



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. 3

March - April 2011

Spring Programs -co-sponsored with Bronx River - Sound Shore Audubon - Free and open to the public.

Gardens Filled with Life: Designing with Northeastern Flora

Speaker: **Carolyn Summers**

Wednesday, March 16, 7:30 p.m.
Refreshments will be served at 6:30
Eastchester Public Library
11 Oakridge Place, Eastchester



Author and landscape architect Carolyn Summers will present an informative review of current research that reveals the many ways in which indigenous (native) plants form the basis of the food web that supports a healthy, biodiverse landscape. Her lecture covers ways to minimize harm from exotic plants, including the use of indigenous substitutes for a wide variety of traditional styles. Examples of striking, unusual indigenous plants used in formal settings will be provided along with naturalistic styles to explore the full design potential of northeastern indigenous flora. Carolyn Summers is the author of *Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East*, released by Rutgers University Press in April 2010. She is currently an adjunct professor at Westchester Community College and serves on the Steering Committee of The Native Plant Center at Westchester Community College and chairs its annual native plant sale.

Gasland Award-winning film about hydrofracking – gas drilling.
Is it safe?

Moderator: **Al Gassman**
Thursday, April 14, 7:30 p.m.
Refreshments served beginning at 7:00 p.m.
Church Street School, Room 132
295 Church St., White Plains



The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology of "fracking" or hydraulic fracturing has unlocked a "Saudi Arabia of natural gas" just beneath us. But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country odyssey uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination. A recently drilled nearby Pennsylvania town reports that residents are able to light their drinking water on fire. This is just one of the many absurd and astonishing revelations of a new country called GASLAND. Part travelogue, part expose, part mystery, part bluegrass banjo meltdown, part showdown. Al Gassman, a licensed land surveyor, lives and works in White Plains. He is CWAS Conservation Chair and Vice President of Concerned Citizens for Open Space. He believes in advocating for wildlife and nature because they have no voice.

CENTRAL WESTCHESTER AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 359, WHITE PLAINS, NY 10602

www.centralwestchesteraudubon.org

email: cwas@centralwestchesteraudubon.org

President	Jeanne Alpert	946-1780
	jsalpert@optonline.net	
Vice President	Open	
Recording Secretary	Rotating	
Treasurer	Fred Pfisterer	949-2254
	fpfisterer@verizon.net	
Birdathon	Open	
Bird Seed	Hank Weber	713-0630
Conservation		
Local	Al Gassman	288-9063
	aglandsurveyor@yahoo.com	
State/National	Catharine Raffaele	948-4061
	callen150@juno.com	
Education	Susan Fried	949-1780
Field Trips	Open	
Hospitality	Open	
Membership	Hank Weber	713-0630
Newsletter		
Editor	Catharine Raffaele	948-4061
	callen150@juno.com	
Distribution	Connie Petagine	406-0578
Pecans	Beth DaSilva	949-5249
Programs	Joan Conca	681-8967
	Barbara Ferrari	946-5741
Publicity	Open	
Scholarships	Gladys Goldmann	949-3486
	Barbara Ruskin	949-4429
Web Master	Dick Budnik	
	DickBudnik@verizon.net	
Delegate at Large	Frank Alpert	946-1780
	Jefalpert@optonline.net	
Retired Board Members:	Jack O'Brian, Libby Wagner	

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.

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.

Field Trips 2011

Saturday, May 7. CWAS Annual Memorial Walk.

This will be a lovely spring walk for birds and wildflowers in memory of our dedicated members. Location to be announced. Please call Jeanne Alpert at 946-1780 to register.

