



Central Westchester Audubon Society *News*

Central Westchester Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon Society serves
Elmsford, Greenburgh, Harrison, Purchase, Rye, Rye Brook, and White Plains

Vol. XXXIV, NO. 2

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2011

Winter Programs - Free and open to the public.

Ghost Bird - Award-winning film about the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Wednesday, January 19, 2010, 7:15 p.m.
Refreshments served beginning at 6:30 p.m.
Eastchester Public Library

11 Oakridge Place, Eastchester

A story of the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker after a sighting was reported in 2004. The last universally accepted sighting of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the United States occurred in 1944. Then on February 11, 2004, a lone kayaker caught a glimpse of a large and majestic woodpecker in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge of Arkansas. This documentary records the early searches — 2004 - 2006 — when scientific evidence was slim but people were still reporting that they had seen the bird. The documentary unravels like a mystery, examining all sides of the story, while it explores the ultimate question: does the Ivory-billed Woodpecker still exist, or is it extinct?



Costa Rican Ecology, Our Coffee, and Our Cars: A Naturalist's Travels and Musings in Central America

Speaker: Ted Gilman
Thursday, February 17, 7:30 p.m.
Refreshments served at 7:00
Church Street School, Room 132
295 Church St., White Plains

With Scarlet MacCaws, tree frogs, monkeys, bats, snakes, orchids, and much more, Costa Rica's amazing biological diversity attracts ecotourists from around the world. Ted Gilman, naturalist and education specialist for Audubon Greenwich, was fortunate to travel there in January and February of 2008. Join us as Ted shares a program which will take us to a wide variety of Costa Rica's habitats from north to south and seacoast to continental divide. We'll meet some of the amazing varieties of birds, snakes, monkeys, spiders, insects, flowers, frogs, and wonderful people who call Costa Rica home, as well as neotropical migrant birds which we share with that country. Ted will also share some of the ecological challenges faced by Costa Rica's biota and ask all of us to consider the possible links between our everyday lifestyle choices and their potential impacts in faraway places such as Costa Rica.



CENTRAL WESTCHESTER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Field Trips 2011

Doug Bloom, Field Trip Leader for BR/SS invites CWAS members to join these field trips. Please call Doug Bloom for Information on trips at (914)713-0630 days between 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM Tuesday-Saturday, or evenings at (914) 834-5203 until 10:00. Beginners are always welcome

Sunday, January 9 - Montauk All Day Trip
Meet at 6:15 AM Scarsdale Village Hall. Wintering ducks, alcids and other winter birds.

Saturday, February 5- Seventh Annual Hudson River Eagle Fest 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Saturday, February 12 Eagle Walk Meet at 8:00 AM at Wild Bird Center, 400 Central Park Ave. Scarsdale or at Croton Point Parking lot at 8:45 AM.

Sunday, April 10-Larchmont Reservoir
Meet at Reservoir at 8 AM. Best local site for early spring migrants including warblers and vireos.

Sunday, May 1-Central Park
Meet at 7:30 AM at Central Park West and 72nd Street at statue across from Museum of Natural History. Spring migrants including warblers, vireos, grosbeaks.

Sunday, May 15-Doodletown Road
Meet at 8:00 AM at Doodletown. Spring migrants including cerulean and other warblers.

Sunday, May 22-Walkill
Spring migrants including grasshopper sparrows and bobolinks.

Program Cancellations

To find out if a program is cancelled because of inclement weather, please call 914-946-1780.

Directions to Eastchester Library

From White Plains take Rte. 22 -Post Road south to Eastchester. Pass California Road. After Orchard St., take the next left onto Sunnyside Terrace. Turn right on Oakridge Place.

In Memoriam

Norma Canfield, former CWAS Board Member, passed away on November 24, 2010, in Minnesota, where she had relocated to be near relatives. Our condolences to her family.

Directions to Church Street School

Take 1-287, Cross Westchester Expressway, to Exit 6, North Broadway, Going west-bound (toward Tarrytown) turn left at the end of the ramp, and turn left (south) on North Broadway. going east-bound (toward Rye) turn right (south) at top of ramp on North Broadway. Then take the first right, immediately after expressway ramp, onto Westview. Westview has a sharp left turn into Church street. The entrance to the school parking lot is on the right, 0.2 miles from Westview.

CWAS Offers Camp Scholarships

Each summer CWAS offers camp scholarships to elementary school students who reside in the communities served by our chapter. Children entering grades 2 through 6 by September 2011 are eligible for 1-week scholarships this coming summer to the Westchester County Ecology Camps at Marshlands Conservancy in Rye and Cranberry Lake in North White Plains. This is a wonderful opportunity to encourage in your children an appreciation of the natural world.

Around mid-January we will be mailing applications to the principals of the schools in the communities we serve for distribution to teachers in the appropriate grades. If you wish your child to apply for a scholarship, ask your child's teacher or principal for an application. In addition applications will be available at the children's section of your local library, at the Marshlands and Cranberry Lake Nature Centers, and on our website. You may also call Gladys Goldmann at 949-3486, or Barbara Ruskin at 949-4429 for information. See the letters below from some of last summer's very happy campers.

