



# Central Westchester Audubon Society News

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

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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 2008

## *Program*

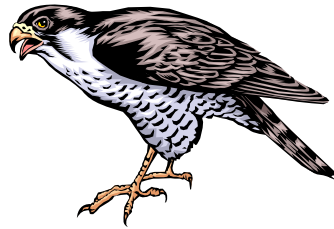
### **Raptors In The Rafters** **Our Annual Live Raptor Program**

Thursday, November 20, 2008

7:00PM

The Gym at Church St. School  
295 Church St., White Plains, NY

Speaker: Jim Eyring



Once again Jim Eyring will thrill us with his presentation of live owls, hawks and falcons. Watch as these avian aerialists fly from his glove to the rafters and then back again to the lure. Jim, who is the assistant director of Pace University Environmental Center in Pleasantville and a master falconer, will capture the attention of children and adults alike as he relates his experiences with these beautiful birds and demonstrates their astounding capabilities. Jim always manages to make his program fresh, informative and entertaining. So come, bring the kids and enjoy.

## **Invasive Species**

**At first glance they may look pretty in your own backyard, but invasive plants can pose a serious environmental threat.** Once used widely in gardening, landscaping and erosion control, non native plants like the five mentioned here can be found in yards, along roadsides and in business lots across the country. Free from natural restraints, these alien invaders establish themselves in new areas and eventually supplant native species.

**Purple Loosestrife**—Also known as the "purple plague," purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is an ornamental plant known for its purple-spiked flowers, it chokes wetlands across the country.

**Kudzu**—A climbing, semi-woody perennial vine, kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) was widely planted to combat soil erosion. Unfortunately, it grows out of control, smothers native plants and even uproots entire trees by the sheer force of its weight.

**Multiflora Rose**—Also called rambler rose, is a thorny, perennial shrub with clusters of fragrant white-to-pink flowers that bloom in May or June. Small, bright red rose hips develop during the summer. It is often found on the edges of farms and along highways.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## *Field Trips*

**Sunday, November 2, 8AM, Larchmont Reservoir.** Meet at the Reservoir on Weaver Street. A fall migration trip for both land and water fowl. Easy walking; good for beginners. Joint field trip with Bronx River/Sound Shore Audubon. Trip leader: Doug Bloom of BR/SS.

**Sunday, November 16, Jamaica Bay.** Meet at Ed House at 8am for carpooling or 9am at Jamaica Bay. This is one of the premier birding spots on the east coast. Dress in layers (it can be windy) and bring a snack if you wish. Joint trip with BR/SS and the Wild Bird Center.

**Sunday, December 14, Greenwich Point.** Meet at 8am at Scarsdale Village Hall for directions and/or carpooling or 9am at Greenwich Point Park. Greenwich Point is a peninsula jutting into Long Island Sound and is a great spot for winter waterfowl. Sponsored by BR/SS and Hudson River Audubon.

*Field trips are designed for all levels of birders, from beginner to advanced.*

*If you share a ride, offer to share the cost of gas and tolls with the driver.*

Any questions can be directed to Jeanne Alpert at 946-1780.

**CENTRAL WESTCHESTER AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
**P.O. BOX 359, WHITE PLAINS, NY 10602**  
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## Garden News

In mid October I visited the Church Street School to participate in an orientation session with the Courtyard Scientists (all 5<sup>th</sup> graders). Because the day was sunny and warm, the two teacher advisors, Wendy Podell and Loretta Cannito, decided to take the students outside to test their observation skills. They had sharp eyes and excitedly spotted most things before the adults could.

*(Continued at top of next column)*

*Garden News (Continued from previous column)*

Among their observations were many bird feathers, a seed pod that did not seem to have come from any of the surrounding bushes, a nest of sticks and some Mourning Doves in the Norway Spruce tree. I think for the first time they observed that the plant labels were in Latin as well as English and were given the explanation as to why that was so. The hit of the day came when we opened a bird house to reveal the complicated intertwining of sticks creating the nest. They all agreed that this was "cool" and wondered how there was room in that tiny box for the baby birds. This was a very curious, observant and smart group of children who were a delight to be with. If anyone in CWAS would like to help with this group, I have a list of days during the year when they will be meeting, generally once in a 6-day cycle. The commitment would be about an hour between noon and 1pm.

