



## A Looming Problem: Invasive Plants

by Brian Bielfelt



Multiflora  
Rose

What if Audubon Greenwich's meadows and fields had only Common Reed, Multiflora Rose, Wineberry, Privet, and Purple Loosestrife?

Missing would be the species familiar to many of us, such as Goldenrod, Milkweed, Blueberry, Shadbush, Dogwood, and native grasses. Also missing would be the Monarch Butterflies and other

insects that depend on these species. What if the only birds you could find were House Sparrows and European Starlings? This is what Audubon could look like if invasive species have their way.

Approximately half of the species listed under the Endangered Species Act are considered to be endangered due to competition with, predation by, or habitat changes by invasive organisms. Worldwide, 80% of all endangered species are at risk because of invasive species. One study estimates that the United States alone spends \$138 billion dollars on invasive species damage and control each year.

Clearly, something needs to be done to stop invasive species from spreading further.

### What exactly is an invasive species?

An invasive species is any non-native plant or animal that causes environmental or economic harm. Many invasive plants – such as Multiflora Rose – are imported ornamentals that escaped from the garden into the wild, where they grow unchecked and crowd out native species. Today, many plant nurseries, garden centers, and home gardeners continue to sell and plant a wide variety of invasives.

Different plants and animals exploit different conditions to become invasive. For example, a species that does not have a natural predator in a region, such as a plant that deer will not eat, can thrive undisturbed. Plants that spread easily and are hard to eradicate colonize new areas rapidly. The most invasive plants are those with weedy qualities that have adapted to human-disrupted habitats and lack co-evolved herbivores to feed on them. Disturbed

*continued on page 6*

## Summertime Science

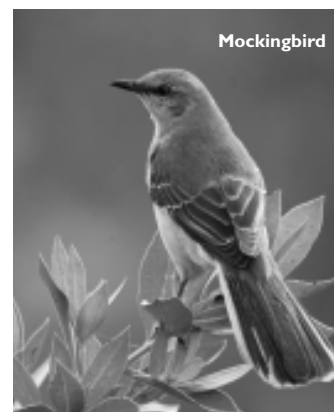
**June 7 & 8 - Summer Bird Count**

**July 12 - Audubon Butterfly Count**

**July 26 - Dragonfly & Damselfly Survey**

Scientific research is happening right here in town and you can become a part of it! Ideal for teens interested in conservation.

No scientific experience required. *See calendar for details.*



Mockingbird



The Mission of Audubon Greenwich is to motivate people to conserve, restore, and enjoy nature, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, through education, land stewardship, science, and public policy advocacy.

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**Web:** http://greenwich.audubon.org  
**Open:** 7 days a week 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
**Admission:** Members: FREE  
 Non-members: Adults \$3.00  
 Children/Seniors: \$1.50

**Education & Science Interns Excel**

The Science and Education Internship program has made a huge contribution to the programming and habitat management projects at Audubon Greenwich this year. While improving natural history skills and learning about the nature center business, Education Interns assisted with school students, scout groups, birthday parties, and weekend programs. They also helped with exhibit projects, animal care, and wildlife gardening projects at the intern house. Karina Bongaarts coordinated the high school interns on a daily basis and Brian Bielfelt lead invasive plant removal sessions and field lessons on how "point counts" and other bird research is conducted at Audubon Greenwich.



High school interns Anne Aviles (left) and Erika Buffa (right) are Seniors who spend 4-6 weeks working with Audubon staff each Spring.



Pictured from left to right: Brian Bielfelt - the 2008 Science Intern, David Tunick and Melissa Gayle - Education Interns from local high schools, Karina Bongaarts - the 2008 Education Intern and Jeff Cordulack, advisor for the education interns and Education Program Manager since October 2004.



**Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch**  
**August 20-November 20, 2008**

**Raptor Counting Season is near!**

Audubon Greenwich's hawk watching site is staffed on weekdays... but it's the volunteers who are in charge on weekends.

**VOLUNTEER RAPTOR COUNTERS**

*If you have hawkwatching skills and time to spend counting hawks & recording weather data, please contact Brian O'Toole at 203-869-5272 x228.*

**CITIZEN SCIENCE & YOU**

**Dragon & Damselfly Count**

July 27, 2008 • 11 am to 5 pm

**A New Era of Insect Identification: Dragonflies and Damselflies**

For many years, Audubon staff and volunteers have participated in the Summer and Winter bird counts to inventory bird species in our area, and the North American



often use binoculars for easier recognition and several recent books have really helped bring Odonate identification into the spotlight, including Ed Lam's *Damselflies of the Northeast* and

Butterfly Association's summer butterfly count each July. This summer, Audubon Greenwich will do its first ever summer dragonfly count! Not only is it fun to identify birds and insects but it also improves our understanding of these fascinating species.