Dear Central Westchester Audubon Society...

Thank you so much for providing me a scholarship to Cranberry Lake Camp. I had so much fun fishing, hiking and learning. I hope I can go again next year.
Meaghan

I liked going to Ecology Camp at Cranberry Lake Preserve because we did lots of fun things, like going to the rock quarry to collect rocks to make necklaces and catching fish at the quarry pond with nets. I also liked going to the cascade where we caught salamanders with our bare hands. They felt slimy and cold, but I wasn't scared! Two new things I learned were that the mugwort plant is a natural bug repellent and makes a great fishing lure. I also learned that phragmites (or common reed plant) are invasive species. Thank you very much for helping me have an awesome time! Jourdan

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go to the Marshlands this summer. Here are some of my favorite things. I saw a female deer with her fawn. I went to the shore to catch blue crabs. I learned about poison ivy. I found wild turkey feathers. We built a stick barricade to protect the plants. We found fiddler crabs at the salt marsh. We played the camouflage game and blended in with nature. Again, thank you for a great summer! Your friend, Peter

Thank you for letting me go to nature camp. I had a really fun time going to the bird tower, ponding and playing games. My counselor was awesome. The best was the cascade. I can't wait to go next year. Jake

Volunteers Needed for Feeder Watch Program

Joan Conca's 4th grade class at the Church Street School participates in the Feeder Watch Program sponsored by the Cornell Ornithology Lab. We need adult volunteers to help the students take a census of the number of species seen and the number of individual birds of each species. The results of the census are e-mailed to Cornell which tabulates the Feeder Watch results from all over the country to get a picture of the status of bird populations during the winter months. The volunteer should be able to identify the common backyard birds and, most of all, be comfortable working with children. The time commitment is about an hour a week (or every other week if we get enough volunteers) during the lunch period from noon to 1 pm from December through April. You will be working with 2 students during the hour and all observations will be from the corridor overlooking the courtyard which has multiple feeders to attract the birds. The students, who have been working on bird identification since September, are very excited about participating in the Feeder Watch program. We just need the adult volunteers to supervise them. There will be a short orientation program to get you up to speed. If you are interested in helping out with Feeder Watch, please call or e-mail Jeanne Alpert at 914-946-1780 or jsalpert@optonline.net.

Field Trip to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

What a stroke of good luck, to spot 3 white winged scoters among rafts of thousands of waterfowl! That was one of the highlights of the field trip to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, led by Doug Bloom on November 14, 2010, and sponsored by Central Westchester Audubon Society, Bronx River- Sound Shore Audubon and the Wild Bird Store.

Male white winged scoters are black feathered ducks with a small patch of white on the head and a white speculum (patch) on the wings that is barely visible while it floats on the water. During breeding season, it can be found on freshwater lakes and wetlands in the northern and western interior areas of North America. At other times of the year, it can be found in salt water bays and inlets of both coasts. This duck dives to feed on mollusks (clams, mussels) and crustaceans. Since the mollusks that it consumes concentrate toxic chemicals from the water, scoters are among the most vulnerable of birds to oil spills.

In addition to the scoters on the bay side of the wildlife refuge, our group of about a dozen birders not only saw thousands of brant geese, Canada geese and bufflehead ducks, but also saw smaller groups of red-breasted mergansers, horned grebes, herring gulls and great black-backed gulls. A northern harrier (marsh hawk) was also seen methodically hunting across the marshes.

On the fresh water pond, were impressively large rafts of ruddy ducks, greater and lesser scaup, green winged teal, northern shovelers, brant, American widgeon (baldpate), gadwall and American coots. A lone white snow goose shared space at the edge of the pond with brant, double-breasted cormorants, and three yellowlegs, who paraded back and forth along the shore. A dunlin, rapidly probing the mud, had the birders checking field guides to ensure proper identification. Just as the neighboring JFK Airport continuously fed jets into the air and absorbed them back out, the pond served as a runway for continuous take-offs and landings for the waterfowl. A few great blue herons stalked fish along the edges of the pond, while a common goldeneye hid its head in its feathers, challenging us for identification. A northern flicker made a sinuous flight over the pond. A single pied-billed grebe also made a brief appearance.

Other birds seen or heard as we walked the trails through the refuge included American tree sparrows, song sparrows, yellow-rumped warblers, American crows, winter wren, Carolina wren, northern mockingbird, black-capped chickadee, swamp sparrow, and white throated sparrows. A dead egret in a tree top had us wondering about the cause of its demise.

The East Pond, on the other side of Cross Bay Boulevard, additionally yielded hooded mergansers, mute swans, laughing gulls, snowy egrets and cardinals. The sudden appearance of a sharp-shinned hawk over the blind, seemed to frighten a female wood duck from her perch on a branch emerging from the water, sending her to seek safety with the mallards and green winged teal retreating across the small pond. Our final birds, seen as we headed back to the parking area, were the ubiquitous urban European starlings and house sparrows.

