



Audubon Greenwich Launches *TogetherGreen* Volunteer Days

by Karen Dixon, Center Director

In 2008, Audubon launched a dynamic and innovative program funded by Toyota called *TogetherGreen*. *TogetherGreen* encourages people to “act today to shape tomorrow” by providing inspiration, leadership, and opportunities that help people from all walks of life to take action at home and in their communities to improve and protect our environment.

In June, Audubon Greenwich received a *TogetherGreen* Volunteer Days grant to conduct six volunteer events. These Volunteer Days will focus on engaging people in habitat restoration at our sanctuaries, particularly Fairchild and our main sanctuary.

For our first event on October 4, more than 20 volunteers and staff, including several new volunteers, banded together



to improve the habitat at Indian Spring Pond. While our volunteers received *TogetherGreen* hats and t-shirts, lunch, and camaraderie with their fellow volunteers, our pond received a much-needed face-lift! Our volunteers

worked hard throughout the day to remove invasive species such as Japanese Stilt Grass and Porcelain Berry, clear and improve access points and paths, and thin the cattails that were overwhelming and obscuring the pond. Volunteers braved some threatening weather and chilly morning temperatures to get both wet and dirty for conservation and for Audubon.

Join the next Volunteer Day on January 24, 2009. To participate, contact Brian O’Toole at botoole@audubon.org or x228! To learn more, visit: www.togethergreen.org.

HawkWatch 2008 - In Brief

This year, Brian Bielfelt returned for a third season (August 20-November 20) and his keen observations were summarized at the annual HawkWatch meeting on November 22. Some points he noted were:

The Bad

- Fewer harriers and kestrels in the Northeast overall this year. This is of concern to biologists.
- Minor downturn in red-tails and sharp-shinned hawks noted this year. This was somewhat expected due to cyclical population changes.

The Good

- It was another good year for bald eagles (155).
- The 14 golden eagles seen this year was similar to last year (11).
- 18,706 broad-wing hawks were counted. This was the first good year since 1995 (36,000+). Broad-wings numbered 9000+ in 2007 and 10,000+ in 2006 at our site.

Thank you to all the volunteer hawk watchers (you know who you are) who searched the skies this season with us.



View from the HawkWatch Lawn

The 2008 HawkWatch report and past years’ reports are posted and available on the Audubon Greenwich website.

Brian Bielfelt made many improvements to the record keeping and analyzed the data to identify some overall trends in the local raptor migration seen over our site. Our sincere thanks to him for yet again another year of hard work on HawkWatch lawn and our best wishes for him and his new fiancée.

AUDUBON GREENWICH NATURE PROGRAM CALENDAR

W I N T E R 2 0 0 8 - 0 9

Saturday, December 6

Bushy-tailed Neighbors: The World of Squirrels

1:00-2:30 pm

Take a closer look at the different sizes, colors, and lifestyles of our bushy-tailed neighbors. We'll take a close look at some specimens and skulls indoors and then take a walk outdoors to seek out our squirrels, their winter homes, and other signs of their activities. All ages. Sign up with Ted at x230.

Sunday, December 7

"1st Sunday" Bird Walks - Greenwich Point Park

Starting at 9:00 am

Dress warmly, bring binoculars and enjoy seeing and learning about winter birds and their varied habitats at beautiful Greenwich Point. Guides are experienced, knowledgeable birders. Everyone welcome. Free, no registration required. Meet at the second concession flagpole at 9:00. "First Sundays" Bird Walks are on the first Sunday of the month, year-round. Contact Meredith Sampson, Director of *Wild Wings, Inc. Wildlife Rehabilitation & Environmental Education*, at 203-637-9822.



Carolina wren

Saturday, January 31

Animal Homes and Hideouts 1:00-2:30 pm

Join us as we explore the Audubon trails through field and forest for special hiding places where our wildlife seeks shelter from the weather and predators. All ages. Sign up with Ted at x230.

Hudson River Eagle Festival Croton Point Park, NY

Saturday, February 7

9:00 am-4:00 pm

Come scan the Hudson River shores and icy waters for wintering bald eagles. Live eagle programs, information tables, warming tents, etc. Snow date: Feb. 8. For more details visit www.teatown.org.

Saturday, February 21

Late Winter Exploration Hike

2:00-3:30 pm

We will take a loop hike into our field and orchard and down through the woods to Mead Lake and the Byram River to seek out any early returning black birds, animal tracks, skunk cabbage peeking up out of the ground, and more. All ages. Sign up with Ted at x230.



White-breasted nuthatch

Saturday, February 28

HIKE: Signs of Spring at Fairchild Garden

2:00-3:30 pm

In spite of the cold weather, we can find evidence of the spring to come. Join us as we explore this wonderful sanctuary and seek out signs of wildlife, early spring bird song, developing color in tree twigs and more. All ages. Sign up with Ted at x230.

Saturday, February 28

T4C: Teens for Conservation

10:00-11:30 am

Did you know that over the course of a year, birders regularly spot between 100-200 different species of birds in Connecticut? Take this chance to improve your birding skills when local teens and Audubon naturalists try their hands at finding and identifying many of our local birds. The group will start with an introduction to birding by Ted Gilman and then hit the trails with loaner binoculars and field guides. Sign up with Jeff at x239.

Saturday, December 20

Project Federwatch: a citizen science program 1:00-2:30 pm

Help our naturalist count our local birds and report them to Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology. Ideal for families who want to count birds at home throughout the winter. Register with Ted Gilman 203-869-5272 x230.