Sidney W. Dunkle's *Dragonflies through Binoculars*. Unlike butterflies, which usually settle on plants or the ground, dragonflies are more active and usually require net-capture to be able to see key features for identification. Fortunately, the Odonates are much tougher than a butterfly, which means you are less likely to harm a dragonfly in capturing and handling them.

Like butterflies, the Odonates, which includes the dragonflies and damselflies, are active in the day and relatively easy to find. Insect enthusiasts

**Join us on July 27 from 11am-5pm for a dragonfly count.**  
 RSVP with Brian O'Toole in the nature store at (203) 869-5272.

Coming in September...  
**HawkWatch Weekend Festival**  
**Sept. 13 & 14**

- Raptor counting
- Lectures
- Family fun
- Food
- Exhibitors
- and much more!

**Don't miss this great event!**



Photo: David Tunick

**Nature Store News**

**National Audubon Society members receive a 10% discount on all merchandise (excluding bird seed).**

- Have bird songs and frog calls at your fingertips with the new *IFlyer Scanning Wand and Songbook*. Package includes wand, barcode book, carrying case, and bar code stickers to put in your favorite field guide



- Feed the hummingbirds in your backyard with decorative feeders from Bird Brain and Perky Pet
- Wooden bird doorknockers from Alexanders
- Vortex binoculars – high quality and affordable binoculars
- New fine crafted nature jewelry by Silver Seasons
- New "green" children's books from two local Greenwich authors: *Think Green* by Jeanine Getz and *William Is Going Green* by James Martin II
- 500 & 1000 piece bird puzzles
- A blended mix of nesting material by Songbird Essentials to help your local breeding birds
- *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens* by Douglas Tallamy
- Designed especially for clinging birds such as chickadees, titmice, goldfinches, and small woodpeckers, our "Clingers Only" feeder discourages starlings, pigeons, and grackles.

**Order Books Through Us!**  
**Contact the Store Manager,**  
**Brian O'Toole at**  
**203-869-5272 x228.**

# AUDUBON GREENWICH NATURE PROGRAM CALENDAR

## SUMMER 2008

### Saturday, June 7

#### E4C: Family Breakfast & Photo Hike

9:00 - 11:00 am

Enjoy family fun while hiking the trails at Audubon! Families can enjoy a healthy breakfast and prepare for photo expedition in the nearby preserve. Parents can choose a shorter walk (45 min.) through the meadows, orchard and to nearby Indian Spring Pond. Or choose a longer hike (1.5 hours) that will venture down to Mead Lake and back. As a special bonus for the hike, guests can borrow Sony digital cameras to and seek out great nature photos! At the conclusion of the hike, we will raffle a special prize to one of the families that participated in the breakfast hike. \$25 per family ~ RSVP Required. Sign up with Jeff Cordulack: 203-869-5272 x239 or jcordulack@audubon.org. *Sponsored by E4C: Executives for Conservation, Sony and Celestron.*

### Sunday, June 8

#### Spring Concert by Musica Plenti

Starting at 7:00 pm

Join us for an evening of wonderful music to celebrate Spring and the beauty of nature with this award-winning vocal chamber ensemble. Wine and cheese reception to follow. Admission \$20. For tickets, call Karen Dixon at x226.

### Summertime Science

June 7 & 8 - Summer Bird Count

July 12 - Audubon Butterfly Count

July 26 - Dragonfly & Damselfly Survey

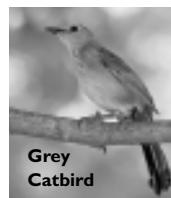
Scientific research is happening right here in town and you can become a part of it! Sign up to participate in a citizen science program with Audubon and you'll help contribute to important wildlife studies about birds, butterflies, and more. All events will start with a short introduction to how to help with counting and learn some basic identification skills.

*Ideal for teens and adults. Sign up today.*

### June 7 & 8

#### T4C: Annual Bird Count

A two-day survey to help determine what birds are living and nesting in this area at this time of the year. A wonderful way to get out with experienced birders. Please sign up with Ted Gilman to join in the summer bird count. Call 203-869-5272 x230 by June 6th. Suitable for teens interested in conservation.



Grey Catbird

### Saturday, June 14

#### Bird Nests and Families

2:30-3:30 pm

Join us as we take a peek at birds nesting at Audubon Greenwich - finding out where they nest, how they build their nests, and how they raise their families. All ages. Call store to sign up.



