



*Ralph T. Waterman
Bird Club
50th Anniversary
1958 - 2008*



The Purple Martin House at Thompson Pond



This photo shows the raising of the Purple Martin house at Thompson Pond on Feb. 5, 1961. The house graced the masthead of Wings over Dutchess during most of the 1960s as shown on page 18, the event pictured here is retold on page 54. People in the photo are, front to back, John Mattson who built the house, Brad Whiting, likely Eleanor Pink, Otis Waterman, Florence Germond who organized the project, and maybe John Klink. The photo was taken by Roz Davis. The house was large, five feet square, with 16 compartments.

After a couple years without Martins moving in, Ed Briggs took the house to his home on the corner of Raymond Ave. near Vassar Farm. Sometime after 1972 it was raised at the east side of Buttercup Sanctuary in Stanford. It was still there in 1976, in good condition, and without Martins. Roger Cohn does not recall it being there in 1981 so it must have moved again.

found after the 50th Anniversary booklet was printed.

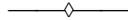
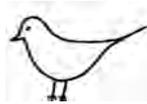
**RALPH T. WATERMAN
BIRD CLUB**

**FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
1958 - 2008**

as retold from *Wings over Dutchess*

Compiled and Edited by:

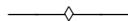
**Stan DeOrsey
Barbara Michelin
Barbara A. Butler**



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2008



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Cover Photographs:

These photographs demonstrate the wide abilities of club members to capture outstanding examples of local birdlife. All photographs were taken in Dutchess County.

Front Cover:

Red-tailed Hawk by Bill Case
Black Vulture by Bill Case
Eastern Bluebird by Bill Case
Baltimore Oriole by Bill Case
Barred Owl by Bill Case
Yellow Warbler by Steven Golladay
Wood Duck by Steven Golladay
Pectoral Sandpiper by Steven Golladay

Back Cover:

Northern Saw-whet Owl by Gary Zylkuski
Barn Swallow by Maha Katnani
Red-bellied Woodpecker by Michael Kuchman
Black-billed Cuckoo by Barbara Mansell
Common Redpoll by Steven Golladay
Carolina Wren by Steven Golladay
Indigo Bunting by Steven Golladay
Great Egret by Carena Pooth
Bald Eagle by Ed Solan

Overleaf: The small bird symbol was created by Ralph Waterman to use on correspondence and to mark ceramic hobby items. It is traditionally used by the Waterman Bird Club. Its first use by the club was on 1962 membership cards.

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is offered to the members of the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club as a tribute on its golden anniversary. The stories presented are reprinted from the newsletter, Wings over Dutchess, some with minor changes, some with added details. Photographs are from the club archives and from many generous members, most have not been published previously.

This is a story of people. Many people have been members of the club over the previous 50 years. Many have also contributed regularly and for extended periods. It is these people and their accomplishments we celebrate.

While every story mentions birds, this is not a story about birds. We all enjoy a common interest in birds which brings us joy and a wonder of nature. May the birds always be appreciated.

We hope this accurately documents the past both factually and symbolically — symbolically by capturing the spirit and joy always shown on club activities. May the club continue to prosper.

*Barbara A. Butler
Stan DeOrsey
Barbara Michelin*

September 2008

HISTORY

The Waterman Bird Club has an extensive history as exemplified through its many projects and activities. These articles highlight some of the people and projects not mentioned elsewhere. At the end of this section, Bernie Heyman captures the “initiation ritual” conducted by Mary Yegella. Mary was a club fixture, knowledgeable about birds, flowers, and mushrooms, as well as an accomplished photographer. We begin with a biography of our Club’s namesake.

Ralph T. Waterman Remembered

by Otis T. Waterman

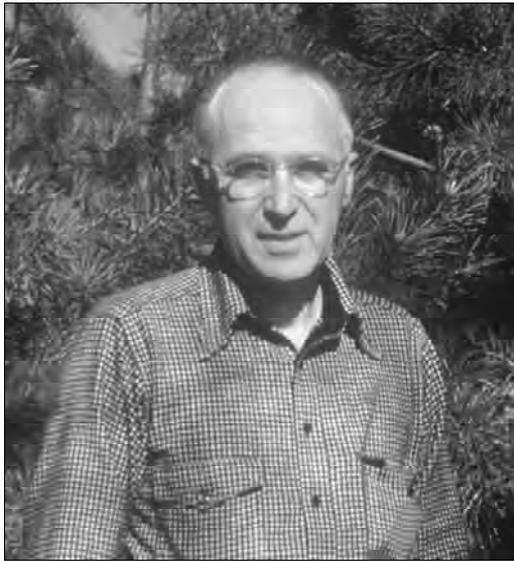
My father was born in 1901 in Kinderhook, N.Y. His childhood was spent in Poughkeepsie on Forbus Street and Grand Avenue where he had a large garden and met my mother, Katherine (always called Pete). He managed to finish only the eighth grade before running away to join the Army during World War I at age 16. My grandmother had him returned home, being underage, but as the war ended he did enlist, serving as an aide to General Pershing on a trip to Panama after the war. Married in 1921, he took up chicken farming with Pete on Sharon Turnpike near Millbrook, which lasted until 1933 when we moved to Poughkeepsie and he started the Waterman and Heaton Insurance Agency which is succeeded today by the Hill Agency.

Ralph, an outdoorsman and sportsman since childhood, spent his summers fishing on Upton Lake. He was an avid trout fisherman, particularly fly fishing, spending many hours each season on the Sprout Creek in LaGrange or the Wappinger Creek above Pleasant Valley. His interest in birds did not really commence until 1943 when he took over as Scoutmaster of Troop 2 and then Troop 16 in Poughkeepsie. He was guiding a number of Boy Scouts, including myself, to attain the Eagle Badge. This required a merit badge in “Ornithology” and identifying 40 birds in the field. He became extremely interested and took to the field almost every chance he could. His favorite birding spots then were a marsh behind our house, Ireland’s farm, and Brickyard Swamp, all in the Town of Poughkeepsie. The first is still there for the most part, the second is a housing development, and the third is the 44 Plaza Shopping Center.

He subsequently became an intense bird student, being helped by Allen Frost and Ray Guernsey, both experienced birders in the county since the 1910s. They in turn had birded with Maunsell Crosby, the dean of Dutchess County birding who lived at his estate, Grasmere, south of Rhinebeck. Ralph was also helped by several ornithologists at Vassar College, including Ralph Palmer in particular.

In 1945 Ralph first went on Dutchess County's historic May Census, started in 1919, with Allen Frost, Ray Guernsey, George Gray, and Frank Gardner. These were the principal birders in the county at that time. I joined them in 1946 mostly as an observer of the birders.

My father's real claim to fame was the many people he taught and interested in birding in a relatively short period of time, from 1943 to 1958. He started his adult education classes at Arlington High School in 1948 at the urging of Eleanor Pink. Eleanor



Ralph Waterman behind his Poughkeepsie home, 1949.

recalls that it was difficult to get the required ten to start the first class but its members included Marion Van Wagner, Dan Munsell, Helen Manson, Bill and Louisa Chrystal, Marge King, Natale Mestechen and several more. Subsequent classes produced birders which formed the first Dutchess County Bird Club in 1949 with Ray Guernsey as president. This club did not last, but by 1958 with more students available the second Dutchess County Bird Club was formed. The name was changed to the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club after my parents' death in an auto accident Nov. 20, 1958 near Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The success of the adult education classes was due to Ralph's charismatic nature and his intense interest in everything he did from fishing and birding to woodworking, ceramics, and golf. Ralph also gave many talks to local groups here and in Myrtle Beach where they went winters, 1952-58. His leadership ability manifested itself throughout his life as he was president or head of the Masons, the Kiwanis, the Dutchess Golf and Country Club, the Chamber of Commerce, First NYS Forest Practice Board, etc.

Wings over Dutchess, April 1983

History of the Waterman Bird Club

The Early Years *adapted from Helen Manson*

In April 1949 a Dutchess County Bird Club was formed. At that time Ralph Waterman was conducting classes in Bird Identification at the Arlington High School Adult Education Program and members of the class were part of the club. Raymond Guernsey was president, Waterman vice-president, Marion Van Wagner secretary-treasurer, and Eleanor Pink records chairman. Mr.

Guernsey financed the first efforts and a metal box was provided for the record cards. The group met a few times each year for the next few years and some continued to go to the identification classes and participate in the annual May Census and the Christmas Bird Count. However, the club was loosely formed and even though they continued to send in records and have field trips, the club was in need of reorganization. By 1952 they were effectively inactive as a club.

In 1958 all the available people from the classes were asked to meet at Baird State Park for a mid-summer get-together. There was quite a crowd and from that a group was formed and plans went ahead. On September 9 a meeting was held at the Arlington High School (now Arlington Middle School) and the present club was born, again named the Dutchess County Bird Club. Officers were elected and Ray Connelly was the first president. We were off and running. Then tragedy struck. Our founder and good friend and his wife were killed in an automobile accident near Myrtle Beach, S.C. They were on vacation and had planned to return to bird and guide the club in this new venture. The club was renamed the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club on the first anniversary of Mr. Waterman's death. There were 71 charter members with the membership growing to 105 the first year. The dues were \$3 single, \$5 family.

In 1959 the bird club joined the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs (renamed the New York State Ornithological Association in 2003.) Eleanor

Dutchess County Bird Club Founders

- Raymond Guernsey
- Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Waterman
- Elinor Belding
- Mrs. S.A. Brewster
- Mrs. Albert Dorsey
- Dr. Ralph Palmer
- Mrs. Andrew Pink
- Dr. Karl Sandbank
- Sally Kelly
- Danforth Munsell
- Mrs. John King
- Dorothy Wright
- Marion Van Wagner

These 14 people met on April 21, 1949 to establish a bird club.



Newly elected club officers, taken Nov. 5, 1959 following the first Annual Dinner meeting held at Talbot's Inn, Pleasant Valley. The same officers were elected at the first meeting, Sept. 9, 1958. Left to right: Raymond J. Connelly, President; Otis T. Waterman, Vice president; Mrs. Webster (Janet) Jones, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Robert (Jean) Beck, Corresponding Secretary; Bradford Whiting, Treasurer; and Dr. Ralph S. Palmer, N.Y. State Zoologist and former Vassar College professor, the after dinner speaker.

First Year Members of the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club

* Mr. Elting Arnold	Mrs. Janet Jones
Mr. & Mrs. Robert F. Barth	* Mr. & Mrs. James Key
** Mrs. Jean Beck	Mrs. Margaret King
Mrs. Olive Beebe	Mr. & Mrs. John Lane
Miss Lilita Berg	Miss Margaret Lane
Miss Lugrida Berg	Mrs. Dorothy Lloyd
Mrs. Betty Blodget	* Mrs. Helen Manson
Mrs. Esther Bradley	Mr. & Mrs. John Mattson
* Mrs. Marguerite Brands	Mrs. Josephine McDonald
Mrs. Mabel Brewster	Mr. & Mrs. Harold McLaughlin
Patricia Bunce	Mrs. Francis Merritt
Mr. Fred Burnett	Miss Grace Miller
Mr. & Mrs. Eldridge Camp	Mr. Danforth Munsell
* Mrs. Louisa Chrystal	Mr. & Mrs. George Nash
Mr. Walter Claire, Jr.	Mrs. Dorothy Nyce
Mr. Walter Claire, Sr.	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Palmatier
Mrs. Valentine Cleaver	Mrs. Viola Palmiter
* Mr. Ray Connelly	** Mrs. Eleanor Pink
Dr. & Mrs. John Coulter	Mrs. Evan Post
Mrs. Frederick Cowles	Mr. & Mrs. Newton Post
Mrs. Arthur Davidson	Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm Pullen
Mr. George Decker	Mrs. Keene Richards
* Mrs. Sallie Draney	* Mr. Herbert Saltford
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Foster	Mrs. L. Schwartz
* Mr. & Mrs. Harold Freer	Miss Emilie Skidmore
** Mrs. Jane Geisler	* Mr. & Mrs. Frederic Smith
* Mrs. Edith Gerhards	* Mrs. Eleanor Stoutenburgh
* Mrs. Florence Germond	* Mr. & Mrs. William Strauss
* Mr. Thomas Gilbert	* Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Terhune
Miss Anita Griffin	* Mr. & Mrs. Richard Thomas
Mrs. Lawson Griffin	Mr. Willard Trask
Mrs. F. R. Grochau	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Traver
Mr. Victor Grover	Dr. Mildred Van Riper
Mr. Raymond Guernsey	* Mrs. Marion Van Wagner
* Mr. & Mrs. Paul Haight	* Dr. Scott Warthin, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Halsted	** Mr. & Mrs. Otis Waterman
Mrs. Frances Hanson	Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Waterman
Dr. H. V. Harsley	Mr. Bradford Whiting
Mrs. Fred Heinzmann	Mr. & Mrs. Rufus Wood
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Hyde	Mr. Robert Wright

105 people joined during from November 1958 to October 1959.

* notes 30 who were still members after 25 years.

** notes 5 who were still members after 50 years.

Pink sent bird sightings from the club to be published in *The Kingbird*. The Annual meeting was held in November with Dr. Ralph Palmer as the speaker. The Annual meeting was a “dress up” dinner meeting, for many years held at Talbot’s Inn, Pleasant Valley.

In 1960 Otis Waterman, son of Ralph Waterman, was elected president of the club. The first of many Audubon Screen Tours was in 1960. Half of the

proceeds from the lectures went to Arlington High School Scholarship Fund. In return we used the school auditorium free of charge. In 1961 the first telephone relay was started and called the Wild Goose Chase. It did help many of us to see rare and interesting birds. Initially bird walks were held monthly, but midweek walks were begun in March 1961, although not every week.

Brad Whiting, who was our first treasurer, became president in 1962. Even though he served only one year before moving to Colorado, he was a good influence and



On March 28, 1962 Roger Tory Peterson gave an Audubon Screen Tour presentation on "Wild Europe" at the Arlington High School cafeteria. Photographed by Otis Waterman.

our club membership grew to 141. Though younger in those days, and well able to make our own way, the ladies were pleased to have Brad help them over and through fences. How we missed him when he left. A Western Meadowlark was found mated to an Eastern Meadowlark female on Layton Rd., Bangall, and caused a few traffic jams. The birds, with their offspring, were collected and taken to an aviary on Long Island for study by the Museum of Natural History. Audubon Screen Tours continued with Roger Tory Peterson as a speaker.

Florence Germond was elected in the fall of 1963 as the first woman president. It was during her term that the memorable trip was taken to Montauk Point. We hosted the Federation of New York Bird Clubs' annual meeting at the Poughkeepsie Inn, and the Bluebird Trail was started. We gave the first scholarship to Maine Audubon Camp and published the first volume of *Birds of Dutchess County 1958-1964*. It was a busy time.

Audubon Screen Tours continued in 1965. Alice Jones and Helen Manson put on interesting exhibits in the school lobby which attracted much attention before the lecture and during the intermission. The annual dinner was \$4.00, and 65 young birds were fledged from the growing Bluebird Trail. We put on an exhibit at the first annual Sportsmen's Show in 1966. The first of many, and had an exhibit at the Arlington Scholarship Fair. In 1967 we sent the first used commemorative postage stamp to the Florida Audubon Society for the Bald Eagle Program and continued to do so for many years.

The first Harris Sparrow to be recorded in the county was found at a feeder in Dover Plains in 1968. Through the relay calls, many went to see it. Our good friend, George Decker, passed away. George had found in 1953 the first Townsend's Solitaire ever seen in Dutchess County, the skin is in the

American Museum of Natural History. Work was done on the trail around Thompson Pond and the first of many interesting trips was taken to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The growing Bluebird Trail fledged 124 young.

In the fall of 1969 we moved to the new Arlington High School at Freedom Plains. The first Black-legged Kittiwake was seen on the Hudson River by Davis Finch. We were privileged to have Davis living in the county. We enjoyed working and birding with him. Some of us started participating in the Connecticut Christmas Bird counts, which we did for many years. The annual dinner was \$5.50 and the club purchased the ill-fated film "Our Endangered Environment - Soil" to be shown in the schools. It was a good idea but the film was ruined at the early showing. The John Burroughs Natural History Society hosted the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs annual meeting at Mohonk, with our assistance. Mary and Jim Key reached 606 species on the Life Lists.

