**PHAS ANNUAL DINNER A GREAT SUCCESS!**

Connie Mayer-Bakall

The Chapter’s annual dinner, held on Saturday, April 6, at the newly renovated Old VFW Hall in Cold Spring, was a resounding success. About ninety attendees wined and dined in the spacious rooms located near the Hudson River.

Love of the Craft, our new caterers, did a fabulous job, as did several members of the PHAS Board of Directors. Kudos to Event Chair Adele Stern, Peter Conway, Diana Polack, Perry Pitt, Lew Kingsley, Kyle Bardwell, Ryan Bass, and all the other Board members who worked so hard to make the evening such a success.

Many thanks to Kim Connor, who owns the venue and welcomed us so warmly.
Bird conservation benefited from the speakers, who did a terrific job. It was great to have the younger generation (Ian Kingsley, Ryan Bass, and Kyle Bardwell) speak about their dedication to birds and bird conservation; how they were mentored and influenced by the work of Jim Rod, Eric Lind, Ralph Odell, and Charlie Roberto; and how they would work to build on that legacy. The attendees were impressed with the younger generation stepping up and speaking and being involved in conservation.

The event honored Eric Lind, who recently retired as director of Constitution Marsh, and his twenty-five years of bird conservation work in the Hudson Valley. Eric was lauded for taking over from Jim Rod and continuing the stewardship of the marsh through the critical Marathon Battery cleanup and leading the marsh’s various research projects into this century. He will now take on a new position with Audubon New York and will continue to work for bird conservation.

It was announced that Scott Silver, a PHAS Board member, has been selected as the new director of Constitution Marsh. The community made it clear that they welcome the selection, since Scott is the ideal person to continue to build on the bird conservation work of Jim Rod and Eric Lind.

Ian Kingsley and Ryan Bass announced that the Chapter Birdathon will take place on Saturday, May 11, and that beginning birders are welcome to participate along with the experts who will canvass the Hudson Valley and beyond in a 24-hour birding marathon. The Birdathon is a fundraiser, but it also provides a valuable snapshot of the bird world and local and regional habitats through the eyes, ears, and binoculars of the birders.

My thanks to the hardworking Board members and volunteers, as well as the local businesses that provided auction items. (Go to the PHAS website to view photos of the event.)
THIRD SATURDAYS
BIRDING WALKS

[Please note: These events are free and open to the public. All bird walks require registration. Please look for a registration link on the PHAS website in the twenty days prior to the scheduled date. Due to the popularity of these events, we are capping participation at twenty-five individuals in order to have a minimal environmental impact, in accordance with the American Birding Association's Birding Code of Ethics (see the following article).]

April 20: Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary (CMACS).
Join birding experts and naturalists from PHAS and CMACS for a guided walking tour of the marsh. Spring migration will be under way, with expected arrivals of ruby-crowned kinglets, blue-gray gnatcatchers, and Louisiana waterthrushes. Owing to the narrow trails, sensitive rare plants, and steep terrain, this event will be capped at twenty participants.

May 18: Long Dock Park, Beacon Waterfront.
Volunteers from PHAS will lead a walk at Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park on the Beacon Waterfront. Spring migration will be well under way! A southern breeze or an overnight shower could flood the area with neotropical arrivals. Although anything is possible during migration, members of the New World woodland warbler family will be the target species for this walk. Sporting their bright, fresh, tropical breeding colors, these birds are not to be missed!

June 15: Glynwood Farm.
Join birders from PHAS to explore the rich farmland habitat of Glynwood Farm. With many birds settled on their breeding grounds, we expect to find busy parents of eastern bluebirds, grasshopper sparrows, and bobolinks. As a special treat, Malachy Cleary will end the walk at the purple martin colony that he worked tirelessly to establish.
AMERICAN BIRDING
ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLES OF
BIRDING ETHICS

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.
   1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.
   1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

   Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.

   Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

   Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

   1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance can be minimized, and permission has been obtained from private landowners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

   1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law and the rights of others.
   2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner’s explicit permission.

   2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

   2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate
goodwill with birders and nonbirders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure that the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a group member.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as those of people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities

[amateur and professional trips and tours]

4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

4(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area.

4(e) Ensure that everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.