American Goldfinch with nest

### Audubon's Invasive Plants

#### Lecture & Field Day

Saturday, June 28

9:00 am: Breakfast & Guest Speaker

10:30 am-noon: Help remove invasive plants

Learn about our local plant invaders and how to get them under control. The first part will be an informative lecture accompanied by a light breakfast and then join in the fun with our stewardship team when we work a site that has an invasive plant problem.

Bring a note pad, work clothes, and gloves.

*Breakfast fee \$5. Free to all who stay to help with plant removal.*

*Sign up in the store by calling 203-869-5272 x221.*

### Saturday, June 28

#### Family Pond Exploration

2:30-4:00 pm

Hop around the pond with Audubon staff and get up close to the tiny creatures that call the nearby pond home. Equipment will be provided. Suitable for all ages. Limited registration. Sign up by calling the store at x221.

### Thursday, July 3

#### Fireflies - Nature's Fireworks

8:30-9:30 pm

An ideal time of the year to learn about these special insects. Learn about how and why the firefly flashes and then try your skills at telling the species apart by looking at the different patterns made by the different firefly species. Sign up with Ted at 203-869-5272 x230.



Firefly

### Saturday, July 12

#### T4C: Annual Butterfly Count

10:30-11:00 - Introduction

11:00-5:00 pm - Official Counting

Start with an introduction to local butterflies and learn how to count scientifically from 10:30-11:00 and then head out on the Audubon Center grounds to view our butterfly gardens and conduct our count. Sign up with Ted at x230. Suitable for teens interested in conservation.

### Friday, July 18

#### Guided Night Hike

8:30 pm-9:45 pm

Come explore the dusk and night-time world of the Audubon Center fields, pond, and forest to watch the changing of the guard from daytime to night time wildlife. RSVP required. Sign up with Ted at x230.

### Sunday, July 20

#### Family Pond Exploration

12:30-2:00 pm

Hop around the pond with Audubon staff and get up close to the tiny creatures that call the nearby pond home. Equipment will be provided. Suitable for all ages. Limited registration. Sign up by calling the store at x221.



Bullfrog

### Honey Harvest

Saturday, July 26

10:00 am to 5:00 pm



Visitors are invited to stop by to see how the honey is taken out of the hive and bottled.

Help "spin" the honey from the wax combs.

Honey will be available for purchase (while supplies last). No RSVP needed. No charge.

*Sponsored and staffed by the Backyard Beekeepers Association.*

### Saturday, July 26

#### T4C: Dragonflies and Damselflies Survey

10:30 am-11:00 am - Introduction

11:00 am-5:00 pm - Field session

Join us for an introduction to our local dragonflies and damselflies and take part in the first official 'dragonfly and damselfly' survey of the Audubon Greenwich grounds. All ages welcome but may be more suitable for children 7 and up.

RSVP required. Sign up in the store.

Suitable for teens interested in conservation.



dragonfly

### Sunday, August 17

#### Fairchild Meadow Exploration

9:30 am-11:00 am

Come search for spiders, butterflies, dragonflies, and praying mantids among many other meadow mini-beasts.

Sign up in the store at x221.

### Sharon Audubon Festival

August 9 & 10

9:00 am-5:00 pm

Travel north to the Sharon Center in Northwest Connecticut to join this great family nature festival with walks, demonstrations, music, food, activities, and displays.

Suitable for all ages and worth the short drive. Call 860-364-0520 for directions and information about the scheduled events.

### Sunday, August 17

#### Family Pond Exploration

12:30-2:00 pm

Hop around the pond with Audubon staff and get up close to the tiny creatures that call the nearby pond home. Equipment will be provided. Suitable for all ages. Limited registration. Sign up by calling the store at x221.

### HawkWatch Weekend Festival

Sept. 13 & 14

Raptor Shows • Environmental Exhibits • Family Fun

Programs are suitable for all ages unless otherwise indicated. Please register by calling 203-869-5272. Programs start at the Kimberlin Nature Center at Audubon Greenwich, 613 Riversville Road. <http://greenwich.audubon.org>. Program fees: \$3/adult members; \$5/adult non-members; \$1.50/member children and seniors; \$3/non-member children and seniors; no charge to Teacher Naturalists as part of their ongoing training.

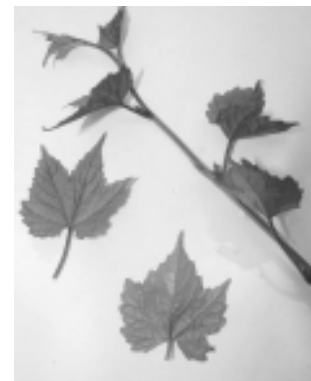
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or degraded habitats, or areas nearby, are the most susceptible to invasives. These habitats can include field, forest edge, and early successional habitat. Audubon sanctuaries contain many such habitats, prime territory for invasives.

