

NEWSLETTER

Of The

Quaker Ridge Bird Club

An Email
Birding Publication
Covering the Greater
Rye, Greenwich, & Stamford Area

Sponsored by Audubon Greenwich

Winter 2010 Edition

Editors

Joe Zeranski & Brian O'Toole

Saturday, February 6

Hudson River Eagle Fest at Croton Point Park

9:00-4:00 pm

Come scan the Hudson River shores and icy waters for wintering bald eagles. Live eagle programs, information tables, warming tents, etc. *For details visit www.teatown.org.*

Audubon Greenwich Events

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 12-15

Join a nationwide effort to count birds in your own yard or neighborhood and report them to the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University. Visit www.birdsource.org/gbbc or call Ted at x230 to learn more about participating.

Saturday, February 13

TRAINING SESSION:

Great Backyard Bird Count 1:00-2:30 pm

Join us as we check our bird feeders and take a short walk on the property to identify and count local birds before returning to the center to report our bird sightings to Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology using the internet. Participants will learn basic bird ID and how to do counts in your own backyard and neighborhood. *All ages. Sign up with Ted at x230.*

Saturday, February 20

DOUBLE FEATURE:

Eagles In Alaska – Photography by Dan Burns &

Meet the author of “How To Grow Your Own Tree Hugger” 2:00-3:30 pm

The show begins with a series of incredible bald eagle photos by renowned NFL/sports photographer, Dan Burns. His striking images from Homer Alaska capture an unusual gathering site for several dozen birds each winter. Author Wendy Rosenoff will follow with activities from her new

how-to book about with raising eco-conscious youngsters. *\$4 for adults/ \$2 for children. All ages. RSVP to the Nature Store at x221.*

2009 Quaker Ridge Hawkwatch

Luke Tiller

It seems like it was just a short time ago that I was standing out on the lawn at Greenwich Audubon in a t-shirt picking up the first migrating raptor of the season as temperatures soared up into the 90's. We started our watch on August 20 and three months later we are at the close. What a season it has been though, records have tumbled, rarities have been sighted and most importantly we have gathered another seasons worth of data which will help scientists determine the health of North America's raptor population.

Highlights of the year have been legion, with a total of nine beautiful Sandhill Cranes on the season, including a remarkable group of five that were tracked by observers all the way from Wareham MA to the Scott's Mountain Hawkwatch on the border of NJ and PA and perhaps eventually as far as Georgia (see post below). Other interesting sightings have included two Mississippi Kites that appeared together on October 14 (a species that has only recently been found nesting as far north as New England) and 11 Golden Eagles on the year.

We have also been breaking records all around, for example Nov. 18 with just two days to go we finally broke our seasons best record for Bald Eagles (thanks to Stefan Martins eagle eyes – bad pun intended). It has been a great year for these magnificent birds and it's amazing to witness an environmental success story like this in action and heartening to see that armed with the right information and desire to make a difference we really can make a positive impact on the lives of these creatures.

Merlin numbers (a rather feisty little member of the falcon family) also peaked at an all time high this year (150) reflecting their burgeoning numbers and spreading breeding range. Conversely American Kestrel numbers, although not shockingly low, were not as high as past years and there is still much concern for this birds future, especially in our own state. Early date records were set for Golden Eagle (Sept. 12) and late ones for Osprey (Nov. 18 – by just one day).

Counting all of the 17,000 birds that have passed overhead would of course have been impossible were it not for the dedicated team of volunteers who have helped man the watch, pick out birds that would have otherwise have been missed and simply helped get me through the birdless days. There are too many to mention by name but they know who they are, and it has been a pleasure to have met and worked with such a nice group of people. If you didn't manage to get along to the

hawkwatch or join us for the amazing Greenwich Audubon Hawkwatch Festival this year, make sure you add it to your diary for 2010.

The Hawk Watchers:

Tom Baptist, Marty Barris, Steve Beal, Gail Benson, Tom Burke, Al & Diane Collins, Eamon Corbett, Annette Cunniffe, Jim Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Debby Ethridge, Larry Flynn, Barry Freed, Carole Griffiths, Frank Guida, Pete Gustas, Catherine Hamilton, John Hannan, Orlando Hidalgo, Carl Howard, Brenda Inskip, Ryan MacLean, Hugh Martin, Stefan Martin, Shaun Martin, Ken Mirman, Allison O'Toole, Brian O'Toole, Matt Popp, Mike Reese, Tom Renner, David Salmon, Benjamin Van Doren, Bill Wallace, Mike Warner and Joe Zeranski

The Birds:

Black Vulture 25, Turkey Vulture 1131[2nd highest total], Osprey 607[lowest number since 2003], Bald Eagle 176[highest ever total], Northern Harrier 169, Sharp-shinned Hawk 3254, Cooper's Hawk 411, Northern Goshawk 3, Red-shouldered Hawk 352 [2nd highest total], Broad-winged Hawk 9866, Red-tailed Hawk 213[lowest total since 2002], Golden Eagle 11[co 3rd highest total], American Kestrel 536, Merlin 150 [highest ever total], Peregrine Falcon 33, Mississippi Kite 2 [highest ever total], unidentified raptors 107.

2009

Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Bird Count Results

The Basics:

December 20, 2009, 117 species, 46,747 individual birds, plus two count period species. Sixty observers in 35 Field Parties observed for 179.0 party hours. Since the GSCBCs 1913 founding 213 species have been reported.