Otis Waterman was elected president for the second time in 1971, and 135 acres was added to the Thompson Pond Nature Preserve. A second Black-legged Kittiwake was found on the Hudson River by Jim and Mary Key.

Jim Fiedler went to Maine Audubon Camp on the eleventh scholarship. We had well over 200 members. In 1972 we had the last of the Audubon Wildlife Films. We were forced to discontinue them due to rising costs and low attendance.

Vivian Gilbert followed as president in 1973 and brought her youth and vitality. We held the first yard sale at Eleanor Pink's garage and it was a huge success. The money went to a Conservation Fund. The Zoological Survey of Dutchess County was conducted under the leadership of Erik Kiviati, and many of us participated. Sadly we bid Vivian and her family good-bye as they moved to Colorado.

As Vice-president, Alice Jones filled out Vivian's term and was elected president in the fall of 1975. Thompson Pond Preserve was fully paid up with \$50,000 raised in three years. The club considered becoming an Audubon Chapter. After much thought and discussion it was voted to remain the Waterman Bird Club. The constitution and by-laws were

1970 - 71
AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS
presented by the
Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club
AT
Arlington Senior High School
Route 55, Freedom Plains
Benefit Arlington School District Scholarship
Fund and Conservation Education
All Programs Start at 8:00 P. M.
Season Ticket \$3.50

Harold J. Pollock
1. **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1970**
"Wanderings of a Naturalist in the
Australian Bush"

Kent Durden
2. **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1970**
"Death Valley — Land of Contrast"

Buzz Moss
3. **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1971**
"Mule Deer Country"

The 1970-71 Audubon Screen Tour programs. This was the penultimate season, having started in 1960. Three admission tickets were attached to this season ticket.

revised and updated and we acquired a tax free status. Many hours were spent by the Education Committee to put together a birding guide, and in October 1977 *Where to Bird in Dutchess County* was published in loose-leaf format.

In 1977 the Rare Bird Alert was officially added to the list of permanent committees in the constitution. Mary Key continued to keep us informed of any rare and unusual birds, not only in the county but elsewhere in surrounding states and Canada. The checklist of Birds of Dutchess County was revised, updated, and reprinted; a hard-working committee put together a slide presentation "Symbols of the States" which was shown to many groups over the next two years. Fifty-five Turkey Vultures were found at a roost in Quaker Hill in December and January. Two good members left our area – Bob Smart and Dan Nickerson. We gave them a sendoff with an August picnic, our first annual August picnic get-together. A bluebird box building bee was held at Florence Germond's and 52 boxes were built. Plans were formulated for the Federation meeting to be held in the county in 1980.

An endowment fund was set up in 1979 whereby money can be given to the club in the name of someone who has passed away. A second yard sale was held, also at Eleanor's garage and the money was used for the Federation of New York Bird Clubs' annual meeting which was held at Holiday Hills, Pawling. Alice Jones, the club's permanent representative to the Federation, organized the meeting. It was a huge success, even to the weather. It could not have been done without the cooperation of everyone.

Meg Guernsey, whose great uncle Raymond Guernsey was a guiding light many years ago, was elected president in 1980. *Birds of Dutchess County, 1965-1979* was published. This was a result of years of record keeping by Eleanor Pink and compiled into book form by Otis Waterman. The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas started in 1980, swung into high gear with Barbara Butler at the helm. In 1981 a Fulvous Whistling-Duck and a Northern Wheatear were found in the Cruger Island area and added to our growing checklist. Over 400 Bluebirds were fledged and banded by Florence, 1981 was a banner year.

Club Presidents	
1958-60	Raymond Connelly
1960-62	Otis Waterman
1962-63	Brad Whiting
1963-65	Florence Germond
1965-67	James Key
1967-69	William Strauss
1969-71	Edward Briggs
1971-73	Otis Waterman
1973-75	Vivian Gilbert
1975-77	Alice Jones
1977-79	Helen Manson
1979-80	Aline Romero
1980-82	Meg Guernsey
1982-84	Louis Endsley, Jr.
1984-86	Kurt Strauss
1986-88	Barbara Butler
1988-90	Steve Walsh
1990-93	Roger Cohn
1993-96	Alan Peterson
1996-99	Bob Kendall
1999-01	Roger Cohn
2001-05	Art Jones
2005-07	Rodney Johnson
2007-	Maury Lacher

Wings over Dutchess, April 1983

Recent Times by Barbara Michelin

Our History of the next 25 years continues with Lou Ensley as club president and the breeding bird atlas work in high gear with many birders in the field. Starting in January 1984, Kay Sisson served refreshments after our meeting, which the hospitality committee has continued to this day. In October Maxwell Wheat, Jr. conducted a workshop on "How to Write a Poem about a Bird." Since then many members have contributed their poems to our bulletin.

Kurt Strauss was elected president in 1984 through 1986. In May the check list for Dutchess County birds was revised in bar graph format using data from the breeding bird atlas project, and was included with the bulletin. The old mimeograph machine was retired and a committee researched in purchasing a plain paper copier, however it was determined to be more expensive than using a commercial service which has continued to this day. At the close of the breeding season the six year project to cover Dutchess County for a state breeding bird atlas was wound up by Barbara Butler, county coordinator. During the atlas project, 126 species were confirmed nesting in Dutchess County, six for the first time.

In 1987 Barbara Butler was elected president, serving through 1988. Three evening sails from the Beacon Sloop Club on the sloop *Woody Guthrie* were offered to our members during the summer and arranged by George O'Donoghue, continuing for two more summers. A committee to revise *Where to Bird in Dutchess County* was formed and work started on updating it. We lost one of our founding members and first club president, Ray Connelly.

In 1988 there were some Committee Chair changes. Special Trips was formed and Sue Gyscek arranged many spring bus trips to Jamaica Bay. Joan DeOrsey retired as Librarian, a position she established several years earlier. Millie Sturcken, our present Librarian, took over. We lost one of our founding members, Trixie Strauss. *The Breeding Birds in New York State* was available in June, several club members contributed to the atlas. Alan Peterson assembled his first team to participate in the New Jersey World Series of Birding. Our club sponsored his team and they continued for 17 years helping raise donations to the Nature Conservancy, Hudson Valley Raptor Center, and Friends of Stissing Landmarks. We were proud of their accomplishments each year as they increased the number of species seen in a 24 hour period. Our Bluebird Trail fledged 609 Bluebirds – an amazingly high number so far.

Steve Walsh was our next president from 1989 through 1990. In June a granite bench was dedicated at Thompson Pond Preserve in Elting Arnold's memory for his work to establish the preserve. On January 7, 1990 a Townsend's Solitaire was found at Duell Hollow Road by Marion Van Wagner, Mary Yegella, Jean Beck, and Dot Fleury. This is our second record and over 100 birders were excited to have great views of this bird. In May the second edition of *Where to Bird in Dutchess County* edited by Barbara Butler became available in book form.

Roger Cohn was elected president in 1991 and again in 1992. Russ O'Malley scheduled Weekend Field Trips including an overnight trip to Jones Beach and vicinity in February and an Adirondack bog trek in June which he continued through 1994.

From 1994 through 1996 Alan Peterson was president. On May 11, 1994 Rosa Corbeels and Jean Murphy saw a rare sighting of a White Pelican over Ferncliff during the walk. An amazing number of over 800 Bluebirds fledged this season. In October we lost founding member Florence Germond, our Bluebird Lady, a scholarship fund was set up in her memory. In 1996 we lost founding members Thelma Haight and Jim Key. Thelma was critical to establishing Thompson Pond Preserve. Jim was our Hawk Specialist and contributed so many hours to our club in many capacities. He was a great inspiration. He and Mary would run to confirm all Rare Bird Alert calls.

Bob Kendall was elected president in 1997 through 1999. During school construction, our May meeting was moved to the Arlington High School South Campus on Stringham Road. After long time active member Dot Wolbach died, club donations were used to place copies of *Hawk Hill* by Susie Gilbert in all Dutchess County elementary schools in her memory.

In 1998 we celebrated the club's fortieth anniversary. In May the club hosted the New York Bluebird Society spring meeting. The club's field trips included Grasmere, home of Maunsell Crosby, on May 9. For our October meeting we moved back to the Arlington High School North Campus. In the November *Wings* issue a new bird check list / reference guide was distributed with larger text and abundance bars for easy reading for our members. A rare female Mountain Bluebird was found on December 27 in the town of Northeast on Mill Road by Elaine Andersen, Rich Nord, and Dot Fleury that several members enjoyed seeing.

Bob and Agnes Busing donated materials, cut the pieces and fashioned a series of jigs to aid in making 47 bluebird houses to be put together by a group of volunteers in February 1999. With the materials left over, the number of boxes went up to 63. Dorcas Brower donated her speaker honorarium for more wood and a second volunteer team put together 50 more boxes in March. We built more boxes again the next year. On May 15, Census Day, the group covering Vassar Farms found a Kentucky Warbler singing along the hillside trail. The relay was put out for many members to see. It returned each year through 2004. The Bluebird Trail continued with over 1000 bluebirds fledged, thanks to our volunteer monitors.

Roger Cohn returned as president from 2000 through 2001. The Atlas 2000 project got underway and breeding blocks surveyed for the next five years would be used to update the 1980s field work for the first atlas. In January 2001 our monthly meeting moved to the Freedom Plains Presbyterian Church across the street from Arlington High North Campus. In April Carena Pooth took on a project to build an Internet web site for the club, it has been up and running ever since. It is a valuable addition to our club with information, photos, our newsletter, plus so much more available online. Our Reference



2008 Officers. Left: Maury Lacher, President. Photo by John Winkler, Jr. Above: Ken Fredericks, Treasurer; Suzanne Infante, Recording Secretary; Jean Hicks, Corresponding Secretary; and Barry Haydasz, Vice-president. Photo by Carena Pooth.

Guide was updated and reprinted in memory of Jim Key. Ken Croke provided wood and made bluebird boxes over the next five years for the club.

Arthur Jones was elected president for 2002 through 2005. In April 2002 a group of our members volunteered to help with the Great River Sweep to clean up along the Hudson River. We chose Sand Dock Road in the town of Poughkeepsie and did again in 2003. We changed sites to Madam Brett Park, along the Fishkill Creek, Beacon for the next two years. In June 2002 bird banding was started at Buttercup West with the help of interns from Sharon Audubon and our own club member, Janet Allison, and continues during each spring migration. We lost two founding members in 2002, Helen Andrews and Marion Van Wagner. Helen nurtured the growth of our club, holding almost every position. She was our Education Chair, artist and wrote newspaper articles on birds for many years. Marion's long term role was Field Trips Chair and her love of birds and nature helped guide many new members as they arrived for a Wednesday field trip.

The growth of our club has maintained membership to about 350 members as of 2004. On January 7, 2004 a memorial bench was dedicated to Thelma Haight at Thompson Pond Preserve for her love and work for this preserve. We lost two more of our founding members this year, Tom Gilbert and Mary Key. Tom hosted bird walks at his Hyde Park farm and later sent in reports of the special birds from his Red Hook home. Mary contributed years of dedicated work in several positions (notably membership, *Wings*, and Rare Bird Alert) and helped make our club what it is today with her inspiration and love of birding. Beginning in May 2004 the club sponsored Rodney Johnson in the World Series of Birding following Alan Peterson's retirement from the competition.

Rodney Johnson was elected president in 2006 through 2007. In June 2006 Millie Sturcken with the help from Barbara Mansell completed a list of books available in our library and included it in the newsletter. The club acquired a laptop computer and digital projector, first used at the June picnic for showing member's digital photos. In September 2006 the book *The Birds of Dutchess County* by Stan DeOrsey and Barbara Butler was available after six years researching the extensive records maintained by our club. It is a wonderful reference book for birds found in Dutchess County. Joe Woleader built twelve bluebird boxes for the club which Peggy Fasciani and Barbara Michelin used on their trails in southern Dutchess County.

With 2008 we celebrate our Fiftieth Anniversary as an active bird club with Maury Lacher as our president. Five of the original members are still active: Jean Beck, Jane Geisler, Eleanor Pink, Otis and Ginny Waterman. Some old friends have gone and many new friends are added to our list of members. It is hoped that the club will continue for many more years.

Welcome to the Club

by Bernie Heyman

The first time I met her she invited me to hug a tree. It was my first bird walk with this group. There were obvious other "first timers" too, but she picked on me. No hesitation. No indecision. She walked right up to me with

her hands stuck in her jacket pockets, stopped dead two feet away, tipped her head back to look up at me from under her floppy hat, and asked, "Have you ever hugged a tree?"

Not a single familiar face among all the people standing around. A few looked at me. Most didn't. A few smiled, but hardly so you could really see it. Hers was a friendly voice, not challenging, not belligerent, just firm and pleasant, merely asking an odd question in an uncomfortably reasonable way.

I had to look down to find her. A tiny imp of a woman in her vigorous late sixties, all bundled up in a sort of Chinese quilted looking outfit. Only the little face showed, hardly five feet off the ground, and that almost lost under the tan



Mary Yegella and Bernie Heyman at the Verbank Church, July 8, 1991 for the celebration of Jim and Mary Key's 60th wedding anniversary. Photographed by Helen Manson.

Aussie hat covered with bird club patches, bird pins, and birding location remembrances. The eyes behind the gold rimmed glasses questioned. I could see that her lips really wanted to smile but she wasn't going to let them. At least not yet.

Again, quite firmly, "have you ever hugged a tree?"

Out of the corner of my eye I watched the rest of the group ... all watching me out of the corners of their eyes and trying to not let it show. Their assorted little conversations seemed

to quiet down and the pauses got longer between sentences as their attention, without letting it show, shifted to us.

Inside my head I logically and honestly acknowledged that, of course, I'd never hugged a tree. Why would I ever have done a thing like that? But simultaneously I knew, with great certainty, that within a very few minutes I was either going to feel quite foolish and hug a tree or earn release via some as yet unknown process.

She never budged. Just stood there, relaxed, hands stuffed in her jacket pockets, looking up at me. Waiting.

I'll ask her "why?" I thought. Why'd she pick me? I'll get silly and ask her "boy trees or girl trees or just any old trees?" I'll ask her if she ever hugged a tree (but somehow I knew she must have). I'll ask her if she just thought up that question. I'll ask if the trees here have some special meaning. I'll ask her if there's some reason.

And then the reactions around me finally penetrated. The small bundle of female person in front of me was good at this. It was sort of her job. This flock of birders had obviously migrated, roosted, flown, fought, and fed together for many years. It was a large and accepting flock open to all, no discrimination. A beginner who hardly knew which end of a pair of binoculars to look through was every bit as welcome as a pro with a three continent life list with many

hundreds of birds, slow starters, darters, guessers, gabbers, listeners, no matter, c'mon along and welcome to you. The little lady had decided, in my case, to be the sorter-outer.

She had us center stage, brightly lit, "standing room only" audience in place. Three charming white haired ladies with binoculars worn to a chrome-like finish by years of industrial strength birding seemed most attentive and one even seemed quite sympathetic to my plight. A little bantam rooster of a guy in a gasoline company peaked cap turned on a one hundred octane grin. The lady counting attendees and rapidly listing birds that people were imagining they'd heard took her foot off the throttle. One or two others stopped asking each other if it was lunch time yet — which I thought was just and fitting as it was barely ten a.m. A plump gentleman with camera to eye started moving in, focusing as he neared.

Two on the brightly lit stage: the Persistent Peanut and a Foolish Feeling Me. "Reeeeeeely now," with a slight smile, "have you ever hugged a tree?"

Hoo Boy.

Come on, mind! Get in gear! Say something. Anything. That thin lady over there peeling the banana is trying so hard not to laugh she's saving the skin and throwing away the fruit. SAY SOMETHING! ... er ... yup ... sure.

Act One is getting to be a doozy.

I imagined Turkey Vultures arranging to tighten their circle overhead, losing altitude and beginning to drool as they centered above me . If Act One didn't improve pretty quick, Act Two was gonna be just me feeding them birds ... me!