Annual Birdathon - Saturday, May 14 (Rain date

Saturday, May 21). This is our major fund raising event of the year. See back page for pledge form. Our first stop will be Forest Park in Queens, followed by a visit to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. We will search for spectacular warbler sightings and should tally several other migrants and residents. **Meet at 7 AM at Education House for carpooling. Bring lunch and water.**



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, 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.

fracking

What is fracking? Ted Williams writes in *Gas Pains* (*Audubon Magazine*, May-June 2010), "Fracking - from 'hydrofracturing'- is a process developed by Halliburton in which a mixture of water, sand, surfactants (to keep the sand in suspension), acids, formaldehyde, petroleum compounds, and herbicides (to kill pump-clogging algae in wastewater ponds) is blasted into the shale, breaking it apart. The sand, forced into the fissures, props them open." This has been the method used for economic drilling in the Marcellus shale formation, which contains a large natural gas deposit extending from Pennsylvania and southern New York to Ohio, Maryland and West Virginia. "A single frack job can require five million gallons of water. Aquatic life is at risk when gas companies dewater streams for fracking and when they store or dispose of used frack water. Not only is the industry allowed to protect the chemical composition of frack water as a trade secret, but under what is called the 'Halliburton Loophole', fracking is exempt from Safe Drinking Water regulations...Something like three quarters of the frack water stays in the earth, but that which flows back has acquired additional toxins such as salts, xylene, benzene, ethyl benzene, toluene, heavy metals, and naturally occurring radioactive materials..." Devastating ecological effects have occurred from hydrofracking in Pennsylvania. All chapters of Audubon Council of New York State support the Resolution to urge the State to delay drilling due to concerns about wildlife habitats, forest fragmentation, and risks that flowback water poses to water quality and drinking water resources. The Croton Clean Water Coalition actively opposes fracking as a threat to our watersheds.

Go to <http://www.audubonmagazine.org/incite/incite1005.html> to read Ted Williams' full article and come to our program featuring the film *Gasland* on April 14.

Birdathon 2011

Please join the CWAS Birdathon Team as we welcome back the warblers and other spring beauties of the avian world at our annual Birdathon on Saturday, May 14th. (Rain date May 21st.) All birders and potential birders, from beginner to advanced, are invited to enjoy a fabulous day of birding. We will start out at Forest Park in Queens in the morning and then proceed to Jamaica Bay Wild Life Refuge to have lunch and bird the west pond and the gardens, finishing up around 4 PM. Car-pooling will be arranged at Education House in White Plains with a start time of 7:00 AM.

Our goal is two-fold: to see, hear and identify as many species as possible (around 100); and to raise money to send eager elementary school students to a week of nature at one of the county ecology camps. Last year, we provided 23 scholarships but in order not to disappoint any of our applicants, we had to dip into our reserve funds for part of the tuition. This year we hope to raise enough money from the Birdathon to fully fund the scholarship program. We have a dedicated corps of members who make a contribution to the Birdathon every year and we are so grateful for their support. We would like to increase the number of contributors to our fund drive, so if you have never pledged before, please consider doing so this year. **Remember that we welcome all contributions in whatever amount you feel you can give.** Please fill out the coupon on the back page to pledge either an amount per species or a flat amount or respond positively when a board member calls to ask for a pledge.

If you have any questions, please call me at 914-946-1780. Remember, you don't have to be an expert to join in the fun. I hope to see many of you on May 14th.

Jeanne Alpert

Hello from England

Former CWAS Board member Jean Coates writes and sends photos from her home in England.

We haven't managed to go birding very much this year. However, we did take a boat trip to the Farne Islands, which are just off the coast, at the beginning of July. These are an international site for seabird breeding and this was just when the puffins were breeding so we saw loads of those among others catching sand eels to feed their young.



Last week we walked along a stretch of the coast and were amazed to see how many wintering waders there were, especially large flocks of both curlews and oystercatchers. We have also had many birds coming to the garden to feed this winter probably encouraged by the severe weather we have experienced... This year we had heavy snow towards the end of November and this remained with us well into the new year. This was the heaviest snow to fall here for about forty years and we also had the coldest December on record so I think the birds appreciated the food we put out for them.



