master Gardener, Mary Harrington, for this informative and fun walk and talk.

Nature Week. Session 1: July 20, 10-3 and Session 2: July 27, 10-3

Children will explore our habitats, learn about our local flora and fauna, participate in science experiments and more. For 1st-5th graders.

For children entering grades 1 through 5. \$275/session. Pre-register by July 13, 2015 by calling (914) 968-5851.

Information on upcoming summer activities available at westchestergov.com/parks

Summer Programs

at the Lenoir Nature Preserve with Walter Chadwick

Insect Walk

Saturday, June 20, 2015 10:00 am

Join us as we look for bugs, beetles, butterflies and more. Learn what makes an insect an insect.

We will look in the meadow, forest and under rocks. For young naturalists there will be a craft after the walk.

Summer Stroll

Saturday, August 22, 2015 10:00 am

A walk to observe the flora and fauna of Lenoir. Join us as we search for birds, butterflies, and even dragonflies in migration. Colorful flowers fill the meadow. For young naturalists there will be a craft after the walk.

For information and registration:

Walter Chadwick, 914-237-5791

mrcnaturally@optonline.net

Birdathon

Join a team and spend all day raising money for the chapter.

Hudson River Audubon's BIRD-A-THON will be held Saturday, May 16th (rain date May 17th) to raise money for the chapter. You can help by making your pledge today.

A BIRD-A-THON is like a walk-a-thon, bike-a-thon or any other "-thon" in that we ask people to pledge X amount of money per lap, mile, or as in our case, bird species seen, within a 24 hour period. The combined list for the teams should be between 100 to 150 species. Pledges can be given for a flat rate such as \$25.00, or you can pledge per species such as 25 cents per bird. If we see 120 species, your pledge will come to \$30.00. We will send out reminders after the event on how much you pledged.

Thank you for your generous support!

NATIONAL AUDUBON BIRDATHON PLEDGE CARD

I am happy to pledge \$ _____ . _____
per species in support of your birdathon.

From:

I prefer to pledge the enclosed gift of \$ _____ . _____

Name

I will give you an additional \$ _____ . _____ if the
team spots a _____ (bird species)

Address

City

State

Zip

Send to: Hudson River Audubon Society

PO BOX 616

Yonkers, New York 10703

(_____)

Telephone

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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 the National Audubon Society. 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 Code _____

Telephone _____

CHAPTER # C9ZR200Z

Send check and this application to:

National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 422250

Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

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www.hras.org

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