"Me? Hug a tree?" ... not much of a line. "Me Maam?"

I'm getting in gear. "Shucks Lady, sure I've hugged trees." (Teeny 2 point white type lie, hardly counts.) "And I went on Snipe hunts when I was a Boy Scout." (Truth)

Shift up to second gear. "And I never carved anything on the bark of a tree. (Sofietta-Louise Ocnoczeffski's whole name must still be in that heart on the birch behind the high school in Jersey, and it took days and my father's second best knife to do it.)

Shift up to third gear and floor it. "Why, its funny you should ask, 'cause just this morning when I got up, before I even took my Doctor Dentons off, I looked out at the backyard at all the beautiful trees, and just couldn't control myself. I just had to rush out there and give every single one of them a big hug and a kiss. The dogwood barked at me and I got scratched by the pussy willow and darn near strangled by the choke cherry, but I love them all."

Burn rubber going into the home stretch. "Enjoyed it so much I rushed out to Cary Arboretum, got a pamphlet showing the location of all 250 of their prize specimen trees and hugged every one of them too. I'm so darned tired of hugging trees today I just can hardly lift my arms past here." I wiggled a couple of fingers just south of my binoculars.

Coast across the finish line. "So I hope you'll excuse me this time."

The Little One grinned up at me and her eyes twinkled as she stuck out her hand to shake mine, saying "ten more years polishing up your lines and you'll be as good at it as I am. Welcome to the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club. My name's Mary."

Wings over Dutchess, September 1991

Every club has committees and annual projects. This section explains what goes on behind the scenes for some activities which can often be taken for granted, such as the monthly newsletter which does so much to keep the club together and moving in the same direction. Or the Education Committee which is often our face to the public. Or the Records Committee which has been so important in collecting and preserving bird records every month for all 50 years. Also Mary Key describes what she and Jim loved most, chasing rare birds to extend their life list of 700 species.

This section also contains an extensive review of how Florence Germond managed the Bluebird Trail. Started in 1962 with only six fledged Eastern Bluebirds, by 1992 over 1000 were fledged. These articles explain the dedication required from Florence to achieve this success. There is also a review from Jim Key on his passion for hawks. Jim and Mary ran a hawk watch at various locations, none of which experienced major flows of hawks.

A selection of photographs follows depicting various activities which have kept the club active and often made it known to the public.

Wings over Dutchess — A History

adapted from Helen Manson and Barbara Michelin

Our first newsletter, often referred to as the bulletin, was called *News Notes* and was published through the courtesy of Victor Grover. Four copies a year were issued for the first two years, 1959-60.

Our newsletter, as we see it today, was first printed November 1960. Mary Key, Helen Manson, and Florence Germond were the bulletin committee. Florence would gather the articles then Mary typed them on stencils and ran them on the duplicator kept at her house. At first it was called *The Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club Bulletin*. We put out an appeal for a name and had many suggestions including *The Junco's Slate*, *Bird Words*, *Creeper's Review*, *Junco Jottings*, *Sea Gull Sagas*, *The Chicken Hawk*, *Notes from the Nutchatch*, *Hark the Lark*, and *Wings over Dutchess* which was suggested by Sally Draney and chosen unanimously. In 1967 the newsletter was changed to its present letter size, having used longer paper that some felt was hard to file.

The Waterman Bird Club purchased a new Gestetner Duplicator in 1969. Up until then we had a used machine and for a number of years it was housed at Mary Key's. The new machine went to Helen Manson's home.

In 1972 the memo paper cost \$2.35 a ream and with the tax we had to pay in those days ten reams came to \$24.44. In 1982 ten reams of the same paper cost \$47.30. We are now tax exempt. In 1974 a tube of black memo ink cost \$3.75, in 1982 the same ink was \$9.60 a tube.



The first newsletter masthead with the name Wings over Dutchess was used from April 1961 to December 1968 and was drawn by Ken Davis. The significance of the Purple Martin house is told on page 54. The current masthead has been used since January 1969 and features Ralph Waterman's small bird.

Each month (ten bulletins a year) we printed about 260 copies of the bulletin with ten or twelve pages (5-6 sheets). About every three years we had 7500 sheets printed with the *Wings over Dutchess* heading. I have not even mentioned the cost of the stencils or the extra paper to print the membership list once a year. Three to three and a half reams are used at each printing and one tube of ink will do at least two printings. In 1972 the postage was 8 cents.

After the newsletter was run off on the duplicating machine, we would meet at Harry and Esther Chapman's home to collate, staple, fold, stamp, and address the newsletters. The address labels were typewritten on three part copies every three months, first by Mary Key then by Ruth Purdy. In 1978 the assembly process moved to Joan DeOrsey's home where it stayed for the next 20 years. There were always many willing volunteers to assist in assembling the newsletter, if only to partake of the fine dessert offered following completion.

At the end of 1976 Trixi Strauss retired as *Wings* editor and Leona Wilson became coeditor with Aline Romero. Aline remained coeditor until she became club president in November 1979 and Leona took total responsibility for typing *Wings*.

In 1987 Leona Wilson retired as our newsletter editor and turned over responsibility to Peggy Fasciani and Barbara Michelin. Peggy did April, May, and June while Barbara did August, September, October, and November for that first year. By that time Leona was no longer doing the newsletter by stencil. In 1988 Barbara became newsletter editor. In 1990 we upgraded from a

typewriter to a computer. In 1993 Evelyn Stevenson and Chuck Martinez were coeditors for our newsletter. In 1997 Evelyn Stevenson retired as editor and Barbara became coeditor with Chuck Martinez. Our membership has been around 300. In 2000 Chuck Martinez retired and Janet Allison became coeditor. About this time, the final assembly of *Wings* was moved to Ruth Greenwood's home. Since collation is now done by the printer, Copy-a-Second, only labels and stamps are still applied manually.

In 2003 the Executive Board decided to raise dues to \$20.00 in hopes it would cover the raising cost of postage and printing for a while. In 2003 Janet and Barbara changed the look of the newsletter a little. A membership form was added to most issues and the back page identified the president, editors, and membership plus weekend field trips were added. In 2005 we went to a booklet format for our newsletter. In 2006 Michael Kuchman became coeditor to help Janet and Barbara.

Carena Pooth now puts each issue of *Wings* on the club internet web site, often with extra photos, many in color. All issues from January 2001 are available online.

All the work put into the bulletin is done on a voluntary basis. Putting out a monthly bulletin is a lot of work for a few people who have to work around a busy schedule. It is your bulletin and we welcome contributions that are timely and bird related. It is not necessary to wait until the fifth of the month to have an article in, you may send it any time the previous month.

We think we have a pretty good bulletin and hope we can continue even with rising costs to get it out each month.

Wings over Dutchess, September 1982 and April 1983

Education Committee

by Helen Manson, Jane Geisler, Mary Yegella

Education is by no means confined to the Education Committee. Many bird club members give talks to various groups throughout the county on bird related subjects. We all answer phone calls and talk to people about birds and try to help with problems. The participants in the weekly Wednesday field trips are walking encyclopedias.

But what has the committee done? We have participated in outdoor activities at Bowdoin Park, Stonykill Environmental Education Center, and Cary Arboretum; worked with the state DEC at the annual field day at Verbank in May for sixth grade children where we talked to over 500 children, teachers, and parents; talked to several schools throughout the county as well as senior citizen groups and garden clubs. We had a booth at the Tymor Park in the Town of Unionvale Tercentenary celebration and placed a copy of the anniversary issue of *Wings* and a brochure in the time capsule. We were on the Talk-back show at Station WEOK and had an exhibit in the library at Dutchess Community College for a month.

In the coming year we will once again conduct the Bird Identification Class at the Arlington Adult Education Program. With the new projector



Helen Manson representing the Bird Club at the Stony Kill Fall Festival, October 1986. Her exhibit featured plants that produce food for birds.

purchased with the grant from IBM, we will offer a series of slide programs to be shown to schools and other interested groups upon request. We will participate in a bird identification workshop at Stonykill in December.

Anyone interested in serving on this committee will be most welcome.

Wings over Dutchess, November 1983

Records Committee

by Eleanor Pink

What is your records committee and what does it do?

The records committee keeps the permanent record of your club about the sighting of birds in Dutchess County. Each month from 10 to 20 people regularly send their monthly sightings to the Committee. We compile these on work sheets and abbreviate them for *Wings*. At some point during the year they are recopied on 5x7 cards and become our permanent file. The permanent file contains monthly records back to 1958. From these we have over the years written books on "The Birds of Dutchess County." These are available for sale from the club.

Our monthly records are reported to a regional compiler for the state journal, *The Kingbird*. Our region consists of six counties from both sides of the river near us. The state itself is divided into ten regions. Records also go to a compiler for *American Birds*, which covers the whole country. Of course only our most important records are used in that.

We welcome all members to send us what they see in Dutchess County each month. Don't feel that you have nothing worthwhile to report. It's good to know the distribution, early and late arrival or departure dates of even our most common species. Speak to one of the committee members, if interested. We will be glad to show you what to do.

Unusual records, birds which normally reside in the West or South or over the ocean, unusual dates, etc. all have to be sent by us to New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC). They decide if we have a valid state record. This is the reason we need careful details, pictures when possible, on all such birds. Don't feel uneasy if you should be questioned. We've all been subject to this over the years and that is why we have a good reputation about such records.

Wings over Dutchess, March 1987

UPDATE: Since 1990, the reports have been entered in a computer database instead of the 5x7 cards. The cards and all reports are still kept by the Records Committee, lead by Barbara Butler. All were used in the writing of *The Birds of Dutchess County*, published in 2006. Consistent throughout has been the efforts of the tireless monthly compilers. Each does one or two months a year, compiling reports from field trips and 5-20 reporters, and condensing all that into a readable report for *Wings*.



Eleanor Pink searching for birds along the Hudson River at Cruger Island, May 3, 1969. Eleanor kept the club records from the first Dutchess County Bird Club in 1949 until 1990.

Memorable Rare Bird Alert Relays

by Mary Key

Our first Telephone Relay was started in December 1961 and called the "Wild Goose Chase." Ginny Waterman was not teaching at that time so she was chosen as "blast off" for the relay. If she was not home they were to call Mary Key. There were 40 people on the list. The instructions told birders if they saw a "Blue Goose" on "Grandpa's Pond" they should call Ginny. She would start the relay and each person called three or four designated birders. Only then should they decide *to go* or *not to go*.

Some of the more interesting relays are still remembered.

Iceland Gull, March 20, 1963, Beacon dump. Since gulls are plentiful at dumps and a possible rare one had been found, a relay was sent out. It takes time and patience to look them over well. We always take a light lunch along and this time was no exception. We spread out some food on the tailgate of one car and stood about "glassing" the gulls, but several non-birders came to the dump to deposit garbage and just could not believe our happy picnicking group. The wind was in the right direction but I am sure our Bird Club's name fell a few notches. We found an Iceland Gull — Hurray! That dump is closed now and a small attractive park is there.

Black-headed Grosbeak, Jan. 23, 1965, Pleasant Valley, home of Eleanor and Andy Pink. This bird stayed 81 days or until April 13 and was still in winter plumage. The relay brought birders from all over Dutchess County, New York State, and New Jersey. When such good birds stay so long it means the occupants of the house are constantly on alert for a stranger at the door. This bird could be seen only from inside the house. One could not stand even close to the window.

At other homes we have hung out of small bathroom windows (Czecher Terhune's home, **Lark Sparrow**, Feb. 5 though April 4, 1965) or stood on chairs. Another club member left her home open with a guest book to sign on the table when she had a **Hoary Redpoll**, March 19-20, 1982. She could not stay home but wrote notes, and left. All went well thanks to Marion Van Wagner.

Wilson's Phalarope, May 15, 1965, found by Jim Key. This was our Spring Census Day and everyone was out counting birds. It was found on Karl Ehmer's pond in LaGrangeville. We had trouble getting the use of a phone to send out the relay. Perhaps because of our rather ridiculous field clothing, or the nature of our message seemed too suspicious or perhaps our extreme excitement in begging for a phone. A pay phone was finally located and through Ginny Waterman's efforts about eight birders did see the phalarope. It was gone the next day.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Aug. 10-16, 1972. The call came at 9:30PM. These non-birding people had seen the bird for six nights and were so curious and amazed with the bird's behavior that they tried very hard to find some birders who might explain what it was and if it would harm them. Somehow they located us. The South Gate area below Poughkeepsie is only about four miles from our house and we hurried. It was dark, of course, and we had difficulty locating the correct house. When asking neighbors for help, some very odd expressions crossed their faces when we explained our mission,



This is Jim & Mary Key during their May - June 1973 trip to Alaska. The Key's traveled to all parts of North America looking for birds. On this trip they drove their Volkswagen camper on the Alaskan Highway. This photo was used as their Christmas card, Mary wrote "the Huskies would not stay put for this picture." Mary Key ran the Rare Bird Alert from the beginning to 1995.

but we located the house and no police followed. Yes, this rather large awkward bird was pecking at the ground around the base of an aboveground swimming pool and sometimes hopped up on the rim and picked insects from the water. These insects were attracted by the electric lights and it was feasting on them at night. The bird was not seen during the day. The relay failed however, because the bird was not seen again. Probably he decided he would find another dining area further south.

Ross's Goose, March 13-14, 1983, found by Dorothy Fleury and Mary Yegella on Round Pond north of Amenia. This is another find where you pinch yourself and say no, impossible! But the girls checked the bird out thoroughly on a Sunday afternoon and dashed over to see Trixi Strauss who lived close by, to spread the news. It was verified Monday morning by Edward Treacy, and our relay got into action. About 25 birders saw it on Monday. A good 30 birders arrived Tuesday but the goose never was found again on that pond or any other pond in the area. It was with two immature Snows and two White-fronted Geese and some 3,000 to 4,000 Canada Geese. Tuesday morning only 500 Canada Geese remained and Wednesday morning about a dozen were counted. This goose was compared with the snows – smaller in size, pure white with black wing tips, small round head and short neck, no black “lip” line on short stubby bill, clear or clean pink bill and legs, and some could see the gray warty area around the base of the bill on Sunday when the light was perfect and the goose closer. Many scopes lined the hillside. A delight, a thrill, a marvel, and what next? The sighting was accepted by NYSARC, it was the first New York State record.

White-tailed Kite, Tuesday, April 26, 1983, found by Chuck Roda near his home on Shenandoah Rd., Hopewell Junction, about 3PM. He considered himself a non-birder but seeing this white bird with black elbow markings, hovering as it hunted in the valley back of his house, demanded him to consult a bird guide. Finding it to be a probable White-tailed Kite and the proper area to be California and Texas, and possibly Florida, he tried to locate someone who would be interested. He knew James Rod, Warden / Biologist of Constitution Marsh Sanctuary near Cold Spring. All this took time, so when Jim reached us it was 6PM. We took down direction, grabbed bird books, glasses, scope, and telephone relay sheet. However, we truly thought it would be a white crow or gull.

We tried to reach Helen Manson but with no success, so we took off posthaste. One look told us it *was* a lovely adult White-tailed Kite perched atop a deciduous tree. Now a dash for a phone to start the relay. Many birders are not at home or within hearing distance of their phone on a nice spring evening. But I was shortly interrupted and told the bird had flown away. Helen was the only one on her way. We searched fields and roads to no avail. It was late when we returned home. A relay that never got started before it was all over!

By 6AM Wednesday morning I decided to alert our relay people so they could search and watch the sky. Vaughn Morrison said he would go out and look about. Ken McDermott also took off. This area is near the IBM plant at Fishkill where they worked. Later Joan McDermott and Dave Kintzer arrived. Our Wednesday Field Trip people were gathering at Millbrook and this would be the time to alert them. Just before leaving home, Vaughn phoned to say the bird was back near the original location. About 12 birders from the Wednesday walk headed for the kite and by early afternoon a good 25 of our members had

found some excuse to get away from meetings, etc. and make a dash for the visitor, but again the bird had flown away about 9AM. The entire area was covered but the kite was not found again.