In the next week or so, Bruce Riggs, our garden scholar, will be helping the students plant herbs in the greenhouse to prepare for the Great Soup Extravaganza in December. This was a great hit last year and a project that the whole school looks forward to.

The garden itself looks good although there were a few plants struggling for survival. We will probably have to replace a few shrubs and since there is plenty of room, plant a few more.

Let me hear from you if you wish to get involved in any aspect of this project.

Jeanne Alpert

### Directions to Church St. School

Take I-287, Cross-Westchester Expressway, to Exit 6, North Broadway. Going west-bound (toward Tarrytown) turn left at end of 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, on to 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.

### Directions to Education House

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

### Program Cancellation

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

## Endangered Species Act

Central Westchester Audubon joined an effort organized by National Audubon by sending the following letter to the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a public comment on proposed changes which would threaten the protections of the Endangered Species Act.

Dear Secretary Dirk Kempthorne:

We are submitting these comments on behalf of Central Westchester Audubon Society in White Plains, New York, representing 400 members. We are strongly opposed to the proposed changes to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and believe they will substantially undermine protections for species on the brink of extinction like the Whooping Crane and California Condor.

One of the most important ways the Endangered Species Act successfully protects endangered and threatened plants and animals is by requiring federal agencies to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before approving a project that may harm those species. Very few projects are actually stopped by the Endangered Species Act; however the changes made to these projects in consultation with federal biologists are vital to ensuring that endangered species receive adequate protection.

The proposed changes in the rules unacceptably narrow the circumstances under which federal agencies are required to consult with the FWS or NMFS before approving projects such as permitting new oil and gas drilling or constructing federal highways. Instead, in many circumstances, federal agencies will be able to determine for themselves if proposed projects are likely to cause harm to any endangered or threatened species. Independent review of projects by professional, independent federal biologists is crucial for the effective implementation of the Endangered Species Act.

Another proposed rule change that would decrease the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act is the new 60-day deadline for the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to evaluate projects that are submitted to them for informal consultation. Rushing science is not good policy.

The Bald Eagle, our national symbol, was an endangered species. The protection offered by the Endangered Species Act has been essential in the recovery of these glorious birds. Every winter our local Hudson River Eagle Fest celebrates the return of Bald Eagles to the Hudson Hills and Highlands. Young, old, entire families gather for views of eagles soaring, fishing and floating on ice cakes in the Hudson.

Our chapter is disappointed that the comment period for these proposed rule changes is so short. We urge you to extend the public comment period by another 90 days.

We strongly urge you to withdraw the proposed rule changes to the Endangered Species Act. Thank you for your consideration of our comments on this critically important conservation issue.

Sincerely,

*(signed by each member of the Board)*

*Invasive Species (Continued from page 1)*

**Giant salvinia**—This water fern has a horizontal stem that floats just below water and produces folded, floating leaves. It has been spread to many parts of the world for use in aquariums and garden ponds, but when small fragments are introduced to larger bodies of water, it quickly grows out of control.

**Tree of Heaven**—A Chinese tree also known as ailanthus (*Ailanthus altissima*), Chinese sumac and stinking sumac, the tree of heaven is a rapidly growing deciduous tree with pale gray bark, light brown twigs and large compound leaves. It can flourish in unfavorable conditions with little care, and was a common stock in nurseries across the country as early as the 1840s.

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If you have any questions, please call Beth DaSilva at 949-5249

All profits from our pecan sale help to fund our programs and other chapter activities.

**Be an Activist—the Easy and Effective Way**

By joining the Audubon Activist Network, you will receive alerts of urgent issues together with already-written letters, which you can edit if you wish, that you can send via e-mail to your legislators. Log on to Audubon.org and click on Issues and Actions. You will be prompted to give your name, zip code (which will identify your legislators) and your e-mail address. The rest is easy. You will receive the alerts by e-mail and with a touch of the “Send” button you can express your opinions on vital conservation issues to your legislators.