Birding in a group like this is great for all levels of experience. Everyone eagerly shares telescopes, binoculars, identification books and identification tips. It's a fun social event. Please check our list of upcoming field trips and join us next time!

Susan Fried

White Plains Student Studies Birds, Publishes Article


Benjamin Van Doren, White Plains High School student, who presented a program to us last year on his birding experiences, is involved in exciting activities as reported in the White Plains City School District Fall 2010 newsletter *Inside Our Schools*. As a student in the Science Research Program, Ben is working with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and local birders to study early morning reorienting flights of nocturnal migrating birds. Ben's article on the Brown-backed Solitaire published in the journal *North American Birds* describes his sighting of this species, the first accepted record in the United States.

Central Westchester Audubon Society Bird Seed Sale - All profits support Chapter Activities

Your Name: *(Print clearly)* _____ email address: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone Number _____

<i>Type of Seed</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i># Bags</i>	<i>Total</i>
Black–Oil Sunflower Seed	20 Lbs.	\$20.00		
All around favorite for chickadees, cardinals, titmice, others . . .	40 Lbs.	\$37.00		
Hulled Sunflower Seed/ Sunflower Kernels	5 Lbs.	\$11.50		
Black-Oil Sunflower seeds with all shells removed. Less Mess.	15 Lbs.	\$29.50		
Safflower Seed	5 lbs	\$8.00		
Squirrels don't like this seed! Cardinals and others do	16 Lbs.	\$24.00		
Birdwise Blend Sunflower Seed (60%), Nuts and Millet	15 Lbs.	\$20.00		
Feederwise Good basic blend	13 Lbs.	\$24.00		
Patio Mix All shells are removed. No waste. 	5 Lbs	\$14.00		
	15 Lbs.	\$35.00		
Thistle/Nyjer Attracts Goldfinch, House Finch and Pine Siskins	5 Lbs.	\$13.00		
	16 Lbs.	\$36.00		
Woodpecker Mix Also attracts Nuthatch, Titmouse and others	5 Lbs.	\$14.00		
	16 Lbs.	\$43.00		
Peanut Suet Cakes. Birds love it /Case of 12 cakes	12 cakes	\$30.00		
Pure Suet Cakes. Squirrels don't like it, birds do / 12 cakes	12 cakes	\$48.00		
Deadline for Orders: Thursday, Jan. 20th			Sub - Total	
Make your check payable to: Central Westchester Audubon Society			Add a Donation to CWAS	
Mail to: CWAS Seed Sale, P.O. Box 359, White Plains, NY 10602			GRAND TOTAL	

Deadline to Submit Orders: Thursday, January 20th
 Seed available to pick-up after: Tuesday, January 25th
 Pick-Up Location: WILD BIRD CENTER, 400 Central Park Ave. Scarsdale
 Any questions? Call: Hank Weber Days: 713-0630, Evenings: 769-1379

New Birding Club for Youth

Bronx River – Sound Shore Audubon Society is forming a Youth Birding Club. The purpose is to give children with an interest in birds a peer-friendly group to pursue this interest and hopefully encourage other youngsters to join them. Suggested age group is 4th through 8th graders. The group will meet once a month on the second Saturday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. at a good birding location. Adult Audubon members will provide some instruction and education about birding. All children must be accompanied by an adult.



The first meeting will be Saturday, March 12, 2011, at 9:00 a.m., at Read Wildlife Sanctuary, located behind Playland Amusement Park in Rye.

This Audubon Youth Birding Club is part of a new initiative of BRSS Audubon to reach out to children and engage them in outdoor nature and conservation experiences. Knowing that today's children are the protectors of tomorrow's world, we hope these young birders will be our leaders protecting the environment in the future.

This activity is free and open to all interested children in our suggested age group of 4th through 8th graders. For more information or to sign up, email brssaudubon@gmail.com or contact Sandy Morrissey (914) 949-2531.

Central Westchester Audubon Society
Box 359
White Plains, NY 10602

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Naturalists Trivia Challenge at Cranberry Lake Preserve

No kingdom is off limits in this trivia contest for nature buffs! Contestants will answer audio and visual questions on bird songs, wild flowers and more, with an emphasis on our Westchester flora and fauna. *Saturday, February 5, 2011, 2:00 PM at Cranberry Lake Preserve, 1609 Old Orchard St., West Harrison, NY 10604. Call 914-428-1005 for information.*

Mammoth Pecan Halves from Georgia Have Arrived!

These delicious pecans will be on sale for \$11.00 per pound at our January 20 meeting or you can order in advance for local delivery by filling in and mailing this coupon. Number of lbs. _____ X \$11.00 = Amount Due \$ _____

Name _____ Tel# _____

Address _____

Please mail your check payable to CWAS to P.O. Box 359, White Plains, NY 10602, Attn: Pecans
If you have any questions, please call Beth De Silva at 914- 949-5249 or Jeanne Alpert at 914-946-1780.