I called it an adult White-tailed Kite but the light gray of the back did continue up over the nape. This probably made it a sub-adult. The black patches at bend of long pointed wing, light gray back and long white tail is a lovely sight as the bird hovers like a sparrow hawk when hunting. The sighting was accepted by NYSARC and is still the only record for New York State.

This is the challenging part of birding. Birds will not stay put – rare or otherwise. Phone calls came from Boston, New York City, Albany, etc., and birders arrived from other counties.

Other birding clubs all over the U.S. and Canada have Hot Line Relays. We keep in touch with some of the close ones and occasionally give them a “run-for-the-money.” The Ross’s Gull at Newburyport, Mass. in March 1975 will never be forgotten. A good number of our birders were successful in seeing this delightful little gull. Remember, following severe storms or hurricanes can be an excellent time to check for land and water birds blown far beyond their normal locations.

There is no end to exciting Relay Story results. I enjoy it extremely.

Wings over Dutchess, April 1983

UPDATE: With the advent of cell phones and computers with e-mail and listserves, getting the word out about a “good” bird is easier now. But the chase is still exciting and there are still no guarantees the bird will stick around. The camaraderie of the birders we meet while chasing birds remains a joy.

Bluebird Trail

by Florence Germond

Bluebird House Cleaning Day

Saturday, March 1, dawned clear and mild. Before 10AM eager helpers began arriving for the job of cleaning the bluebird boxes on our Trail. Four teams were each assigned different areas, leaving my house to return in time for lunch.

Group 1 was Eleanor and Andy Pink, Carol Jack, and Mary Yegella. Looking their progress sheet over; I note nests of not only Bluebirds but some wrens and Tree Swallows, and of course some boxes contained mice. They spotted two Bluebirds in the Stanfordville area, one of the rewards of the job!

Marion Van Wagner, Dorcas Smith, and Bertha Vanderburgh covered the Arboretum section, spotted twenty Bluebirds. This has been a good wintering area for them. Arboretum personnel have reported sightings all winter.

Meg Guernsey, Joe DeFelco and I spray painted the PVC pipe we had put on some of the poles under the houses as raccoon deterrents. This is a request of the Director who preferred black to the dull green color.

Chet Vincent, Barbara Butler and Helen Manson covered the Shunpike, Stanford Road, and Bangall Road area. Lots of mice were evident, eight or ten Bluebirds were seen plus a flock of 45 Redpolls.



Bluebird Box Cleaning Day crew, March 12, 1988. It takes many people to maintain a large trail. Left to right: Chet Vincent, John Hickey, Peggy Parsons, Bleecker Staats, Eleanor Pink, Barbara Michelin, Dorcas Smith, Judy Strong, and Barbara Butler. Photographed by Florence Germond in her home on the Shunpike.

Otis Waterman, John Hickey, plus Jim and Mary Key did the south section of Route 82, Woodstock Road, Hibernia and South Road off Route 44. They had not only 12 Bluebirds, but also a Kingfisher, 12 Robins and four Red-tails. Jim spotted what he feels quite sure was a bobcat but before any of the rest of the group could see it, it was gone!

Meg Joe and I did the outer perimeter of the Trail, Nine Partners Cemetery in Millbrook, Schuman Road and Bangall-Amenia Road. We had the joy of watching a Rough-legged Hawk hunting over a large field on Bangall-Amenia Road. Also, we checked the 1,000 Canada Geese that have remained all winter (the first ever), and the lone Snow Goose on the Tamarack.

All arrived back ready for lunch and a good exchange of experiences. A wonderful job done. The monitors will soon be starting their weekly trips checking activities. The bluebirds are here!

Wings over Dutchess, March 1986

An Experiment that worked

On April 28 we awoke to snow falling and temperature close to freezing here. Nearby Sharon, Conn. has three inches of the cold white stuff on the ground. Art Gingert, the Bluebird Trail Coordinator for that area, called me at noon with great concern for the Bluebirds. He had lost a box of five young, a few days old, that morning.

He knew we had some hatched and wanted me to check them. He would come take them and hand feed them if I could ascertain that the parents had deserted them and if they were still alive. I left immediately, taking a mixture of the food I mix for winter birds, adding chopped raisins and a few ants I found in my kitchen. (I've been fighting them all spring.)

The first box I checked had five very hungry young about five days old. The parents were near by. I placed a bit of the food on the box top and we

watched from a distance. The female flew from branch to branch in a maple nearby cocking her head, looking to the ground for a bug or worm. The ground here was not snow covered. She didn't find anything and finally flew to the box top and immediately picked up a sizable piece of the dough, taking it off to a tree. She returned for a second and did the same but didn't feed the young. I was sure she was deserting them. This is the process in nature, when food is scarce, the adults serve themselves first.

So I returned home and called Art. He came straight over with boxes of cotton to put the young in, and also food, blueberries and currants. By this time I had checked two more boxes with live young and parents near but I feared for them all.

While we watched the first box we saw the female take bits of the mixture I had left on the roof and feed the babies. We were thrilled. We watched for an hour. She fed, and carried out feces! The young were quiet now and certainly surviving. We then put the currants and blueberries on a tray on a post a few feet from the box. Watched again for an hour. By now the male bird occasionally brought a tiny worm and fed the babies. The female continued to take the dough, neither going near the berries. Art then set the tray on top of the box. The female came, fluttered near but did not light. Twice more she spooked but on the third time she lit and took a currant, flew off and ate it. Again she did the same. Over and over she fed herself. She did not take the fruit to the babies. But by now two hours had passed and both parents did find some food and the female continued going there with bits of dough.

We watched for almost another hour, until near dusk when we left them feeling we had perhaps saved them — most certainly proved food could be provided.

Next day I checked them and the other boxes where young were. All were O.K. but the weather was better here. In Connecticut they not only lost young, but eggs were also deserted. Maybe if we ever have another 'early-late' spring like this one, food can be put out for the Bluebirds.

Wings over Dutchess, May 1987

Orphans and Foster Parents

In several instances thru the years of my monitoring of Bluebird Trails I have found abandoned young — dead parents, of course, the common cause.

This year was no exception but the cases were of special interest, I thought. The first deserted nest of two very tiny live birds and two dead, was reported to me by phone on a very rainy morning in early May. I said, "bring them to me and we will try to find a box of the same size young." This is imperative! I knew of a box of four young and they were the same age, tiny, no feathers, and hungry. We popped the orphans in quickly. It was pouring rain. A week later the nest was full of six feathered healthy Bluebirds. They went off successfully a few days later.

The second tragedy came again by phone to me in mid-August. Most boxes were empty at this time but I again agreed to try to find a box to put two feathered young whose one parent had been taken by a Sharp-shinned Hawk, but the female continued to care for the babies. On this day no parent was seen by the couple in whose yard the box was located. The young were calling and finally they got up to the hole and fell to the ground. Unable to fly, they were picked up and the call came to me. They were taking food offered, bread

soaked in milk and blueberries. However, even if this had been continued, hand reared birds never become self sufficient.

I checked several boxes, one had very young and another had four fully feathered ready to go! With hopes that the orphans might be near their size, I drove to the home of the couple to find the young were not nearly mature enough for that box. I brought the two babies with me and checked boxes, most of them empty. A walk across a field toward a box, hearing bluebirds calling, I opened it and there were three babies exactly the same size as the ones I was carrying! I added the two and hurried away. I was not able to get back until two weeks later. The box was empty, a nice flat nest, evident that they had fledged. There were a dozen or more smooth clean cherry pits in the nest. Apparently the young had been fed wild or choke cherry which they had digested and eliminated very well.

It is a real joy to be able to go the extra step in 'bringing back the Bluebird.'

Wings over Dutchess, October 1990

Bluebird Trail Results

With reported Bluebirds each month of the bitter, snowy winter, we anticipated a breeding population to exceed 1981s. Alas, Mother Nature had some different plans. With nests well begun the first week of April, came the awful storm. Beginning on Sunday, April 4 we had record cold plus 17" of snow by the sixth. The cold continued for nearly a week, When monitors got out to check boxes, we knew already nesting pairs were in trouble. A single frozen egg was found in one box, another had a pair dead and two eggs. These birds had been banded in June and July respectively last year as nestlings in two different boxes on the Cary Arboretum.

Some of the started nests never were completed, probably one or both birds perished. Some were completed weeks later and produced a single family instead of the normal two. A spell of wet cold weather in late May resulted in the death of several broods during a critical stage of development when parents were unable to provide enough food and/or warmth for survival.



Florence Germand in 1984 with a bluebird nest box. Florence worked long and hard on her pride and joy project, and successfully brought Eastern Bluebirds back to Dutchess County.

Loss by the parasitizing blowfly this year was low, primarily because the monitors are so watchful and ready to destroy the grubs and "build" new nests for the baby Bluebirds. This seems to be often necessary even though the nests have been sprinkled with Rotenone.

In spite of all the bad news, we did fledge a good number of young from a considerably enlarged area and increased number of boxes. My total from the same five monitored areas of 1981 plus a new one in the Moores Mill area monitored by Helen Manson and another at Buttercup Sanctuary covered by Roger Cohn, is 260 birds.

Besides our Trail we have a new friend of the Bluebird in the Kistner family on Rt. 343 opposite Chestnut Ridge Rd. After reading an article done by Millbrook Round Table on our trail last year, they built and monitored a series of boxes along their farm fences. Two were used and produced two broods each. How's that for a success story? The 4H Club also has begun a project of building and monitoring boxes. They had an exhibit at Fair this summer.

Kelly Greer continues to be very successful with her Trail in the Mabbetsville area, building her own boxes and doing all the monitoring. She is a real "pro" at nest building too. Trixi Strauss has several boxes put out by Art Gingert or Miles Sanctuary in the "eastern provinces" two years ago. She is beginning to have some Bluebirds in residence and will expand the trail next year.

The grand total cannot come close to the over 400 fledged last season but our state bird is certain of a continued chance to increase as long as interested people will build and maintain boxes to provide needed nesting places. Our Club can be proud of being part of this nationwide project.

The monitors beside those already mentioned were: Meg Guernsey, Winnefred Hebb, Jennifer Germond, Marion Van Wagner (Eleanor Pink, when Marion was off on her birding trips), and Florence Germond.

If anyone is interested in becoming a monitor next year, we can certainly use several more. It takes a trip once a week from early April through August, and keeping some record of all boxes. Let me know if you are interested.

Wings over Dutchess, October 1982

Hawk Watch on Dutchess Hill

by Jim Key

A lot of hours have been spent on Dutchess Hill during the month of September. This is a delightful place, easy to get to, you can drive your car right to the spot. All you need is a lawn chair, food, warm jacket and maybe a sun hat - oh yes, binoculars and a field guide might help too! The view is good with the Shawangunks and the Catskill Mountains to the west over the Hudson River, Mt. Beacon to the south, distant hills to north and east and an ever changing sky overhead. Arrange your chair so you can see to the north, west and east, and settle in to watch the sky. As the minutes slide by you become conscious of the twits around you. Overhead fly Bobolinks, Tree and Barn Swallows, a pair of Kestrels are feeding over the field, a Hummingbird whizzes by, once two Snipe skimmed low over the hill to a wet area below. Sparrows - Savannah, Field, or possibly a Vesper - but don't forget the sky, we are here to hawk watch. Someone calls "hawk over the candy-striped pole" and all eyes focus on that spot. We do see a small kettle of Broad-winged Hawks and everybody has a look. Sometimes we are lucky and see an Osprey, Marsh



Hawk watching on Dutchess Hill with the Keys about 1970. Now a housing development, at one time it was easy to drive to the top, put up a chair and watch. Left to right: Mary Key, Alice Jones, and Jim Key

Hawk or a rare Golden Eagle. Sometimes we have large kettles of Broad-wings and everyone gets excited and we all count, each getting a different number so the compiler chooses the number he accepts and it goes down. Turkey Vultures, for some reason they are not counted, circle by all day as well as Monarch butterflies. In the grass at our feet we find lots of grasshoppers, praying mantis, once a garter snake, and lots of crickets. Just being out in such a beautiful spot is enough to make your day, but of course having the hawks fly over really makes the day complete!

September Hawk Migration

The September Hawk migration started on the 12th and we had a total of 344 hawks pass by that day. Past records show this to be a low count. For the following six days our count was very low. On September 21 we had a total of 326. Our best bird was a Golden Eagle. Between September 12-26 we had the following: Broad-wing 766, Red-tail 14, Osprey 13, Peregrine 2, Golden Eagle 1, Marsh Hawk 6, Sharp-shinned 54, Kestrel 7, Coopers 1, Turkey Vulture 6, and unidentified 14 for a total of 884.

Hawk watching during migration takes a great deal of patience and although our count this year was low, the records sent to the North American Hawk Migration Association will help plot the course these hawks followed this year. Many thanks to all who attended the hawk watch at Dutchess Hill!

Wings over Dutchess, October 1976

Federated Sportsmen's Show and Scholarship Fair

by Mary Key

A great deal of interest was shown at both educational events. Many questions were answered regarding identification of birds and literature was given out. Various books, magazines, music records, our scrapbook, and bird houses were displayed. The live Screech-Owl, loaned to us by the Millbrook Boys School, attracted attention from both old and young folk. He was a good sport about the whole thing, probably because he is somewhat accustomed to people. A display card gave the owner's name, Frank Trevor, and his license number 290, which acquainted the public with the fact that this owl is protected and cannot be kept captive by just anyone. His lovely nightly serenades will never be forgotten by Alice Jones and Mary Key, who cared for him during these display periods. It was a sad parting when he was returned to the School.

Our booth at the Sportsmen's Show, sponsored by Adam's Fair Acres Farm, Route 44, Poughkeepsie, displayed both migratory and native ducks, and game birds of Dutchess County while the Arlington Scholarship Fair Booth displayed many birds of winter and spring. Frequent comments were of surprise that all these birds could be seen here at home. About 35 mounts and 12 skins were used in various positions — on a real blossoming dogwood branch, around a pond, on snow and on lawn, and by appropriate bird houses. Bird song recordings were played during the exhibit.

We extend thanks to all who helped with these projects and to Alice Jones, Chairman, who gathered such excellent display material. Mounted birds were loaned to us by Vassar College and the Millbrook Boys School.

Ten Wren Houses were given to the drawing winners, and all houses were delivered personally.

Wings over Dutchess, March 1966



Left: Club display at the first Sportsmen's Show, held March 4-5, 1966 at the Arlington High School. The club regularly had a booth at the annual show.

Right: Club display at Arlington Scholarship Fair held March 12, 1966 at the Arlington High School. Notice the Screech-Owl in the small cage on the table.



Photo Gallery — Other Activities



Although special fund raisers have not been held often, there were two yard sales and accompanying bake sale, this one on April 2, 1975 and another on April 19, 1980. Both were held in Eleanor Pink's driveway in Pleasant Valley.



Thelma Haight, along with Elting Arnold, lead the effort to save Thompson Pond. This photo was taken in August 1975, one month prior to the dedication of additional shoreline property, the first 180 acres having been purchased in 1958. Many Waterman Bird Club members helped to create and maintain trails and to pay off the purchases. Elting Arnold was Executive Secretary of the Nature Conservancy. Along the trail are memorial benches honoring Haight's and Arnold's contributions



The Annual Dinner has been a fixture from the first in 1959. The dinners were held at a variety of restaurants over the years, with a special speaker invited to give the program. This is the Nov. 4, 2002 dinner at Cappucino's on Route US-9. Left to right are: Doug Bean, Ruth Greenwood, Peggy Rudis, and Jan & Alan Peterson. Photographed by Binnie Chase.



Since 1996 a raffle or auction has been held at the Annual Dinner meeting to raise money. Peggy Fasciani organized the first ones followed by Binnie Chase. Some items are shown at the left. Here Binnie is speaking with Rosa Corbeels at the Nov. 1, 2004 dinner at Cappucino's.



The club has participated in Scenic Hudson's Great River Sweep, an event to clean up the Hudson River shores held each spring. Beginning in 2002 the club cleaned by Sand Dock Rd., Poughkeepsie. In 2004 the club location was changed to Madam Brett Park, Beacon. On this rainy day, April 25, 2004 are left to right: Tully McElrath, Chet Vincent, Barbara Michelin, Kelly Liao, Barbara Butler, and Sue Infanti. Photographed by Binnie Chase.