The Observers:

Michael Aurelia, Pat Bailey, Tom Baptist, Valentina Baptist, Trudy Battaly, Steve Beal, Joan Becker, Richard Becker, Joe Belanger, William Belanger, Gail Benson, Michael Bochnik, Thomas W. Burke, Ioa Byrne, Federico Carballo, Manuel Carballo, Al Collins, Eamon Corbett, Annette Cunniffe, Daniel Cunniffe, Peter Davenport, Cynthia Ehlinger, Debby Ethridge, Andy Farnsworth, Kathy Gellman, Ted Gilman, Arthur Green, Frank Guida, Tim Guida, John Hannan, Carol Hartel, Bo Hopkins, Elsbeth Johnson, Ryan Keller, Melody Libonati, Shaun Martin, Chris Mignon, Ken Mirman, Mike Moccio, Tim Moses, Maryann O'Leary, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer, Drew Panko, Matt Popp, Stephen Ricker, Polly Rothstein, Meredith Sampson, Joanna Schaffer, Andy Towle, Richard Trepp, Jim Utter, Bill Van Loan jr., Benjamin VanDoren, Jim Voros, Mike Warner, Lynn Zeltman, and Adam Zorn.

The Birds:

Snow Goose 18[2nd highest total], Brant 613[2nd highest total], Canada Goose 8281[new high count], Mute Swan 116, Wood Duck 59[largest number since 1980], Gadwall 89, Eurasian Wigeon 1, American Wigeon 69, American Black Duck 671, Mallard 1422 [largest total since 2001], Northern Pintail 1, Green-winged Teal 1, Canvasback 5, Ring-billed Duck 28[2nd low count since 1980], Greater Scaup 7, Lesser Scaup 2, White-winged

Scoter 10, *scoter sp.* 3, Long-tailed Duck 205, Bufflehead 938[new high count], Common Goldeneye 218, Hooded Merganser 277, Common Merganser 729, Red-breasted Merganser 469[3rd highest number], Ruddy Duck 58,

Wild Turkey 28[lowest total since 1997],

Red-throated Loon 75[2nd highest total], Common Loon 43[2nd highest total], Pied-billed Grebe 6, Horned Grebe 14, Red-necked Grebe CW, Northern Gannet 10[new high count], Double-crested Cormorant 12[2nd highest total], Great Cormorant 78,

Great Blue Heron 40,

Black Vulture 18[highest ever total], Turkey Vulture 147[highest ever total], Osprey 1[6th record, 1st since 1984], Bald Eagle 4[11th straight year], Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 17[3rd highest total], Cooper's Hawk 12, Red-shouldered Hawk 2, Red-tailed Hawk 111[2nd highest total], American Kestrel 1, Merlin 3[new high count], Peregrine Falcon 3[co-count high],

American Coot 4, Black-bellied Plover 12, Killdeer 14, Ruddy Turnstone 52[3rd highest total], Purple Sandpiper 8, American Woodcock 2[highest total since 1998],

Bonaparte's Gull 11, Ring-billed Gull 1669, Herring Gull 1656[highest total since 1996], Iceland Gull 1[2nd record since 1937], Lesser Black-backed Gull CW, Great Black-backed Gull 156[3rd highest total],

Rock Pigeon 541, Mourning Dove 721, Monk Parakeet 26 [lowest total since 2000], Eastern Screech-Owl 3[due to the weather it's the lowest total since 1972], Great Horned Owl 9, Barred Owl 1, Long-eared Owl 1[3rd record since 1995], Northern Saw-whet Owl 1,

Belted Kingfisher 13, Red-bellied Wood-pecker 169, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 18[2nd highest total], Downy Woodpecker 201, Hairy Woodpecker 37, Northern Flicker 29, Pileated Woodpecker 6,

Blue Jay 516, American Crow 2401[3rd highest total], Fish Crow 6, Common Raven 1[5th record, all since 2003], Horned Lark 146[new high count, previous one was 36 birds], Black-capped Chickadee 440[4th lowest total since 1950], Tufted Titmouse 430, Red-breasted Nuthatch 6, White-breasted Nuthatch 159[4th lowest total since 1978], Brown Creeper 15[4th highest total since 1987], Carolina Wren 101, Winter Wren 11, Golden-crowned Kinglet 10, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 5,

Eastern Bluebird 31[6th lowest total since 1973], Hermit Thrush 9, American Robin 2933[new high total, previous high 1763], Gray Catbird 13, Northern Mockingbird 75, Brown Thrasher 1[5th record since 1990], European Starling 2551, American Pipit 57[new high count & 8th consecutive year], Cedar Waxwing 254, Yellow-rumped Warbler 12,

Eastern Towhee 7, American Tree Sparrow 56, Chipping Sparrow 2, Chipping Sparrow 2, Field Sparrow 10, Savannah Sparrow 10[3rd highest total, highest since 1969], Song Sparrow 326, Swamp Sparrow 10, White-throated Sparrow 1868[2nd highest total], White-crowned Sparrow 1[6th record since 1986], Dark-eyed Junco 2583 [new high total, previous high 928],

Snow Bunting 34[3rd highest total since 1930], Northern Cardinal 357, Red-winged Blackbird 842[new high total, previous 552], Rusty Blackbird 16[2nd highest total, high 48], Common Grackle 8896[new highest total, previous high 238], Brown-headed Cowbird 40[highest total since 1980], Purple Finch 8, House Finch 308[4th lowest total since 1968], American Goldfinch 219[4th lowest total since 1973], and House Sparrow 676[4th lowest total since 1960].