4(f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g. no sound devices allowed).

4(g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special
responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company’s commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

Can you identify this bird? (answer on p. 10)

Keep close to nature’s heart...and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain, or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

John Muir

Cardinal (and cowbird?) eggs. There were two fledglings, one much larger than the other. Only the larger one survived. Photo by Carolyn Doggett-Smith
With reports of Lake Canopus and White Pond being frozen over, the "Third Saturdays" duck sitting was moved to Foundry Cove in Cold Spring.

The walk (or “sit”) was led by Kyle Bardwell, Lew Kingsley, and Ryan Bass, with special assistance from experienced birder Sean Camillieri as well as Saw Mill River Audubon's Larry Trachtenberg.

Observers identified twenty-nine species of birds, including:

- Rusty blackbird, a species that is experiencing a mysterious and steep decline. This scarce bird migrates through our area in March and can be found overturning leaves in flooded forest habitats.
- Bald eagle: Three birds were seen effortlessly soaring and cutting into the stiff northwesterly breeze.
- Wood duck: one pair in Foundry Cove and a separate flock of fifteen birds put up by a kayaker in Constitution Marsh.
- Eastern phoebe: two birds were sounding off with their eponymous vocalization. A true harbinger of spring, the eastern phoebe is one of the first migratory insectivore songbirds to arrive in our area.
- Song sparrow: fourteen birds were seen, many of them foraging on the ground directly in the footpath.
Every spring, birders rejoice when a few bellwether species arrive. It is a sign that the cold and dark days will soon be over and spring has officially sprung! The eastern phoebe and the American woodcock lead the charge every March.

The American woodcock is an oddball in many ways. Proportionately, it resembles a grapefruit with a set of wings. It has an unusually long bill, used to probe the soil for worms – while dancing, to boot. It nearly has eyes on the back of its head to look for danger overhead. It is so expertly camouflaged that many birders mistake it for a pile of leaves. The male has a complex twilight flight display to attract a mate. With such an odd set of traits, birders adoringly refer to them as timberdoodles.

You are most likely to find a timberdoodle in a young forest or fallow field, but during spring migration they end up in the oddest places, sometimes with disastrous
results. Recently, while rushing between business meetings in midtown Manhattan, I passed Bryant Park. Nestled under a small shrub, behind a wrought-iron fence, lay an American woodcock. The poor little bugger hunkered down, relying on its expert camouflage to remain unseen by the thousands of folks passing by on Sixth Avenue.

Between my subsequent meetings, two hours later, I detoured to check on the bird's welfare. Unfortunately, it hadn't moved an inch. I feared that this individual was moribund, perhaps after a building strike. I contacted the Wild Bird Fund and New York City Audubon to arrange a rescue. Both of these organizations do amazing work, but their resources were spread so thin that they could not attend to the bird. I wish this story had a better ending, but after I reported the sighting to eBird, another user reported a deceased American woodcock in Bryant Park.

Unfortunately, countless birds pass away during the spring and fall migration as a result of collisions with manmade structures. If you'd like to learn more or get involved, New York City Audubon has responded with Project Safe Flight:

www.nycaudubon.org/project-safe-flight.

In addition, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has tips on what you can do to help prevent birds from colliding with your windows at home:

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- A moth can smell a potential mate seven miles away; some tiger moths can hear the ultrasonic hunting call of bats and use their wingbeats to create a jamming frequency.
- Mice are sexually mature at 4 weeks; a single pair of mice can produce 500 offspring in a year.
- Pigeons can tell the difference between Cubist works by Picasso and Impressionist works by Monet, and can even tell when the Monets are hung upside-down.

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*One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of March thaw, is the Spring.*

*Aldo Leopold*

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**THE MARTY MCGUIRE AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIP**

The Marty McGuire Audubon Scholarship is available to college students from the PHAS area who are interested in nature. For details, go to [www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org/scholarships](http://www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org/scholarships).

*The bird pictured on page 6 is a Kauai chicken.*
Four Ducks on a Pond

Four ducks on a pond,
A grass bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing,
What a little thing
To remember for years –
To remember with tears.

William Allingham

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[putnamhighlandsaudubon.org/contact](http://putnamhighlandsaudubon.org/contact)