BIRDS OF DUTCHESS COUNTY	
OBSERVER <i>Ray Guernsey, Frank Gardner, Ralph Waterman</i>	
DATE <i>April 25, 2004</i>	TIME <i>3AM - 7:30PM</i>
WEATHER <i>30-45 rain - clear cool</i>	
LOCALITY <i>Madam Brett Park, Beacon, NY</i>	
Loon, Common. <input type="checkbox"/>	Towl, Blue-winged. <input type="checkbox"/>
Loon, Red-throated <input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler <input type="checkbox"/>
Grebe, Hairy <input type="checkbox"/>	Duck, Wood <input type="checkbox"/>
Grebe, Horned <input type="checkbox"/>	Redhead <input type="checkbox"/>
Grebe, Pied-billed <input type="checkbox"/>	Duck, King-necked. <input type="checkbox"/>
Cormorant, Double-crested <input type="checkbox"/>	Canvas-back <input type="checkbox"/>
Heron, Great Blue <input type="checkbox"/>	Duck, Greater Scaup <input type="checkbox"/>
Egret, American <input type="checkbox"/>	Duck, Lesser Scaup <input type="checkbox"/>
Egret, Snowy <input type="checkbox"/>	Golden-eye, American <input type="checkbox"/>
Heron, Little Blue <input type="checkbox"/>	Buffle-head <input type="checkbox"/>
Heron, Ea. Green <input type="checkbox"/>	Old-queue <input type="checkbox"/>
Heron, Black-crowned Night <input type="checkbox"/>	Scaup, White-winged <input type="checkbox"/>
Bittern, American <input type="checkbox"/>	Scaup, Surf <input type="checkbox"/>
Bittern, Ea. Least <input type="checkbox"/>	Scaup, American <input type="checkbox"/>
Swan, Mute <input type="checkbox"/>	Duck, Ruddy <input type="checkbox"/>
Swan, Whistling <input type="checkbox"/>	Merganser, Hooded <input type="checkbox"/>
Goose, Common Canada <input type="checkbox"/>	Merganser, American <input type="checkbox"/>
Mallard, Common <input type="checkbox"/>	Merganser, Red-breasted <input type="checkbox"/>
Duck, Common Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Vulture, Turkey <input type="checkbox"/>
Duck, Red-legged Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Goshawk, Ea. <input type="checkbox"/>
Gull, Herring <input type="checkbox"/>	Hawk, Sharp-shinned <input type="checkbox"/>
Widgeon, European <input type="checkbox"/>	Hawk, Cooper's <input type="checkbox"/>
Baldpate <input type="checkbox"/>	Hawk, Ea. Red-tailed <input type="checkbox"/>
Pintail, American <input type="checkbox"/>	Hawk, No. Red-shouldered <input type="checkbox"/>
Teal, Green-winged <input type="checkbox"/>	Hawk, Broad-winged <input type="checkbox"/>
	Hawk, Am. Rough-legged <input type="checkbox"/>

Even before the Waterman Bird Club was formed, records were kept by local ornithologists. This is Ralph Waterman's field checklist from the 1954 May Census with Ray Guernsey and Frank Gardner. Notice they started at 3AM (in rain) and continued to 7:30PM. The club also conducts a Christmas Bird Count each December.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips, or walks, have been a key component of club activities from the very beginning. Cruger Island in Red Hook and Turkey Hollow east of Millbrook were major birding destinations before 1920. Here are trip reports from 1963 and 2006 with a table of all birds seen showing many changes.

While most walks are at sites in Dutchess County, many areas outside of Dutchess County have been visited, with areas like Jamaica Bay visited most years. The American Museum of Natural History was a regular venue for many years, although recently the club has scheduled trips to Central Park.

Censuses are held every year. The May Census, started in 1919, covers the entire county. A Christmas Bird Count held most years since 1901 is all within the county, plus two other Christmas counts include a portion of the county. A Waterfowl Count is also held each January.

We end this section with a story of Casperkill Creek whose history illustrates what can happen to valuable birding areas. It passes through Brickyard Swamp, a favorite birding destination until the 1960s, then through Vassar College, a place we still visit for birding. Land that was once Brickyard Swamp is now occupied by 44 Plaza, K-Mart, and Stop & Shop. The Photo Gallery then shows how other locations have evolved.

Field Trips 43 Years Apart

Cruger Island, May 4, 1963 by Alice Jones

Even before arising this day many bird calls filled the quiet morning air. There would seem to be a wave of migrating birds at hand, good. Today we have a trip scheduled to Cruger Island, leaving Poughkeepsie at 7AM, returning in early afternoon.

More conclusive of a wave was the abundance of birds seen and heard along 9G to Ward Manor, where my arrival coincided with Mary and Jim Key plus passengers Alex Petraitis and Helen Manson. By 8AM we had accounted for 32 species, and were viewing a Blackburnian Warbler when Eleanor, Otis, Marion, and Florence arrived. The lane from Ward Manor to the island was literally alive with White-throated Sparrows. These birds merely moved aside for our passing, making binocular vision unnecessary to see the yellow spot posterior to the nare opening. As we neared the western end of the brush-spotted pasture on the right, an insistent, muted, chickadee-like call could be heard. This proved to be a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher whose tiny form flitted about, giving some of us a first and also good observation. In passing, this bird (or birds) had been heard several days earlier and would be again on Census Day the 11th and a few days later in the same general area. It is here also that the Cerulean Warblers can be spotted [alas it is now, 2008, overgrown and without Ceruleans]. A female was seen building a nest Census Day.

The Island was, as usual, productive. The total of warblers seen reached 13. A Laughing Gull was reported on the river and more Veeries were noted. Along a boggy, wet area an unfamiliar bird song was heard but persistent and encircling tactics failed to give us a sighting — one not for the records. Total count for the trip reached 74, a fair number, assuring us May's migration was getting in full swing. The bay brought about first observations of a number of birds for this spring. We all returned to our nests feeling thankful that we were privileged again to an "unsilent spring."

Wings over Dutchess, June 1963

Cruger Island – Tivoli Bay Area, May 7, 2006 by *Barbara Michelin*

On a cool morning six members met at the lower parking lot for Tivoli Bay. The birds were singing around us as we got out of our cars. Barbara Butler heard the Pine Warbler on her way to the parking lot. We could hear Catbirds, Robins, Wood Thrush and Baltimore Orioles. We started at the lookout at the North Bay and found a Great Blue Heron and a Greater Yellowlegs on a mud flat. Robert Williams spotted a large raptor flying over the bay. It was an adult Bald Eagle.

The tide was out so we walked the road to the railroad tracks. The island is off limits because of the nesting Bald Eagles. We found Veeries along the road into the parking lot along with Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and White-throated Sparrows. There were Common Yellowthroats and Yellow Warblers, five Wood Ducks, several Redwing Blackbirds and Song Sparrows along the causeway. We had six Double-crested Cormorants fly over and a Cooper's Hawk. Out over the South Bay were 30+ Tree Swallows plus some Rough-winged, Bank, and Barn Swallows. We heard three Marsh Wrens and a Swamp Sparrow.

We met Gene McGarry on our way out. He told us he had seen two White-crowned Sparrows but they had moved on by the time we got to the spot he had seen them. On the way back the tide was coming in and by 10:30AM some of us got wet feet crossing one area of the causeway. We then took the trail to South Tivoli Bay and found a nice pocket with 11 species of warblers! They were busy feeding and singing in the trees.

We had a nice surprise when we came to the top of the wooded trail into the field near Bard College campus. Ahead of us by the trail was a beautiful red fox looking for breakfast. He looked at us as we looked at him and then he moved on down the field path. A Swan was out in South Bay and a Red-tailed Hawk soared over the college campus. After lunch by our cars we headed home. On the way out I heard a Great Crested Flycatcher to add to our list.

Wings over Dutchess, June 2006

Turkey Hollow, June 8, 1963 by *Florence Germond*

The morning was cloudy and downright chilly, but Turkey Hollow offered interest enough to keep our hearts warm if our hands were cold. The sheer beauty of the rock-strewn hemlock-lined gorge is enough any day to lift the human spirit, but the songs of Wood Thrush, Veery, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ovenbird, and vireo enhances even more. June birding is rewarding, and we should all do more of it. Everything is singing, and nesting is progressing.

We found a pair of Cedar Waxwings with nest finished in a scrub apple tree, a second in progress in a neighboring tree. Kingbirds dive bombed us as we neared their abode atop another low tree. Marion had a Veery flush from its nest a few inches off the roadside. The Chestnut-sided Warbler nest found a

	Cruger I. Turkey H.					Cruger I. Turkey H.			
	1963	2006	1963	2006		1963	2006	1963	2006
Canada Goose		11			House Wren	3		4	
Mute Swan		1			Winter Wren				8
Wood Duck	4	5	1		Marsh Wren		3		
American Black Duck	6				Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	2		
Mallard		1			Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1			1
Blue-winged Teal	2				Veery	15	2	3	21
Common Merganser	1				Hermit Thrush				2
Ring-necked Pheasant	2		1		Wood Thrush	7	5	1	1
Double-crested Cormorant		6			American Robin	22	3	12	16
Great Blue Heron		1	1	1	Gray Catbird	7	8	8	9
Green Heron	1				Brown Thrasher	3			
Turkey Vulture		1	1		European Starling	30			10
Osprey	3				Cedar Waxwing				4
Bald Eagle		1			Blue-winged Warbler	2			1
Northern Harrier	1				Golden-winged Warbler	2			
Cooper's Hawk		1			Nashville Warbler	3	2		
Red-tailed Hawk		1		2	Yellow Warbler	10	5		4
Killdeer	1				Chestnut-sided Warbler	7	1		2
Spotted Sandpiper	1				Black-throated Blue Warbler		2		
Greater Yellowlegs		1			Yellow-rumped Warbler	20	15		
Laughing Gull	1				Black-throated Green Warbler	4	4	1	5
Herring Gull	3				Blackburnian Warbler	3	2	1	1
Great Black-backed Gull	2				Pine Warbler		1		
Rock Pigeon	6				Prairie Warbler	1			1
Mourning Dove	2		4		Cerulean Warbler	6			
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2		6		Black-and-white Warbler	5	2		3
Chimney Swift	8				American Redstart	3	4		4
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1			4	Worm-eating Warbler		1		1
Belted Kingfisher	2		1	1	Ovenbird	5	5		
Red-bellied Woodpecker		1			Louisiana Waterthrush		1	5	4
Downy Woodpecker	2	3		1	Common Yellowthroat	4	4		6
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1			Canada Warbler				4
Northern Flicker	13	3		2	Scarlet Tanager				6
Eastern Wood-Pewee			1		Eastern Towhee	11			6
Acadian Flycatcher				2	Chipping Sparrow	12			4
Least Flycatcher	1		1	1	Field Sparrow	2			4
Eastern Phoebe	1		2	3	Song Sparrow	11	6		6
Great Crested Flycatcher	4	1		3	Swamp Sparrow	4	1		
Eastern Kingbird			3		White-throated Sparrow	100	6		
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	2		3	White-crowned Sparrow		2		
Blue-headed Vireo				2	Dark-eyed Junco	6			
Warbling Vireo	4				Northern Cardinal	3	6	1	2
Red-eyed Vireo			4		Rose-breasted Grosbeak	4	4		5
Blue Jay	16	5		3	Indigo Bunting				1
American Crow	10	5		2	Bobolink				6
Tree Swallow		35		6	Red-winged Blackbird	25	10		10
N. Rough-winged Swallow		2			Eastern Meadowlark	2			
Bank Swallow	50	2			Rusty Blackbird	2			
Barn Swallow		2		2	Common Grackle	20	5		10
Black-capped Chickadee	10	10		6	Brown-headed Cowbird	20			10
Tufted Titmouse	3	5			Baltimore Oriole	6	6		4
White-breasted Nuthatch	4	5			Purple Finch	3			
Brown Creeper	2		2		American Goldfinch	16	5	6	4
Carolina Wren		1			House Sparrow	8		6	

few weeks before was complete but empty. An Oriole's nest swung from an elm, and a young Grackle squawked from his nest in a nearby crotch. A female Scarlet Tanager was spotted carrying nesting material, pursued by her ardent mate. Pat Garthwaite clambered up rocks and through briars disturbing a garter snake, to Marion's dismay, on her way to search out a Canada Warbler, spotting him well and adding another life bird to her list. Several, three at least, Yellow-billed Cuckoos flew low over the picnic area at the entrance to Turkey Hollow, and we all observed one sitting motionless for a long time in a locust tree. A Brewster's Warbler was also recorded.

Those are a few of the highlights of the trip and you members who miss these trips are certainly cheating yourselves of much pleasure and knowledge. Participants: Marion VanWagner, Roz and Ken Davis, Oat Waterman, Pat Garthwaite and Florence Germond

Wings over Dutchess, June 1963

Turkey Hollow [now Tamarack Preserve], July 12, 2006 by Barbara Butler

Neither the weather forecast nor the sky looked promising. Expecting to get rained out long before lunchtime, I went to the meeting place at the Preserve parking lot without packing a lunch. Ten people showed up and we started out in the gloom and off-and-on drizzle. We walked well beyond the dam, then came back and stopped at the house opposite the dam for lunch.

Not surprisingly, the birds were hard to see, but we had wonderful Winter Wrens singing, 4 or 5 at least. Didn't see any of them. We heard a couple of Acadian Flycatchers and two distant Hermit Thrushes. Wood Thrushes were heard and a good number of Veeries heard and seen. Parts of the group saw Louisiana Waterthrush, Worm-eating Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler.

The highlight of the trip was the hummingbird nest! We saw one hummingbird and then another. One went into a nest and fed her young. We could all see the nest. We waited awhile for them to come back but we finally gave up and went on. On the return trip the group saw the hummingbirds feeding young in the nest again. The nest was on a horizontal hemlock branch high in the tree. The tree was downhill from us, so the nest was only a little above eye-level. The June 18, 1994 field trip here also found a hummingbird nest. What a treat!

Wings over Dutchess, August 2006

How to be Successful Without Really Trying!

by Russ O'Malley

An overnight trip January 11-12, 1992 to Jones Beach and beyond.

Well, lets see... Jones Beach. West End. We get out of the cars... Then it was Harrier, Savannah Sparrows, 30 Snow Buntings, SNOWY OWL (50 ft. away)! Something like that. At the parking lot we met Susan Joseph, who was visiting family, and a surprised Peggy Gorson, who was meeting the Lyman Landgon members. They joined us for a short time Saturday morning.

Well, lets see... Point Lookout. We get out of the cars... Then it was Bonaparte's Gulls, Homed Grebe, Red-throated Loon, 10 HARLEQUIN DUCKS (less than 20 ft. away and in courtship display)! Then it was Bufflehead, Black Duck, 10 KING EIDER (confirmed later)! Something like

that. Throw in some Oldsquaw, Red-breasted Mergansers, Ruddy Turnstones, Dunlin, Sanderling, Brant and the fact that the weather cooperated quite satisfactorily. Only 2 hours into our Jones Beach overnighter, not bad eh?

Later stops at the Coast Guard Station, Zachs' Bay and Tobay rewarded us with Homed Lark, Double-crested Cormorant, Hooded Mergansers, Shovelers, Pintails, Green-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, and Great Egrets.

Dinner that evening was a pleasure. Great food and great conversation. I know there was the matter of a \$40 dollar salad, but who was about to argue when the entire restaurant made you feel like you were in the middle of the filming of the Godfather IV!

Sunday morning. Well, lets see... We get out of the cars... Bingo! We observe a Peregrine Falcon on the top of the water tower, in the middle of the Jones Beach traffic circle! Fifteen minutes pass and it's time to move on.

Well, lets see... Tobay Sanctuary. We get out of the cars... Then it was Song Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and SAW-WHET OWL! Then Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and NORTHERN SHRIKE! Something like that. Had an hour passed? It was possible.