Dark-eyed junco

Sunday, January 4

"1st Sunday" Bird Walks - Greenwich Point Park

Starting at 9:00 am

Dress warmly, bring binoculars and enjoy seeing and learning about winter birds and their varied habitats at beautiful Greenwich Point. Guides are experienced, knowledgeable birders. Everyone welcome. Free, no registration required. Meet at the second concession flagpole at 9:00. "First Sundays" Bird Walks are on the first Sunday of the month, year-round. Contact Meredith Sampson, Director of *Wild Wings, Inc. Wildlife Rehabilitation & Environmental Education*, at 203-637-9822.

Saturday, December 13

TRIP: Annual Bird Count 'Scouting Trip'

9:00 am-12:00 pm

Join Audubon for a survey of good coastal and inland birding areas in preparation for the next day's Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Sunday Dec. 14. Meet at the Audubon Center to follow carpool. Bring binoculars and warm clothes. Loaner binoculars and field guides will be available. Ages 8 and up. Sign up with Ted at x230.

Annual Christmas Bird Count

109th Year - Count at home or with teams

Sunday, December 14

Greenwich-Stamford
Christmas Bird Count Territory



Join one of the oldest citizen science bird research projects in the world. Some teams start counting owls at midnight. Other teams start at dawn and count in shifts throughout the day. Join one of our field counting teams or, if you live in our 15-mile count circle, conduct a backyard bird count. To join a team or get a home-based reporting form, call Brian O'Toole in the store at x221.

Monday, February 9

T4C: Teens for Conservation

Full Moon Hike 6:00-8:30 pm

A special night hike for teens interested in nature and conservation. Wear quiet clothes and tie your shoe laces for a 2 hour hike to the far corners of the Audubon property. Learn to listen for owls, coyotes, and other wildlife that are known to scamper about in the night. T4C is intended for 12 years and up but younger siblings and family members are encouraged to join if they have the energy for this extended nighttime hike. Meet by 6:00 pm for 5:00 in the Red Barn. Hike departs at 6:30 pm. \$5 per person. RSVP required. Sign up by calling Jeff at x239. A special event coordinated by the Teens for Conservation Committee.

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 13 to February 16

1:00-2:30 pm each day

Join us as we check our bird feeders and take a short walk on the property to count local birds before returning to the center to report our bird sightings to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology via the Internet. You will learn how you can do your own counts in your own yard and neighborhood. All ages. Sign up with Ted at x230.

2009 Winter Vacation Camp

February 10, 11, 12

Experience winter in a whole new way!

Exciting one-day nature camps for grades K-5. Campers will enjoy winter hikes, nature-themed games, arts & crafts, and more—all coordinated by experienced Audubon Naturalists. Sign up for one, two, or three days. Advance registration required; spaces are limited. Learn more and print registration forms online at: <http://greenwich.audubon.org>

Camp hours: 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Cost: \$50/day (members) or \$60/day (non-members)

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.

STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH AUDUBON PROGRAMS! Send a blank email to: AudubonGreenwichNews-subscribe@yahoo.com for weekly program reminders.

WINTER 2008-09

Natural History Notes

By Ted Gilman, Education Specialist

Buds of trees and shrubs, showing many shapes, sizes, and colors, protecting the promise of next spring's new leaves and flowers within waxy or hairy scales against winter's drying winds; a pileated woodpecker making the chips fly, as it chisels its way deep into the base of a rotting birch tree, to disturb the winter rest of fat insect larvae and capture a valuable meal; air bubbles steadily changing shape, like chilly ghosts, as they flow downstream beneath clear black ice in a winter frozen stream; cattail seedheads slowly expanding and shedding their thousands of tiny fuzzy seeds to float away on the breezes to become established in another wetland; a long-tailed weasel, with bright eyes and twitching nose, steadily working its way in and out of the nooks and crannies of snow-covered woodland stone walls and fallen logs, constantly on the alert for the scent of mouse or the slightest squeak disclosing the location of its prey;



the sweet sunset chorus of musically metallic 'cheep' notes of white-throated sparrows, as they settle in to roost in their dense thicket cover; the afterglow of a winter sunset shading from pink or orange horizon up into gray violet and then higher still into the deep purple-blue-black of the zenith, already beginning to show the diamond-bright stars of a long winter night; a small lakeshore opening in the ice, surrounded by tracks, fish scales and scat, marking the midnight feeding site of a river otter; a red-tailed hawk facing into a steady wind, floating over the snow-covered fields, steadily watching for an incautious meadow vole emerging above the winter snows; wood frogs, spring peepers, and gray tree frogs nestled into the forest leaf litter, with their bodies substantially frozen, until the thawing warmth of late March or early April releases the icy grip and frees them to send forth their spring choruses once again...

BIRD SEED SALES SUPPORT AUDUBON



Need a new feeder or simply some seed?

Shopping at Audubon Greenwich supports the nature center and directly advances the Audubon mission in our region. Call or stop by 7 days a week for advice on a new feeder and choose from our broad selection of bird seed and suet.

Audubon tote bags make great gifts for nature fans on the go. At \$14 and \$16, they are reasonably priced, too. Available in white and olive. Made from 51% recycled materials.



FEEDER TIP: Birds need clean feeders, especially during the cold season. Two ways to reduce bird-to-bird disease transmission is to dispose of old seed when re-filling feeders and consider a monthly or seasonal soak for feeders using a tray of hot, soapy water with a splash of bleach (a 10:1 solution is recommended). Use a bottle brush to loosen grim on the inside and the tubes will look almost new again.

 **Audubon GREENWICH**
613 Riversville Road
Greenwich, CT 06831

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Christmas Bird Count
Sunday, December 14

T4C: Teens for Conservation
February 9 & 28

Bird Breakfast (am) / David Sibley (pm)
Saturday, May 9