



# Central Westchester Audubon Society *News*

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

Vol. XXXIII, NO. 4

MAY - JUNE 2010

## *Birdathon 2010*

Please join us on May 15<sup>th</sup> (rain date May 16<sup>th</sup>) for our annual Birdathon. Our hunt for avian treasures will start at Forest Park in Queens and then proceed to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. As always, we hope to find many species of warblers and other migrating passerines as well as some shore and water birds. In the past, we have totaled more than 100 species. If you are a beginning birder, please don't be shy about joining us. The more experienced birders in our group will do their best to help you to spot the birds.

This is an outstanding field trip in good company for a great cause – our camp scholarship fund. This coming summer, we will be sending 23 eager boys and girls for a week of nature fun at county ecology camps, all of which has been made possible by your generous contributions to our Birdathon fund raiser last spring. Please use the coupon on the back page to pledge, either a flat amount or a per species amount. All contributions are tax deductible. And remember that your contribution will help to fund a happy camper in 2011. *See comments from prospective campers on page 3.*



### *May Program - Suzie Gilbert, Wild Bird Rehabber*

Suzie Gilbert, author of [Flyaway: How a Wild Bird Rehabber Sought Adventure and Found Her Wings](#), will speak to us about her experience as a wild bird rehabilitator in the Hudson Valley for nearly twenty years. Ten years ago she started rehabbing birds in her home, starting with injured and orphaned songbirds, and then including raptors, water birds and game birds. She will speak to us about bird's natural histories and facets of their personalities that she has observed, as well as highlight the dangers birds face and suggest ways we can help make their habitat safer.

**Thursday, May 20, 7:00 PM**  
**Room 20 at Church Street School**  
**295 Church St., White Plains, NY**

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. Enter through metal door closest to flag pole..

**CENTRAL WESTCHESTER AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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

[www.centralwestchesteraudubon.org](http://www.centralwestchesteraudubon.org)

email: [cwas@centralwestchesteraudubon.org](mailto:cwas@centralwestchesteraudubon.org)

President	Jeanne Alpert	946-1780
	<a href="mailto:jalpert@optonline.net">jalpert@optonline.net</a>	
Vice President	Open	
Recording Secretary	Rotating	
Treasurer	Fred Pfisterer	949-2254
	<a href="mailto:fpfisterer@verizon.net">fpfisterer@verizon.net</a>	
Birdathon	Open	
Bird Seed	Hank Weber	713-0630
Conservation		
Local	Al Gassman	288-9063
	<a href="mailto:aglandsurveyor@yahoo.com">aglandsurveyor@yahoo.com</a>	
State/National	Catharine Raffaele	948-4061
	<a href="mailto:calen150@juno.com">calen150@juno.com</a>	
Education	Susan Fried	949-1780
Field Trips	Open	
Hospitality	Open	
Membership	Hank Weber	713-0630
Newsletter		
Editor	Catharine Raffaele	948-4061
	<a href="mailto:calen150@juno.com">calen150@juno.com</a>	
Distribution	Connie Petagine	406-0578
Pecans	Beth DaSilva	949-5249
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	<a href="mailto:DickBudnik@verizon.net">DickBudnik@verizon.net</a>	
Delegate at Large	Frank Alpert	946-1780
	<a href="mailto:Jefralpert@optonline.net">Jefralpert@optonline.net</a>	

Retired Board Members: Norma Canfield, Jack O'Brian, Libby Wagner

**Program Cancellations**

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

***News Flash: The ospreys are back at Rye Marshlands and are sitting on their nest.***

**Garden News**

This spring we and the students at the Church Street School will be planting 13 species of native plants to attract birds, butterflies and bees. A mini-grant from NY Audubon has provided the funding for the plants and other improvements to the Courtyard Garden.

**Field Trips**

Bring binoculars, lunch, water and insect repellent.

**Saturday, May 8. CWAS Annual Memorial Walk. Greenwich Audubon Center.** This will be a lovely spring walk for birds and wildflowers in memory of our dedicated members Nicole Kelisky, John Ferone, Lois Stierhout and Bob Canfield. We will meet at 8:30 AM at Ed House for car pooling. Bring a lunch. CWAS will provide dessert. Please call Jeanne Alpert at 946-1780 to register for this walk.

**Saturday, May 15 (Rain date Sunday, May 16) Annual Birdathon.** This is our major fund raising event of the year. See back page for pledge form. **Meet at 7 AM at Education House for carpooling.** 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. **Bring lunch and water.**

**Sunday, May 23, Doodletown** (near Bear Mountain). Meet 8 AM at Doodletown Rd. Co-sponsored with Bronx River/Sound Shore Audubon. Leader: Doug Bloom.