Birding along the barrier beaches continued and after a stop for lunch, we made a decision to begin our return trip home. But first, a stop at a pond in Babylon, a town on the mainland, with help on directions from Susan Joseph when we met her again by chance Sunday morning. Thanks Susan.

Well, lets see... We get out of the cars... Then it was Canada Geese, 40 to 50 American Wigeon (on land), 2 EURASIAN WIDGEON (also on land)! On the pond itself were 50 or more American Wigeon, 6 to 8 Hooded Mergansers, and 5 Ruddy Ducks. Oh, this was too easy! Russ, Bleecker and Gordon had a great time on a rescue mission of an immature swan. It was on the wrong side of the fence and was trying to get into the pond. It was the funniest scene, but they were able to herd it down to the end of the fenced in area and into the pond with a happy ending.

A final stop at a lake near Rye Playland netted us a Belted Kingfisher, Canvasbacks, and an uncountable number of scaup. If we only had 15 minutes of good daylight left we would have had a TUFTED DUCK! (Gee, we never have any luck.)

I've never had so much fun. Thanks, Gordon and Sally Barnes, Barbara Michelin, Bleecker Staats, Linda Gette, and Sandy Koonce.

Wings over Dutchess, February 1992

Jamaica Bay — April 29, 1992

by Bleecker Staats

Riding on the bus with the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club is like going to camp with a bunch of enthusiastic kids. I love it. Sue Gyscek has done it again, doughnut holes and all. The weather was bright and the air cooled by the offshore breeze. The first thing on the path was a White-throated Sparrow with his bright yellow lores. At the first lookout on the Bay we saw the American Oystercatcher, Great and Snowy Egrets and Mute Swans. Canada and Brant Geese were everywhere. The rising heat waves made distant viewing difficult

but we were able to identify Gadwalls, a Northern Shoveler, Black Ducks, and Mallards.

On the pond side of the trail Red-breasted Mergansers and Ruddy Ducks plied the waters and each piling seemed to hold up a Double-crested Cormorant. At one point we had an unobstructed view of a Brown Thrasher singing in the sun. Later in the day we were treated by sounds and views of his two cousins, the Gray Catbird and the Mockingbird. The more that we gathered around, the more he sang. A Black-crowned Night-Heron was seen and a Tricolored Heron just briefly. And then there was the Red Knot, among the Black-bellied Plovers, just before the second Concorde flew over. Red-winged Blackbirds, creaky Cowbirds, Song Sparrows, Mourning Doves, and Robins added sound to the "picture." Out on the edge of one of the sand bars Willets were gathered and some sort of a sandpiper was seen in the company of a Dunlin or two. A Great Black-backed Gull made short work of a hapless crab but when he dropped it, the Laughing Gulls seemed to laugh.

At least one Killdeer called as well as a Ring-necked Pheasant. I don't recall if the Woodcock was seen or heard. The Glossy Ibis is always a treat when the sun picks up the metallic greens and browns of their "hammered metal" bodies. We were fortunate to see both the Northern Harrier and the Sharp-shinned Hawks. Rounding the ponds and heading back for lunch we saw both the Common and Boat-tailed Grackles; Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. Nearing the Refuge HQ building, the "common" House Finch and House Sparrow, the Rock Dove, and Starling had to be added to the list.

After a nice lunch in the sun, birders walked some of the paths on both sides of the road. Warblers counted were the Black-and-white, Yellow, and the Myrtle (Yellow-rumped if you please). The rich notes of the Cardinal rang out while the Rufous-sided Towhee drank his tea. Both the American and Fish crows were heard as well as the Flicker. A Phoebe told us his name and the swallow family was represented by the Tree, Barn, and Rough-winged, no less. On the other side of the road a Hermit Thrush, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher plus both the House and Carolina Wrens made themselves known.

From a blind on the east side, a male Glossy Ibis stretched his green wings up and danced a bit to impress someone. I know the WE were certainly impressed. Blue-winged Teals were seen there and several eastern painted turtles, and a Snowy Egret shared the shore line. Far out on the back pond, a Bufflehead and a Loon bobbed among the white caps while a small raft of ruddies was off to the left. The only tern identified was the Common Tern.

It is amazing how fast the day at Jamaica Bay goes. It seems that you no sooner get there than it is time to leave. What a pity. On the bus a review of the list gave us a total of 71 species. There was also the discussion as to what the Bird-of-the-Day should be. Should it be the Red Knot? the Brown Thrasher? The White-eyed Vireo? Or how about a Leprechaun named "Irving"!!!!? A day anywhere with the Waterman Bird Club is always a pleasant memory.

Wings over Dutchess, May 1992

May Census, Southwest Dutchess Group

by Mary Key

The day started at 4AM. Arriving at our first stop, Balog's Marsh near Lake Walton at 4:30. To our surprise the first bird heard was the Swamp Sparrow, then the hoped for Whip-poor-will. By 5AM two Barred Owls talked back and forth. When leaving this area about 7AM we had 47 species, including the Green Heron, American Bittern, Virginia Rail, both Cuckoos, and eight species of Warblers. This area has always been very good but since the pond was drained, leaving a marsh with a long draining ditch, and especially since the farm has become a housing development, the houses are crowding the woods, meadows and marsh more each year. But the birds evidently return just as long as there is any possible habitat left. The total species count grows smaller each year however.

Our next area, Breakneck, north to Beacon along the railroad tracks. A new area, excellent this spring and Bald Eagles reported the previous week, set our hopes high. New barricades made it necessary to leave the car and walk several miles with poor results — no Eagles, no shorebirds on mud flats, no gulls on river, and only a few birds in the adjoining woods.

Next location, also new, Blodgett's Woods, Fishkill. We had 46 species here but only ten not seen elsewhere. The beloved Winter Wren, thrushes, 14 warbler species including Parula, Worm-eating, Canada, and Blackpoll, plus the Indigo Bunting made our laborious walk around newly plowed fields worthwhile. Earlier this spring a winding meadow lane lead us through fields and around swales to the woods. Now huge tractors have made all this into one large furrowed field most difficult to cross. But birds we wanted and birds we got.

Next Sand Dock Road, 1PM, near the large IBM plant south of Poughkeepsie. We checked our list for missed species. Here the river gave us the two common species of gulls, Herring and Black-backed, but the mud banks only had a "Spotty." The tour now covered various roads for special habitat and we picked up new species this way. Late evening found us at the home of Davis Finch, Hopewell Jct., where a Woodcock had been calling. He did not call for us and we could not arouse the Screech-Owl with our calls, but we did add needed Wood Duck and Nighthawks. Had Davis been home, no doubt our luck would have changed.

By 10PM we were home. Our total of 105 species was our largest ever, but the total number of birds was way down. The increase in species, I feel sure, was due to longer hours in the field, new locations in our area, and stronger support in our area outside our initial group.

Those on tour: Jim and Mary Key, Jim Southward, Ray Connelly, and Dick Guthrie. Those helping at home: Ruth Dow, Christine Southward, Helen DeMunn, and Bessie Frommann.

Wings over Dutchess, June 1969

Hidden Valley Christmas Bird Count

by Sibyll Gilbert

This count circle includes all of Pawling, north to Wingdale, parts of Beckman and East Fishkill, plus portions of Putnam County and Connecticut.

January 1, 2001: I sat at an upstairs window, bundled in extra sweaters, tiring arms propped on elbows, squinting through the binoculars and counting. I was a feeder watcher. Even this took considerable effort on my part as I contended with a flu induced foggy fever that filled my head. Good old Bob had filled the feeders and removed the 12 inches of snow from the deck. Oh, how I searched in vain for a Boreal Chickadee, a Mountain Chickadee, a Carolina Chickadee (hey, who knows?). The two Tree Sparrows were studied at great length, lest they could possibly be chippies. I came to realize that Tree Sparrows are significantly smaller than Song Sparrows or White-throats. A calling Screech-Owl heard in the wee hours of the morning (did I dream it?) and a Turkey Vulture flyover were the best I could produce for the count.

I studied my new Sibley's Guide, and I realized that it WAS a Clay-colored Sparrow that I had seen on last year's count. How regretful that I did not possess Sibley's then. Small consolation: I did not have to fill out that long verification form. If you own only one bird guide, it should be Sibley's. The name sounds good, too!

As chief compiler for the count, I still had to get it all together, and despite the great and invaluable assistance from Connecticut (Angela Dimmitt) there was the formidable challenge of entering the endlessly detailed data. (How many party hours were spent on snowshoes while playing recorded owl tapes?) And second guessing the data that the participants provide, or neglect to provide.

The day was beautiful, for the 19 field observers capable of enjoying it. Temperatures were between 9 and 15 degrees and it was mostly sunny and calm. Five Black Vultures were seen as well as our familiar TVs. Waterfowl counts were sharply reduced due to the frozen waters, but we had a high count of 78 of those tiniest of ducks, the Buffleheads. The Merlin was well described by Bill Liedlich and Bob Cartoceti and was seen in Danbury. The Phoebe was seen by Judy Kelly-Moberg in Patterson. Ravens were seen in New York and Connecticut. We had a high count of Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Savannah Sparrow (all in one flock: Bill Wallace), and Fox Sparrow.

No winter finches, and several of the expected were inexplicably missing: like grackles, cowbirds, towhee, and Field Sparrow. We missed Rusty Blackbirds. Next year I predict that we shall find a Eurasian Collared Dove to add to our check list. Our count produced a respectable total of 79 species.

Wings over Dutchess, February 2001

Our Lovely Casperkill

by Dr. A. Scott Warthin, Jr.

Prof. of Geology, Vassar College

Once upon a time a little stream began, clear and sweet, in a swamp where the Green Herons perched in the button bushes, and the Marsh Wrens nested in

the long cattails. What this stream may have been called by the Wappinger Indians we do not know, but early Dutch settlers called it the Casperkill. Along its banks the mink and otter hunted and played, while the deer came through the forest to quench their thirst.

The Indians, never of great number, used the stream in small ways; but these ways were in truth so small that they had, no visible effect. Some four thousand years of habitation by Indians left the stream and its denizens as little changed as the forests along its banks.

But when the land was granted in patents and sold to settlers the great change began. Forests fell to clear fields, and to furnish lumber and fuel. The Casperkill suffered its first conspicuous indignity in the construction of a mill in its lower reach. Less obvious changes also occurred. Spring rains washed soil from the bare wheat fields, muddying at times the once clear spate. The hot rays of the summer sun warmed the waters that had been sheltered by trees along the banks. And other misfortunes came, at first slowly but at last in a crescendo of disaster. Beneath the headwater swamp lay beds of clay; this was used for the bricks that built much of old Poughkeepsie and the early buildings of Vassar College. When the brick plant closed in 1932 nearly half the swamp had been replaced by a pit, soon full of water. That phase of history remains today only in the name of Brickyard Hill, east of the swamp.

But that hole full of water? What a marvelous place to dump garbage. So a citizen with foresight bought the worthless hole and leased it to the Town of Poughkeepsie for a dump, and the waters that flowed from the swamp down the Casperkill became rich with the organic material of the decaying garbage and charged with iron from the rusting cans. The decay process used up the oxygen normally dissolved in the water; many kinds of life that had swarmed in the stream were drowned in the waters that once nourished them. Some life, however, survived and found that the waters, though fetid, were richer than ever with the decaying organic matter; these things flourished. So the Elodea and water-lilies that once grew in Sunset Lake on Vassar College campus, were replaced by ugly mats of algae. The coliform count of the water grew so high that the Vassar girls had to give up the kayaks in which they once sported. As the sunfish and bass that swam in the lake were replaced by goldfish and carp, so the waterloving plants around its edge gave way to Yellow Flags and Sagittaria. And for years, when the Town burned its dump thrice weekly, a north wind brought a snow of burnt paper ashes on the water.

A few atrocities were corrected; a gravel miner was required to settle the mud from his wash water before returning it to the stream. Vassar College ceased to use Sunset Lake as a cooler for condenser water from the power plant. And in time more people protested the Monday-Wednesday-Friday smog from the burning dump, so dumping at that spot ceased. Of course, it was coincidence that the dumping space had by then all been filled up well above water level, and was now valuable land. So we come to the era of industry and the supermarket, surrounded by acres of parking lots, where rainfall must be drained away at once or business suffers. And where can the storm sewers most cheaply discharge? Poor Casperkill! Today, even a modest rain promptly produces a brown turbid fluid discharge, courtesy of Shop Rite and the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. It is not, however, tea, and it is (slowly, we hope) filling Sunset Lake which is the first settling basin in its path. And nestling in this unlovely mud are other artifacts — item, two auto tires; item,

an estimated 300 beer cans and assorted bottles. How the few surviving Painted Turtles can find a place to burrow for the winter it is hard to imagine, snug indeed, between Schlitz and Rheingold, in mud spiced with fuel oil released into the Lake by mistake. Why is it that nearly all mistakes made with water are detrimental?

The New York State Water Resources Commission, in effect, has declared the situation hopeless above the Sunset Lake dam, giving that portion a “D” classification. On the theory that running water will gradually cleanse itself, and with the septic tank action in Sunset Lake as an assist, the Commission placed a rating of “C” on the Casperkill below Sunset Lake. This would permit fishing, except for trout which requires more dissolved oxygen than the panfish. This is hardly realistic today, but may come to pass when the organic debris in the Town dump has wasted away.

But will the Casperkill ever return to its early state? No, my friend, the Marsh Wren can never replace the supermarket, so let us have a care for what is left to us before it is too late.

Wings over Dutchess, December 1965

Photo Gallery — Birding Places



Otis Waterman on top of Mt. Beacon, 1966. It has been a long time since any field trip was held to Mt. Beacon. During the 1960s it was often a hawk watch location. While one could hike up, the incline railway was also running making ascent relatively easy, but not everyone used the incline which closed in 1978. Photographed by Helen Manson.



In the “old days” it was common to drive along the Hudson River beside the railroad tracks looking for birds. Helen Mansion wrote: “March 27, 1974. The sparkling river was whipped into whitecaps by a brisk breeze as we drove beside the tracks from just north of Hyde Park to Barrytown. We lunched in a sunny spot near Rhinecliff. We had thought to get off at Barrytown but found the way barred. As we turned back one of the cars stalled. Now take at least ten people, one stalled car, ten different ideas as to what may be the trouble, a driver who wants only to get going again, and you have a sticky situation. With everyone peering under the hood, no loose wires, nothing else visible, so the only thing to do is push the car out of the way and go for help. That was all that was needed — the car, in self-defense, started. Later it was found to have a loose screw — the car that is.”



Thompson Pond as seen from Stissing Mt., December 1975. Pine Plains is to the upper left, and the causeway is to the left. Areas nearby have changed with new homes, but Thompson Pond remains protected.

This section contains a heterogeneous collection of articles which demonstrate the fun had on club sponsored events. As well as sightings of interesting bird activities. We close with a winter remembrance by Helen Manson (Andrews). We hope you enjoy, learn, marvel, and laugh at them.

Finally there is an extended selection of photographs of club members, past and present.

Christmas Census: Here's Mud in Your Eye!

by Elaine Andersen

Birding with Peggy Fasciani is always a treat. Whether we are chasing bats with Bill Case out of our cabin in New Mexico, scaling boulders in Arizona's Scheelite Canyon for Mexican owls, or getting loons at Nubble Light in Maine, we always have a good time. Christmas census was no exception. After a slow morning, the birds came awake about the time we hit Lake Walton and we got some good species.

Rory Solan left to check out a flock of turkeys and after a fortifying lunch, we drove along Hillside Lake Road to Karl Ehmer's farm. A break in the fence sported a gravel area, a perfect spot for us to pull in. We emerged into a biting wind, eager to scan the row of trees far below us for hawks. Sure enough, on a distant branch, hunkered down in his feathers was our Red-tail. Another species for our list. The fierce wind kept the birds down so, thankfully, we got back in the warm car. Peggy made a swooping U-turn off the gravel and onto the carpet of green till we heard a most ungravelly noise ... something like "ssscchhhllllkkk." Pretty much the kind of sound you'd expect from a Chrysler Concorde sinking in mud. "Uh-oh" we said in unison.