### How Can We Fight Invasives?

There are 15 or more invasive species found on the Audubon properties, 13 of which are found in and around the Center's fields. Many of the thickets around the Audubon Center have established populations of invasive plants growing in them for many years, which make eradication of these invasives extremely difficult. Invasive plants have not only remained in these thickets but have gradually expanded into other parts of the property. For example, Border Privet migrated from areas around the main center building into the northern edges of the fields and orchard, where new unwanted privet thickets are beginning to grow.



Often overlooked, Porcelain Berry is a grape-like vine that can quickly overcome shrubs and desirable native plants.

Audubon Greenwich has begun an intensive invasive plant removal program in the fields and forest edges around the Center. The goal of the project is to promote a healthy native ecosystem by removing invasive species and encouraging native plants to grow. We are managing and reducing invasive plants in the fields by cutting, mowing, and pulling out the roots. In large thickets, we are removing the invasives and planting native plants. This

project has already received hands-on support from 30 dedicated volunteers who donated nearly 150 hours of service!

Wildlife often uses the thickets these invasive plants create; therefore, we are implementing a long term plan to replace these thickets with native plants. The thicket on the east end of Hawk Watch Lawn will be model for future invasive removal projects. This thicket is mostly invasive Multiflora Rose, Wineberry, Border Privet, and several invasive vines; however, there are a number of native plants that are being smothered by these invasives. Already, we have begun to restore this habitat.

For the next three years, one third of the invasive plants in this thicket will be removed. To improve the habitat, we will purchase and plant nearly 300 native plants in this thicket. In the next few years, we hope to expand the removal/replanting program to several other thickets overrun with invasives. The native plants will provide a continual supply of berries and dense shelter for wildlife. In addition, we will plant species to attract beneficial insects and hummingbirds. We hope these native plants will act as a barrier to future encroachment of invasive plants.

### What You Can Do To Stop Invasives.

- **Plant Native Plants:** Find plants native to the Northeast instead of foreign and exotic plants. Shop at native nurseries. A great resource for native plants is *Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants* by C. Colston Burrell, which can be found in the Audubon Greenwich Nature Store.
- **Prevention Is Key:** Remove invasive plants right away before they become established. It is less costly and time consuming to remove five plants than it is to remove 50.
- **Herbicides Are Not Always Needed:** Cutting, mowing, and root removal works very well on most invasives and on small populations of 20 or fewer plants.
- **Research The Invasive:** There are many websites devoted to invasive species. They will help you identify invasive plants, determine the best removal technique, and suggest native alternatives. Try searching for information at [www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org) and [www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg)
- **Support Organizations Which Remove Invasives:** Funding is necessary but Audubon is only able to achieve success with the help of volunteers donating their time to remove invasives. Contact Brian Bielfelt at 203.869.5272 if you would like to contribute to our native plant/invasive removal program or volunteer your time with this important conservation project.

INVASIVE PLANTS	NATIVE ALTERNATIVES
Multiflora Rose	Pasture Rose, Common Blackberry, Swamp Rose
Wineberry	Black Raspberry, Common Blackberry, Winterberry
Japanese Barberry	Witch Alder, New Jersey Tea, Virginia Sweetspire
Border and European Privets	Inkberry, Blackhaw Viburnum, Red or Black Chokeberry
Japanese Honeysuckle	Crossvine, Coral Honeysuckle, Sweet Pepperbush
Oriental Bittersweet	Pipevine, Passionflower, Trumpet Honeysuckle
Porcelainberry	Trumpet Honeysuckle, Virgin's Bower, Trumpet Creeper
Purple Loosestrife	Cardinal Flower, Blazing Star, New York Ironweed
Winged Burning Bush	Maple Leaf Viburnum, Silky Dogwood, Highbush Blueberry
Russian Olive	Gray Dogwood, Shadbush, Northern Bayberry

## Join the Audubon Naturalist Team Volunteer Teacher Naturalist Training Begins in September

*Do you have an interest in the natural world? Would you like to share your passion with others?  
Would you like to learn more about nature?*