**May 5, 12, 19, 26 - Weber's Wednesday Warbler Walks, 7:45 - 9:00 am.** Join local bird expert and CWAS member Hank Weber for a walk through Rye Nature Center to spot the elusive warbler. Learn to bird-by-ear and enjoy the fun and challenge of actually spotting them. Experienced and beginning birders welcome. Loaner binoculars will be available. Admission free. Registration not required.

**Directions to Education House**

5 Homeside Lane is located off North St. in White Plains. Going south on Mamaroneck Ave. from downtown White Plains, make a left turn on Ridgeway. Continue on Ridgeway to the traffic light (firehouse on the left) and turn right on North St. Homeside Lane is the third right and Education House is the first building on the left.

## Excerpts from Camp Scholarship Applications 2010

I want to learn how to treat the Earth and nature with respect. I want to learn about animals and plants and lakes. I want to be an earth cleaning girl. *Victoria, Grade 1.*

I would like to go to Cranberry Lake because I like to go hiking and explore the woods. *Michael, Grade 2*

I wish to attend this summer program because of how beautiful nature is. I love animals and my school is going to nature's classroom. I'm looking forward to learning more on the trip. I have gone to ecology camp many times before and I love how fun and interesting it is. I can help stop global warming by recycling and learning about how to preserve. I am also volunteering for a recycling program at school. *Benjamin, Grade 4*

I love learning about trees to find out how they can help the environment. *Jourdan, Grade 4*

I like to look for animals. I like to explore nature. It is fun finding new things. I enjoy being out in the fresh air. *Peter, Grade 2*

If I got to this camp I would be really happy because I love nature. I like to get dirty and I can be really quiet so that I can sneak up on animals and things. *Maeve, Grade 3*

I love nature. Nature has no dirty air. There are lots of animals which I can learn from. Sometimes I don't want to go by car. I told my father not to buy a big car because it warms the air and the polar bears can no longer live. I hope to teach other children. I want to write many books about nature. *Vinaya, Grade 3*

## A Flash of Gray and Gold by Orion Weldon

*Orion Weldon is a Ph.D. student in the Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution at Rutgers University. The decline of Golden-winged Warblers and many other birds in our area is of great concern to him and is the focus of his dissertation research. This article is excerpted and reprinted with the permission of the author.*

The Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), is an especially beautiful bird that thrives only in an increasingly rare habitat in our area - forest edge. It is small, weighing only 10 grams (a little over two ounces!), but what it lacks in size it makes up for by its striking plumage: a blue-gray body with a black throat and mask offset the brilliant patch of gold on the top of its head and wing. Add white stripes above and below the eyes and this bird resembles a dashing bandit. Few people get to see the Golden-winged warbler in such detail for it is a furtive species, often flitting through low vegetation just beyond view. Despite a seeker's best efforts, one is often left with just a glimpse, a flash of gray and gold.

Unfortunately, the fate of the bird, like many other migratory species, is uncertain. Its population level in most regions has undergone precipitous declines. Since the beginning of the Breeding Bird survey in 1966 (an annual survey conducted to count the number of birds breeding in North America) the golden-winged Warbler has experienced an overall decline of 3.4 percent per year in the United States. This has resulted in the extirpation of this bird from 11 states where it previously bred...

The Golden-winged Warbler requires a unique combination of herbaceous plants, scrubby shrubs, and grasses next to a forest edge. This combination of plants, typical of early successional vegetation, is found after a forest fire, a timber harvest, or in a farmer's field left fallow. However, the availability of this habitat has been decreasing steadily with fire suppression, changing logging activities, and the loss of agriculture in the region.

One landscape feature that may promise the continued availability of this habitat is the power line right-of-way. Criss-crossing the landscape, these rights-of-way require that the vegetation within them always remain short and young. Golden-winged Warblers are often found breeding in these corridors. Currently these areas force warblers to maintain artificially linear territories bounded by the narrow width of the right-of-way, quite unlike the natural grouping of territories in a wide field. In the highlands of New Jersey a partnership has been forged between the New Jersey Audubon Society, PSE&G, and the City of Newark to promote breeding habitat for this species. The partnership is undertaking a project to selectively expand a section of a PSE&G right-of-way in order to create patches of wider area that may allow the birds to establish more natural territories and to create a larger amount of suitable habitat for breeding... This experiment in creating habitat shows that there may be real solutions available that can incorporate desirable habitats into our developed landscape.

If you happen to find yourself [on] a trail that traverses one of these rights-of-way, take a moment to appreciate the different creatures that live there. You may just see a flash of gray and gold.

*The Golden-winged Warbler has been sighted by CWAS and BRSS Audubon at the forest edge in Doodletown.*

Central Westchester Audubon Society  
Box 359  
White Plains, NY 10602



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### Birdathon 2010

Saturday, May 15, 7 AM - Rain date, Sunday, May 16  
Meet at 7 AM at Education House for Carpooling

#### Central Westchester Audubon 2010 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.