While Peggy gunned it, Rosa Corbeels and I rocked the car and the mud welcomed a few more inches of steel belted radials deeper into its soft embrace. Then another idea hit us: we took Peggy's floor mats out and crammed them under each wheel. Surely that extra bit of traction would pull us up and out onto firmer ground. Do remember this carpet trick, folks, for this idea would have worked brilliantly if there had been any firmer ground. As it was, the carpets became projectiles and shot like greased pigs out of the wheel wells, splattering us with muck.

As luck would have it, a cyclist passed by up on the road and I called out, "Oh, sir, can you help us?" He yelled back, "I can't pull a car out with a bicycle, lady!" Well, although he didn't sound too helpful, he was, at least, another human soul out there in the wilderness, so we slogged up the hill to talk to him. A travel pouch on the back of his bike yielded his cell phone and the number of a towing company. Hope began to glimmer. He left a message with an answering service about three women stranded in a farmer's field. It

sounded a little fishy even to me. Then he had an idea. "Let me rock it," he said, as he lumbered down to the car.

We stood at the crest of the hill and watched as he confidently swung behind the wheel. He gunned it, rocked it, and as the tires spun, the resulting friction spewed mud outward in four black arcs wondrous to behold. The car swerved and slid in an effort to surge forth, but alas, the three of us watched in dismay as it veered crazily further and further downhill, like butter in a hot skillet, deeper into the morass. Dumbstruck, he emerged and all four of us viewed with dismay the vast trenches he'd carved. Deep brown and oozy, the looping arabesques looked almost artistic in the grass and could perhaps inspire an entertaining new variation on England's famous crop circles.

You know those sudden snow squalls which darken the sky and unleash a horizontal blitz of white? I suppose you'd think I were embellishing if I said we now had such a storm. But we did. Every fold in our parkas filled with little pellets of snow, prompting Sir Galahad to leave on his high-tech steed, as we removed back to the car and waited for his tow truck.

Another hour went by and the snow let up. Then Rosa spotted a tow truck coming along the road perpendicular to ours, preparing to turn in. I attempted to run up to the top of the hill to flag him down, because the car was no longer clearly visible from the road. Each boot step made a wet, sucking noise as the mud reluctantly released it. It slowed me enough that as I just reached the break in the hedges, flailing my arms, the tow truck glided past, giving me a fine profile of the oblivious driver.

After waiting fruitlessly for him to return, Peggy clambered up the hill to a house and called a nearby towing service. When at last the truck driver appeared, he took one look and said, "See you in the spring, ladies!" We groaned and he said, "Just kidding. Piece of cake." Picture a handsome and brawny Viking, the very reincarnation of Eric the Red, clutching chains and cables. Definitely someone you'd want on your side in a fracas. He had Peggy move the wheels left and right as he attempted to attach the hooks and chain. Splat, splat, went black splotches on the windshield, and when he stood up, he'd been lathered in brown, looking like a red-headed mud wrestler. Fastidious Peggy grabbed her packet of Wet Ones and waved it outside to him, "Want a wipey?" His monosyllabic response is lost to history.

After much "yo, heave, hoeing," cables were attached and he went back up the hill to the truck. Now it looked as if we were in business. He stood beside the truck efficiently moving levers and as we inched slowly out of the trench, we felt hope. He got in the cab and began moving his truck. Whirring wheels were not a good sign. The high-pitched whine of a straining engine was not a good sign. The truck sliding downhill sideways was not a good sign. He was now perpendicular to us. We watched in horror as his vehicle came inexorably closer and closer affording us great views of his company logo on the door. Then the guardian angels of birders and/or tow drivers must have intervened, for he slid to a stop alongside us. Now there were two vehicles stuck on the hill, aligned like slippers under the bed.

What was it he said about it being a piece of cake? Mississippi Mud Pie, for sure. He emerged from the cab, lips moving. Was that steam emanating from him or just a bit of mist? His ruddy face and neck appeared redder. Even his hair seemed redder. He grabbed heavy chains and tossed them into compartments as if they were confetti. Peggy didn't offer him a wipey now. He

lit a cigarette and growled into his cell phone. In a few minutes, a huge flatbed truck appeared with a driver sporting a look of unholy glee. I wonder if the guys at the garage will ever let him live it down.

Soon they cranked us up and out across the road, lights flashing, traffic halted. Peggy's white car looked like the mother of all Dalmatians. Now that Eric could smile again he told us, "I've been doing this eleven years, and I've never gotten stuck before." Peggy responded, "I've been driving fifty years, and I've never gotten stuck before!" This was a day to remember. Another adventure for us.

There's still time. Wouldn't you like to sign up to be on our team for Spring Census?

Wings over Dutchess, February 2003

The Turning of the Tide

by Lucile Stevens

On October 5, while our stalwart regulars were away to Hawk Mountain, about eight stay-at-home neophyte birders took off for the scheduled trip to Cruger Island. While walking down the country lane to our destination we were obliged to circle some good-sized puddles. We took our time and enjoyed our lunch while overlooking the river and commenting on the changing tide. As we returned, most of the group chose to walk for a way down beside the railroad tracks to look for birds. Among our group were two guests of Margaret Havas visiting from England. They decided to turn back to our parked cars, and I chose to join them.

As we approached our "country lane" it was totally under water. My two British friends were wearing shoes they didn't mind getting wet but I had on my spanking new walking shoes which I promptly took off and tackled the problem in stocking feet. My friends made it through all right but by the time I had reached the last biggest, slipperiest, deepest hole I knew I'd never make it except on all fours. But wait! We looked up and saw a Land Rover with two duck hunters watching us. They called to me to stand still and wait. One donned a pair of hip waders, came and took me to safety, piggyback. Was I ever grateful. By now the water was up to their floor boards but they drove out to pick up the rest of our group which arrived back with nary a wet toe.

Previously some of us wondered where the "island" is. As you know, the dictionary described an island as a land mass surrounded by water. Well, now we not only knew where Cruger Island is but also when!

Wings over Dutchess, November 1983

Banding Report

by Thelma Haight

I have just completed my banding reports for 1961 and although I banded a small number of birds compared to most banders I find I have a few interesting records. I hope you find them so.

To begin I have banded 25 Cardinals since I started banding in 1959 in the area of my own home. This past summer I banded a hand reared Starling, two hand reared Robins and Dot Lloyd's Blue Jay. Banding hand reared birds is not very satisfactory because their chances of survival are pretty slim. However if Miss Stemmerman of Bangall should call me some day this spring to say one of her Robins had returned I would be more than gratified.

I have had reports of three birds I had banded. One Purple Finch banded 4/9/60 was trapped and released in full male plumage 7/10/60 near Lac Humqui, Quebec [on Gaspé Peninsula]. One female Evening Grosbeak banded 11/19/61 was trapped and released somewhere in western Massachusetts 4/30/62. These are called foreign re-traps. Someone picked up Dot Lloyd's Jay, read the number and reported it to the National Fish and Wildlife Service. It must have been someone in the neighborhood because Dot had him for several days after that before he disappeared for good.

Returns are birds I re-trapped after having been gone for 90 days or more. I had 28 returns last year here, and list a few interesting ones:

- 62-57118 Tree Sparrow banded 12/27/59; return 11/6/60, 12/9/61, and 3/25/62
- 62-57159 Tree Sparrow banded 11/27/60; return 3/5/61, 12/9/61, and 4/15/62
- 65-18003 Tree Sparrow banded 1/18/61; return 12/9/61 and 4/20/62
- 62-57195 Tree Sparrow banded 1/18/61; return 12/9/61 and 4/20/62

The last two birds were banded on the same day and were re-trapped on the same day in two successive years. They probably spent these winters here and just happened to come to the trap on these dates of course. I have banded more Tree Sparrows than any other species.

Two years ago I made a foreign re-trap and with my tongue in my cheek I called it an immature White-crowned Sparrow and sent the number to the national office. I waited impatiently for two months only to find Frank Trevor had banded it at the Millbrook Boys School three days before I trapped it.

I find banding most interesting and hope some day to be able to net birds for banding which will give me a greater field and more species. Now all I am able to trap are seed eating birds.

Wings over Dutchess, February 1963

Carena Pooth continues with her banding find

We were at the Best Western in Matamoras, Pa. and found, as usual, many Canada and Snow Geese behind the motel. What was different was that one of the Snow Geese wore a leg band and a numbered yellow neck collar. I took some pictures of the birds, particularly the banded one. I went to the web site of the Bird Banding Laboratory at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl) and submitted my report online. I could have called it in on the phone instead, at 1-800-327-BAND.

Last week, I received a certificate in the mail, showing the Snow Goose's banding information. To my amazement, this creature that was wandering the lawn at the Matamoras Best Western in January 2002 had been banded in August 2000 near Bylot Island in Canada's Nunavut Territory. Bylot Island is 2200 miles north of Matamoras and several hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle. The certificate also showed that the goose is a female hatched in 1999

or earlier and that the banding was part of a project being done by Dr. G. Gauthier at Laval University in Québec.

While we all know that so many of the birds around us are accomplished world travelers, it is truly amazing to be able to trace the history of an individual bird this way. As I read that certificate for the first time, I imagined the goose up on the northern tundra, where most of the humans it sees may be Inuit natives. I went to the fascinating and entertaining Nunavut Handbook (www.arctictravel.com), where I found an article about Sirmilik National Park by Marian and Mike Ferguson containing the following about “my” Snow Goose’s home turf:

“The southwest corner of Bylot Island is a 1,300-square-kilometre rolling plain of lush wetlands covered by cotton-grass, willow and moss. These wetlands form the nesting grounds of the world’s largest colony of greater snow geese (*kanguq*), one of 30 species of breeding birds found here. In 1993, the colony numbered 75,000 adult geese, after growing by 300 per cent over the previous decade. Seeing signs that the geese may be overabundant, biologists are studying their habitat to assess the impact of their increase ... The abundant wildlife has drawn people to this area for 4,000 years. The numerous archeological sites in the park, which are protected by law, are evidence of the prehistoric lives of Inuit and earlier inhabitants.”

You and I share a wonderful hobby with boundless opportunities for learning. The trail of a single goose has led me to explore new horizons as an armchair traveler.

Wings over Dutchess, May 2002

A Grouse Encounter of the Close Kind

by Chet Vincent

On Tuesday, January 4, I decided to take a walk on part of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and look at birds along the way. On my way to the Coleman Station parking area I drove on Sharon Station Road and looked at the McEnroe corn field. I spotted a nice dark-phase (blue) snow goose among the Canadas, so I considered myself off to a good start birding.

At the Coleman Station lot, I decided to walk south first because I could see and hear chickadees and titmice in that direction. As I went south looking at the small birds, a Golden-crowned Kinglet was with them, I noticed a larger bird in the middle of the trail several hundred yards farther south. In my binoculars, I could tell it was a Ruffed Grouse. I walked closer and it ran off the trail and into the bushes still a hundred yards away. I thought I might as well go look and see if I could see the bird up close.

I walked slowly and quietly and saw it about 20 feet ahead on the east side of the blacktop. As I was enjoying the closer look, the bird picked buds from small bushes and ate a few small green leaves while heading towards me. What good luck, I thought, my best look at a grouse in months. Then the bird returned to the blacktop and walked towards me, amazing! I stopped using binoculars when it was about 8 feet away and still coming. It came up to my feet. I had been still for several minutes by now, so I’m looking down at it as it

proceeded to peck at my shoes, jeans, and especially the tabs on the heels of my shoes, all the time making soft clucking sounds.

After 5 to 8 minutes of that, I decided to move my arms and upper body. That didn't bother the grouse at all. Its plumage was in beautiful condition, its crest was up, and the stiff feathers on the sides of its head were flared out as it walked around and around me. I then took several small steps ahead and the bird jumped up and down, making attack-like moves on my feet with its wings and beak.

I tried walking slowly backwards and it just followed quietly, so I went off the trail a bit and stopped and it still followed me. I began to worry that the bird would follow me back to the parking area so I walked away quickly and that did it. The grouse went into the bushes and I was free.

I didn't have a camera or Bill Case with me so no pictures – hard to believe but a true story.

Wings over Dutchess, January 2005

Releasing Robert

by Bob Kendall

The high point, indeed the purpose of the Raptor Center is returning birds to the wild. What came to us as an injured bird is now nursed back to health and is ready to take up its life again. So it was with Robert, the Red-tailed Hawk. He was brought to the Millbrook School with massive head injuries but, when healed, he refused to feed himself. The Center had the same experience when Robert was brought there, but when placed with a group of other Red-tails he resumed feeding himself. Who knows what the elixir was, competition or inspiration? One hopes they made him feel like a Red-tail again.

Soon there was no doubt. Robert was ready. I had the privilege of taking him down to Netherwood Road where he had been found originally. Since they mate for life, or at least long term, it is always nice if we can put birds back where they have a good chance of finding their mates. We didn't have a cross street to pinpoint the location but Netherwood Road has several sections that look pretty inviting to them. We stopped at a small meadow with woods beyond that afforded some initial shelter, at least that is what I thought.

Robert had banged against the sides of his carrier to get out several times en route, but once I opened the door he hesitated. One minute then well into the second minute. I thought of unceremoniously dumping him out. Then suddenly he burst out of the carrier into freedom. A couple of wing beats and whoa — it's a jungle out there. He was not about to fly straight across the opening. Quickly he turned and climbed in a maneuver the Red Baron would envy, to find a perch in the roadside tree right above me, there to ponder his return, perhaps, or to exercise the caution he would now need to assure his safety. It never hurts to look. As he studied the landscape, I studied him.

Then off, across the meadow and back into his world. Careful now, Robert. You're on your own.

Wings over Dutchess, September 1994

The Snowy Owl Comes to Dutchess County ... and K-Mart

by Judy Atwood and Karen Jaquith

Saturday, Dec. 14, 1996 at 4:00PM, I was parked in a spot in front of K-Mart on Rt. 44 watching for Karen to come out when I became vaguely aware of a large white “gull” flying into the upper left quadrant of my field of vision. Since my office is in New Rochelle just a few blocks north of Long Island Sound with a commanding view of the Sound, I frequently see large white birds soaring and winging their way past my sixth floor office windows. Then my mind and my inattention came to a screeching halt, (sorry, no Screech-Owl). Thinking, “wait a minute gulls don’t land with talons extended and wings banked back a bit; nor are gull wings broad with perpendicular lines like long feathers.” With a chill of excitement I began to wonder — was it possible! — could it be — was I about to get a glimpse of one of the two birds I most want to see? I just didn’t think it was possible that I might have seen a Snowy Owl. I waited a few minutes looking for the bird figuring it had perched on the high side roof of the K-Mart building. When the bird didn’t appear (I thought if it were a gull it wouldn’t stay still more than a few minutes), I drove over toward Walgreens and doubled back toward K-Mart. There it was! Up on the top edge of the side of K-Mart! And that outline was certainly no gull’s shape. I grabbed my small binoculars and created a small traffic jam getting at my very first-ever, all-on-my-own Snowy Owl!!!

Wanting a second opinion, I shifted into first gear, swung into the front of K-Mart, and snapped at Karen, “grab the binoculars, get in fast, Snowy Owl!”. Fortunately, Karen understands such terse statements. We zipped back to a good viewing spot and took several more minutes to look at this magnificent bird, who put on a fairly good show for us — turning its head to face us, preening a bit, fluffing its beautiful white feathers with black markings on them.

We had to leave to get to another appointment on time but I did stop at a pay phone to call Alan Peterson, mostly to ask if a Snowy Owl was anything anyone other than me would want to know about. I was assured that it was, so I gave the vital statistics to Alan. He then informed me that it was important enough and that I had to write up just what I had told him and send it to *Wings*. So I did and here it is. Hope it is of interest!

Barbara Michelin continues the story

The excitement was Judy Atwood spotting a Snowy Owl and calling Alan Peterson with the news. Shortly after I was called by Alan the relay began. Some of the closer members headed over to locate the owl. The lighting became poor and darkness came fast. We could not relocate the owl.