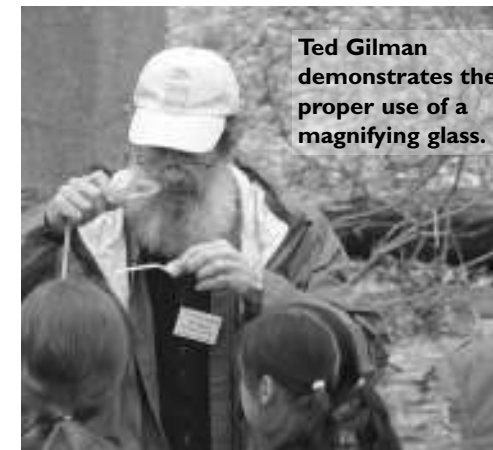
Join the Audubon Greenwich Teacher Naturalist (TN) Training Program and learn to lead hands-on, science based school programs. As a TN-in-training, you will gain natural history knowledge taught by our experienced Education Specialists. You will meet other active nature enthusiasts, enjoy social gatherings and trips to other centers, museums and sanctuaries, and receive discounts at our Nature Store.

But most importantly, you will make an immeasurable contribution to hundreds of children seeking to enjoy a break from their indoor classrooms and learn about the natural world around them.

Please contact the Education Department for information about becoming a member of our Audubon Greenwich team.



Lindsey DeVito preps school students for their trip into the field.



Ted Gilman demonstrates the proper use of a magnifying glass.



James Flynn introduces students to the mice who have taken up residence in a nest box during winter vacation camp.



Ruth Newberg visits the observation beehive with students.

### Audubon Greenwich makes strides with Organic Lawns

Chip Osborne, President of Osborne Organics, has presented several lectures about organic lawns at Audubon Greenwich. Each event had a different focus to attract different audiences including school grounds managers, landscapers, homeowners, and golf club managers.



Pictured right: Redbud tree and organic lawns growing in front of the Kimberlin Nature Center



The organic lawn lectures were very popular and some had standing room only.



Chip Osborne, guest lecturer at several events in 2007 and 2008.

SUMMER 2008

# Natural History Notes

By Ted Gilman, Education Specialist

Painted and snapping turtles seek out the sunny banks of the Mead Lake Dam as a good spot to bury their eggs to allow solar incubation of their next generation of young; goldfinches in their bright yellow and black plumage sing brightly and switch from their typical roller coaster undulating flight to a slow motion moth-like level flight to display both colors and song to potential mates; young screech owls, newly fledged from their natal tree cavity, give quavering begging calls to their steadily hunting parents to demand yet another beetle, moth, earthworm, mouse or songbird to satisfy their youthful hunger; evening primrose flowers burst open at dusk and display their pale yellow forms to night-flying moths who can pollinate them while we sleep; green, half-grown walking sticks, patrol the herbaceous growth in our front fields as they slowly grow towards their autumn maturity of brown, branch-like color and reproductive period when they will produce a new crop of tiny eggs which will gently rain down from tree branches to pass the winter in the leaf litter below; a black-crowned night heron perches on the bridge at the Mead Lake Dam, taking a break from its stealthy night-time pursuit of fish and frogs in the shallow waters of the Byram river below; blackish gray patches on beech leaves alert a mid-summer hiker to thin branches above coated with a waving white mass of sap-sucking woolly aphids, whose sweet 'honeydew' droppings attract ants and wasps for a sweet treat; tiny new



spring peeper frogs, which could easily fit on your smallest finger nail, emerge onto pondside vegetation to catch small insects and begin their lives on land; sandpipers, already returning south in late July, after their quick breeding season in the arctic, scurry along Long Island Sound shorelines in search of tiny crabs, clams and other energy-rich treats to refuel them and prepare them for their continuing journey to their winter homes on the shores of Latin America; little brown bats skim over the waters of Mead Lake at dusk, capturing an abundance of freshly-hatched flying aquatic insects and occasionally dipping down to the water's surface to grab a quick drink on the wing; the Sharon Audubon Festival continues a long summer tradition of attracting families and nature enthusiasts to learn new wonders of the natural world and new ways to both celebrate and conserve it; beautiful lime-green juvenile gray tree frogs emerge from Indian Spring Pond to be discovered by children of all ages, amazed by both their tiny size and vibrant color; bright pink domes of Joe-Pye-Weed flowers, raised by their stems to a height of 5 or 6 feet, attract a steady stream of bright yellow and black tiger swallowtail butterflies to their rich nectar supply in wet meadows and butterfly gardens; the first bald eagle slowly floats south over Quaker Ridge in late August, signaling the start of another magnificent parade of raptors which will continue through the autumn months ahead...

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## Family Pond Days

June 28, July 20 & Aug. 17

## Honey Harvesting

Saturday, July 26

## Hawk Watch Weekend

September 13 & 14