Razorbill auks and shags

“Birds In Art” Comes To Westchester County *For those interested in both birds and art, here's a heads-up from Joe Ferrari*

Each year since 1976 a small museum in Wausau, Wisconsin, the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, has mounted what is arguably the premiere bird art exhibition in the USA. From portfolios submitted from across the US and abroad a jury selects about one hundred original works for inclusion in their *Birds In Art* show. Submissions represent a variety of media - oil, watercolor, sculpture, etc. Only crafts and photography are excluded. Past exhibitors have included such well-known artists as Robert Bateman and Roger Tory Peterson.

After its run at the Museum a selection of roughly sixty works forms a touring show across the country, visiting venues which vary from year to year. Several years ago the American Museum of Natural History hosted the tour in the New York City area. This year we have a venue closer to home. The 35th annual exhibition, *Birds In Art 2010*, is scheduled at the Newington-Cropsey Foundation, 25 Cropsey Lane, Hastings-On-Hudson from April 2 thru June 9, 2011. Up to date information on exhibition hours will become available from the Foundation at www.newingtoncropsey.com, or by telephone, 914-478-7990. It should be a good opportunity to see locally some topflight (pun intended) nature art. I intend to take advantage of it.

Annual Memorial Walk

This year's Memorial Walk is scheduled for Saturday May 7. Susan Fried's description of last year's walk will whet your appetite for joining us this year.

Deciduous woods, a red maple swamp, a pond and a wet meadow were the backdrop for the annual CWAS Memorial Walk, held at Fairchild Garden in Greenwich, Connecticut on May 8, 2010. These habitats are part of a 135 acre sanctuary managed by the Greenwich Audubon Center. Although rain delayed the start of this trip, the afternoon walk proved to be fruitful and fun.

Our star birds for the day were a pair of rose-breasted grosbeaks, who flew in for a close look at the 9 CWAS visitors invading their territory; and a ruby-throated hummingbird, whose iridescence was gorgeously reflected in the sunlight, while the bird flew to and from the top of a dead snag in the meadow. We had an interesting mystery bird. It was large, brown and hugging close to a partially concealed branch. Was it a predatory hawk or an insectivorous night hawk? Despite reference to field guides and lengthy discussion, it remains a mystery. We watched house wrens perched on their nest boxes, as they chastised the circling tree swallows. Baltimore (Northern) orioles, yellow warblers, a red tailed hawk, a flicker and red-winged blackbirds were among the birds seen. Most of the 25 species of the day were heard, making distinctively recognizable calls.

One of the striking wildflowers seen was Golden Alexander. Showing off the delicate filigree that resembles Queen Anne's lace, the Golden Alexander appeared like a brilliant yellow fireworks display, brightening sites where moist wooded edge merged into wet meadow.

This memorial walk was dedicated to remembering our friends and past CWAS Board members Nicole Kelisky, John Ferone, Lois Stierhout and Bob Canfield. Their dedication to the ideals of the Audubon Society, and service in preserving and educating about the environment, laid a strong foundation for our chapter. We are pleased to dedicate this special walk to these friends each year, and to continue their work on environmental issues and education.

Central Westchester Audubon Society
Box 359
White Plains, NY 10602

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Birdathon 2011

Saturday, May 14, 7 AM - Rain date, Saturday, May 21
Meet at 7 AM at Education House for Carpooling

Central Westchester Audubon 2011 Birdathon Pledge Card

I am happy to pledge \$_____ per species in support of the Birdathon
 My tax deductible gift of \$_____ is enclosed, payable to **Central Westchester Audubon**
 My employer matches gifts - matching form enclosed

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

(Area code) Telephone

Email

Mail to Central Westchester Audubon, P.O. Box 359, White Plains, NY. 10602

Thank you for supporting our Birdathon. All contributions are tax deductible and will help support the CWAS scholarship fund and the education activities of our chapter.