Sunday morning before dawn Chet Vincent was out looking. He heard the crows making a fuss and found the reason, the Snowy Owl! By this time Betsy Caswell had found the owl also. At 7AM Chet called me and after a few quick calls we headed for the 44 Plaza. On a light pole at 7:20AM at the corner of Friendly Ln. and Burnett Blvd. was a beautiful immature Snowy Owl looking down at us. What a sight! It was a cold windy morning as we watched it being harassed occasionally by 2 or 3 crows. It seemed not to be bothered by our presence. Soon a few other members arrived, the owl was a life bird for many



The Snowy Owl sitting on the Walgreen drug store sign in 44 Plaza. Photographs by Peter Relson.

of them. We watched the owl for over an hour. A Town of Poughkeepsie policeman stopped and told us that the owl had been seen for a week before Judy saw it. It flew across the road to the wires and then onto Frank's Nursery roof. After we left, Mary Key and Rosa Corbeels watched it fly to the K-Mart roof, staying low to get out of the wind. Many members came out Sunday and some had close up views of this magnificent owl.

This owl has been viewed on many different store roofs and antennas plus light poles throughout the day. Some members have gotten terrific photos of this owl and some like Peter Relson and Adrienne Zylkuski have tried to stop each day to find the owl. On Thursday, Dec. 19, Adrienne called to say she saw it with something in its talons. Two men were working on a sign nearby at the Goodrich Tire building and she asked one of them to please go up the ladder to see what it might have. It looked like a pigeon, there are many pigeons at the plaza. This was our first clue to what it had been eating. It frequently feeds during the day and in this case because of the lighted parking lots it probably feeds into the night on rodents, carrion, and birds including waterfowl. Some members have reported seeing it fly off with a pigeon or occasionally feed on a mouse.

This owl was seen for our Christmas Census on Dec. 21, the last one on a Census was in 1982. The Snowy Owl has been observed plus photographed by many people throughout the area including many club members. The last date the Snowy Owl was seen was Tuesday, March 25, 1997, making it by far the longest stay of any Snowy Owl in Dutchess County. We hope this magnificent owl is safely on its journey back to the tundra.

That Snowy Owl Lives Forever ... in Video Form

There is a video all about "our" Snowy Owl that has been spending the winter "south" in Poughkeepsie. Joe Poluzzi of Salt Point did a 2½ hour production of this fantastic visitor and its "habits." You might want to borrow it from the club library. Thank you, Joe for your donation and documenting this

wonderful bird. Peter Relson published a calendar from his remarkable photographs of the owl.

Wings over Dutchess, January 1997

Mugging on Monroe Drive

by Ben Strong

On a Saturday afternoon in early December, Judy and I were sitting in our garage, holding a moving sale. Although the day was a little damp with an occasional sprinkle, the temperature was moderate and we had the door open so we could keep watch over some of our more waterproof collectors' items in the driveway. Suddenly, the tranquillity of the day was rent by an ear piercing shriek, followed by several more. We looked across the street and saw a Blue Jay on the ground under our neighbor's apple tree, being assaulted by a small Sharp-shinned Hawk. It looked as if Mr. Jay was not going to be around for Christmas as feathers were flying and Mr. Hawk was determined to enjoy a snack.

At that point, however, many more shrieks were heard as four or five of Mr. Jay's friends appeared from nowhere, dive bombing Mr. Hawk and uttering their war cry — definitely four letter curses and challenges that turned the air as blue as their bodies. Pass after pass they made until the poor Sharpie, seemingly stunned by this mob attack, became completely confused and did not know which way to turn. Finally he retreated in ignominy, becoming airborne and turning on his after burner in his haste to high tail it away from this berserk mob before a lynching occurred.

The poor victim then staggered to his feet, wavered for a moment then, in a very shaky fashion, took off. He struggled to make it across the street to the top of our apple tree where he rested a bit. He then made an effort to comb his rather bedraggled feathers, now slightly reduced in quantity, into some semblance of decency before departing the scene. Meanwhile, his fellow squadron members flew in protective circles overhead, making sure that the molester did not return. No problem — I believe that poor Mr. Hawk didn't slow down until he had put many miles between himself and the vengeful pack.

Wings over Dutchess, January 1992

Crows Roosting Near Marist College

by Dan and Beth Nickerson

On February 15 I set out to discover where all of the starlings went that rushed by my apartment every night at about sundown. I quickly traced them to the Mid-Hudson Bridge and then drove over to Ulster County to confirm that starlings there were also converging on the bridge. While parked along Route 9W I noticed a stream of crows headed north along the highlands. Having solved the starling problem, I thought I would tackle this new proposition.

The crows were converging on the ice of the Hudson just above the railroad bridge. There were obviously hundreds, probably more birds that I had

ever seen anywhere, but it was not possible for me to count them from my vantage point on the Highland side of the river.

On February 18 I returned with my wife, Beth, to the riverbank near the Hudson River Psychiatric Clinic to estimate the number of crows. Two streams were arriving; one from the northeast and one from the northwest. Beth estimated those already on the ice at



American Crows converging to a staging area behind Academy St. near Rt. US-9, Poughkeepsie before entering their evening roost. Photograph taken Jan. 24, 2003 by Anne Strain.

our 5:45 arrival at 2,000. I counted those crows across the river, arriving from the northwest, and Beth counted those coming overhead from the northeast. We counted until 6:15 when the crows began to dwindle. Beth's stream actually trickled off at about 6PM. As a final total I had 4,500 birds and Beth 1,500. At its peak, birds in the northwest stream were arriving at the rate of 180 per minute.

This all adds up to a total of 8,000 crows, and doesn't count those arriving from the south after our initial estimate of the birds already on the ice. Any way you count them there were a lot of crows out there.

As darkness approached, the birds shifted southward on the ice to a point opposite Marist College. We drove south to observe these birds. They were now leaving the ice to roost in trees bordering the parking lot at Marist. By 6:30PM only a few hundred remained on the ice.

This may not have been as exciting as hawk-watching but it did have its own drama. Most of the crows would arrive over the river at the height of the highlands on either side. When they reached a point over the center of the river they would "collapse" in flight and plummet many feet to arrive at the ice surface. This created what appeared as a sort of waterfall of crows in the center of the river where the streams converged. A swooping flight of pairs of crows was observed many times. Could this be some sort of courtship flight or related behavior?

Wings over Dutchess, March 1977

Martin House Erected

by Florence Germond

It was a cold, clear and snowy Sunday morning, February 5, after the blizzard of Saturday but Florence Germond and Otis Waterman were determined that the day had arrived, perfect or not so perfect, for the erection of our famous Martin House. When Lois Palmatier reported the road was plowed and completely passable no cancellation was considered.

Promptly at 1:30 the gang began arriving. Otis started out across the marsh to “pitch upon a place” for the three inch pipe to be driven down. About thirty feet out, down he went! Dot Lloyd said his ear muffs were all you could see, so deep the snow. He laid down and “swam” out. By this time Brad Whiting and John Klink had snow shoes on and stamped out to clear a place around the hole Otis had already made.

Pipe down, pounded solid twelve feet into the marsh bottom, John Mattson took over the direction of mounting section upon section of the house to stand tall and beautiful over Thompson Pond as the sun quickly dropped behind Stissing Mountain.

When all was finished pictures were taken of the group and the house for all to see at a future meeting. Then we stopped at Palmatier’s for hot coffee and buns.

The Club is most grateful to all those who helped in this project, especially John Mattson the builder and Earle Lasher who got the pipe and made the base to which the house is mounted. John Klink and his wife, new members of the club who live in Pine Plains, are going to tell us of the first martin arrivals.

Wings over Dutchess, February 1961

UPDATE: Apparently Purple Martins never came to Thompson Pond, at least they did not settle into this house. After being unused for about two years, Ed Briggs brought it to his home which at that time was across from the entrance to Vassar Farm. When the lane was added for turning onto Raymond Avenue, the Briggs’ house was moved across the road. We pass it now on our way out of Vassar Farm. It is not known what happened to the Martin house. However its image graced the masthead of *Wings over Dutchess* during the early years.

Titmouse Twitterpating and Nest Hair Pulling!

by Peggy Fasciani

A day that includes “twitterpating” and “nest hair pulling” is a birding day to remember. Roxie, my dog, and I left the house at 7:15AM to “find” some migrating warblers, and to hone my listening skills (such as they are) for Saturday’s census day.

We were in the woods and overgrown fields along Robinson Lane in Fishkill Plains, and quickly compiled a list of almost 30 birds. How exciting to see my first Oriole and Rose-breasted Grosbeak of the year. The warblers were scarce, but we had lots of Yellow-rumps, a Common Yellowthroat, and some Yellows and Prairies. On the way out of the woods, a Tufted Titmouse began singing. My friend and mentor of 18 years, Helen Andrews, had taught me long ago how to imitate a Titmouse song and wait for his response. Soon enough, the Titmouse was overhead, frantically looking for the “singer,” all the while quivering and fluttering his little wings, his tuft sticking straight up in the air. “Twitterpating” they call it . . . always fun to observe. Little did I know I would have an even more exciting Titmouse encounter once we returned home!

I worked in the garden for a while, then sat with a cool glass of water on my patio bench adjacent to a honeysuckle bush. Roxie was lying on the cool

earth under the bush. As I sat there, a Titmouse flew into the bush, its mate following. Since they were only three or four feet away, I knew as soon as they spotted me sitting there, they would give an alarm chip and scurry out. I was mistaken. They not only lingered, but seemed very interested in me and the dog.

Remembering the fact that Titmice line their nests with animal hair or fur, I froze while I waited for her to fly down to Roxie's back. The next thing I knew, this little bird fluttered in my face, flew over my head and landed 6 inches behind me on the brick siding of the house. I could feel the wind from her wings. Four times she flew back and forth from the bush to the brick behind my head, her wings brushing my hair each time. The fifth time I felt her little feet on my head. She started gently pecking on the top of my head and then I felt some hairs being pulled. She remained for a few more seconds, then flew off, her mate joining her from the bush ... and it was over! I was so astonished that I sat frozen, completely enthralled, not believing what had just occurred. I have no idea how many hairs she pulled from my head, but Elaine Andersen is calling me "baldy."

Do birds carry little parasites, including ticks, that would not think twice about changing hosts? Needless to say, a shower and shampoo were in order!

I've witnessed several Titmice nests during the years of monitoring my bluebird trail. The nest is a work of art ... mosses, leaves and hair woven into a soft, downy haven for the babies. What a blessing for me to realize that my hair will be in one of those nests. Ah, the stuff of life!

P.S. Barbara Mansell's son, Nick, fell asleep on the back deck on Sunday afternoon, May 5 and woke to find a Titmouse tugging at his hair for nest material. He thought it was great.

Wings over Dutchess, May 2002

Winter Reflections

by Helen Manson

Now that winter is over we look back at some of the good findings. The huge flock of Common Redpolls in the fields in Red Hook and the many, many Snow Buntings that were also there. The Rough-legged Hawk and the Northern Harrier often seen over the same fields. The trips to Rondout Reservoir to see the wintering Bald Eagles. What a sight to see them in the trees and flying over the ice.

The half-hardies that wintered over. The two Catbirds at Stony Kill, the Hermit Thrush on Sunset Hill, the two Common Snipe in the little stream in Millbrook and the Great Blue Herons in two or three areas, the White-fronted Geese, two of them, that Alice found on the Christmas Bird Count. They spent the winter with many Canadas in Sylvan Lake where the geese kept a bit of water open and the Ring-necked Ducks and the Buffleheads that found this open water a winter haven. The Robins and Bluebirds and Flickers and a few Turkey Vultures that were seen throughout the winter.

We think, too, of the Pine Grosbeaks at Vassar College Golf Course feeding on the crabapples left on the trees. The Red-breasted Nuthatch that came to my feeder most days, the White-winged Crossbills that Marion and Eleanor found in Rhinecliff when they were in the right place at the right time.

I think of weeds above the snow with tiny tracks all around made by birds feeding on the seeds. The river filled with moving ice, grinding and crunching like a giant grist mill and the ducks that found open leads. The little Screech-Owls that sat in their south facing holes and the Great Horned Owl that was on her nest in Clove Valley. The Bluebird that sang as we cleaned out his house. Yes winter is behind us and now we can look forward to spring.

Wings over Dutchess, March 1986

Photo Gallery — Bird Club Members



Membership cards were distributed from the beginning. In 1962 Ralph Waterman's bird symbol was added. Originally merchants, such as Rymph's farm store in Salt Point, offered discounts when showing the card. Membership cards were discontinued in 2001.



An early photograph, Nov. 8, 1960, of a club field trip to Swamp River and Swift Pond, Amenia taken at the Wassaic State School, which overlooked Swift Pond. The highlight was seeing five hawks, including a Rough-legged Hawk. Left to right: Mary Key, John Matson, Eleanor Pink, Brad Whiting, and Florence Germond. Photographed by George Decker.



Sharon Mt. Eagle Banding Trip, March 3, 1962. Dr. Heinz Meng attempted, unsuccessfully, to lure a Golden Eagle to a trap. Over 20 people attended this trip to Sharon, Conn. on a very cold day. Left to right: Marion Van Wagner, Bill & Trixi (hidden) Strauss, Eleanor Pink, Helen Manson, and Roz Davis. Photographed by Herb Saltford.



Tamarack Swamp, April 21, 1965. The group found Palm Warblers and a Barred Owl. Left to right: George Decker, Don Borquist, Czecher Terhune, Ruth Dow, Jane Thompson, Harold McLaughlin, and Helen Manson. Photographed by Roz Davis.



Roz Davis and Elmer Hunter share dessert during a 1975 field trip. Photographed by Mary Yegella.



A field trip to Tamarack Swamp of Otis Waterman's Bird Identification Class, April 1975. Left to right: Florence Germond (co-leader), Stan & Joan DeOrsey, Susan Gyscek, Bertha Vanderburgh, Dorothy Wohlbach, Bill Consiglio, and Stefley VanVlack. Photographed by Otis Waterman.



A Wednesday walk at Lake Walton, probably in the late 1980s. Left to right, front row: Mary Yegella, Steve Walsh, Bea Balyer (standing), George O'Donohue, Ida Kelly; second row: Marion Van Wagner, Dot Wohlbach, Peggy Fasciani, Millie Sturcken, Marge Foster, unknown, Mary Key; back row: Lou Endsley, Rosa Corbeels, Kay Walsh, and Louise Kaiser.



Wappinger Recreation Area, Aug. 17, 1988. Left to right: Mary Key, Dot Wohlbach, Jim Key, Millie Sturcken, Peggy Fasciani, Art Schneier, Mary Yegella, Helen Manson, Stephanie Schmidt, Marion Van Wagner, and Bea Balyer.



Left to right: Jane Geisler, David & Adrienne Weise, and Art Schneier, Oct. 2, 1989 at a going away party for Leona Wilson.



Left to right: Alice Jones, Marion Van Wagner, and Helen Manson doing Alice and Helen's regular Breeding Bird Survey in the Adirondacks in the early 1990s. Mary Yegella also participated and took this photo.



Mary Key's 90th birthday party held May 1, 1995 at the Red Lobster Restaurant. Left to right: Bob Kendall, Sam Henry, Mary Key, Chuck Martinez, and Don Schoudel.



Three members independently encountered difficulty walking. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail was just the location to accommodate their need on Nov. 10, 2001. Left to right: Kay Sisson, Bill Case, and Mary Key; behind them: Elaine Chernansky, Jean Hicks and Fran Henry.



*Marion Van Wagner and Otis Waterman, May 11, 2002
Census day at Cruger Island. Photographed by Fritz
Waterman*



*Lunch at Ferncliff Forest, Rhinebeck, May 11, 2005. Left: Bill Case; right:
Barbara Butler and Carol & Ken Fredericks. Photographed by Allan Michelin.*



Barbara Butler and Carena Pooth, Sept. 26, 2007 at Stony Kill Farm looking for a Bobolink. Notice the Bluebird boxes in the background. Photographed by Maha Katmani.



Ken Fredericks helps Nathen Schneck, grandson of Elaine Anderson and Bob Busing, study the Hudsonian Godwit found Nov. 10, 2002 at Rhinebeck. Photographed by Carena Pooth.

As the club
passes to the
next generation,
we hope
the next 50 years
are as rewarding
and fruitful
as the last
50 years.

