

THE KINGFISHER

A Publication of the North Fork Audubon Society, Inc. Mattituck, NY
www.northforkaudubon.org

Volume XXX V Number 4

Fall 2016

The Falcons of North America and Beyond

Date: Friday, October 14
7:30 p.m.

Location: Red House at Inlet Pond County Park
65275 Route 48, Greenport

Falcons are among the sleekest, most beautiful, fast and agile of all the birds of prey. Members of the family *Falconidae*, they are also one of the most widely distributed families of raptors in the world. Their ability to survive and thrive, in even the harshest of climates, is directly related to their effectiveness as a migrant and predator. This program will look at the birds of the family *Falconidae*, and discuss those things that make them unique from other raptors. Special attention will be given to the six falcons that occur in North America with a location, identification and status workshop on the four falcons that occur in our area.

Pat Hanly, the presenter, is a local North Fork birder, hawk-watcher and hawk enthusiast. Pat is the new compiler of the Orient Audubon Christmas Bird Count, one of the oldest continuing Audubon counts in the country. He was also a past counter at the Fire Island Hawk Watch.

“OWLTOBER” CELEBRATION

Date: Saturday, October 22

Rain Date: Sunday, October 23

Location: Red House at Inlet Pond County Park
65275 Route 48, Greenport

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Open House

2:00 p.m. - Bird Walk with Rick Kedenburg.

Meet at Red House Parking Lot

4:00 p.m. - “OWLTOBER” Program with Tom Damiani. Live owls provided by the Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center

Fire Island Hawk-Watch with Pat Hanly

Date: Saturday, October 29
All Day

Each fall season since 1974, HMANA (the Hawk Migration Association of North America) has monitored the various organized hawk-watches to count migrating hawks and keep a database of species trends. The Fire Island Hawk-Watch is the only formal HMANA hawk-watch on Long Island.

NF Audubon member Pat Hanly will serve as the official hawk counter on Saturday, October 29, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Come out to the hawk-watch to view migrating hawks, learn about hawk migration, go for a bird walk around the Fire Island Lighthouse or just to enjoy the day. Travel on your own to the hawk-watch platform, Robert Moses State Park, parking lot #5. The platform is at the end of the road, west of the lighthouse, near the east side of the parking lot.

The Great Gull Island Project with Helen Hays

Date: Friday, November 11
7:30 p.m.

Location: Peconic Landing Auditorium
1500 Brecknock Road, Greenport

The Great Gull Island Project is a monitoring study of Common and Roseate Terns nesting on Great Gull Island. Recently it has been expanded to include surveys of the South American coast to determine where numbers of both species spend the nonbreeding season.

The presenter, Helen Hays, is Chair of the Great Gull Island Committee, Division of Vertebrate Zoology-Ornithology for the American Museum of Natural History, which owns the island. She has directed the project since the 1960's and participates in the fieldwork in South America and on the island, where she lives six months each year.

Suffolk County Enacts "Carry Out" Bag Fee Law

Unable to garner the support for an outright ban on plastic bags, on September 7 the Suffolk County Legislature adopted a local law which will require vendors to charge five cents for plastic and paper bags. Once signed by the County Executive, the law will go into effect on January 1, 2018. In addition, legislation was adopted to create a working group which will be tasked with crafting educational programs and evaluating the efficacy of the fee in reducing plastic bag use in the county.

Due to state law, any new "tax" must be approved by the New York State Legislature so the fees collected will be retained by the vendors. In other areas of the country, including Washington DC, up to 80% of the fee goes to a fund for water quality protection or some other type of environmental protection fund. Several County Legislators have stated they will pursue lobbying the state to allow a healthy portion of the fee to be used for water quality programs or land preservation in Suffolk County.

Although North Fork Audubon Society advocated for banning single use bags in Suffolk County, this is a step in the right direction and will, we hope, lead to decreased plastic bag use and an eventual ban.

SAVE THE DATE! NFAS HOLIDAY PARTY

Date: Sunday, December 11
Location: Case's Place
New Suffolk Waterfront

Join us for an evening filled with lots of good cheer as we celebrate the contributions of our amazing volunteers. Make your calendars. More details to follow.

Tuesdays With Tom

October 19 - Hawks, Falcons and Eagles!

October is the time to see raptors migrating south for the winter. We will head to Smith Point to see these magnificent creatures wing their way to warmer climes. We will meet at Office Max at Tanger at 8:00 a.m. and carpool from there. Expect to be out in the field for two hours or so. Bring binoculars.

November 22 - Goldsmith's Inlet

Join Tom as he searches creeks, open waters and woodlands looking for early arriving ducks, passerines and birds of prey. There are many places to investigate in the area so let's explore! Meet at the Red House at Inlet Pond County Park at 8:00 a.m. Expect to be out for two hours. Bring binoculars.

December 20 - Indian Island County Park

It is tradition that Tom does this field trip at Indian Island in December. Birds and last-minute shopping in Riverhead. It's a win-win! Meet at Indian Island County Park at 8:00 a.m. Expect to be in the field for around an hour and a half. Bring binoculars.

It's good to have a headcount so please call Tom at 631-275-3202 or email him at tdamiani3@optimum.net to pre-register for walks. It's helpful, but not required - so come along if you decide to join at the last minute.

NORTH FORK AUDUBON SOCIETY CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ONE YEAR INDIVIDUAL \$25
ONE YEAR FAMILY \$30
ONE YEAR BUSINESS/CORP. \$35

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Make check payable to NFAS and return to
NFAS, PO Box 973, Mattituck NY 11952.

President's Message

First off, I'd like to thank all of you who responded to our 2016 membership appeal. Even though we are a volunteer-run organization, your contributions help us and birds in so many ways!

Just in case you haven't noticed, our home base - the Red House - now has a fresh new look thanks to Suffolk County and its dedication to parks and open space preservation. We plan on getting back to offering a variety of programs there, beginning with our "Owltober" celebration set for October 22. Activities will include an open house, live owls and two bird walks - one, scheduled for dusk, will be a search for owls along the trails at Inlet Pond County Park. During the open house we hope to share with you plans for our future rain garden, which will be designed and planted by master gardeners as a demonstration site that's accessible to people who want to learn about native plants, wildlife habitat and sustainable horticulture. Come spring, once the garden is planted, we will invite you all to join us as we dedicate the sustainable rain garden to the memory of former NFAS president, Maureen Cullinane.

As you can see from this current newsletter, thanks to our remarkable volunteers we are able to offer more opportunities than ever for getting out and connecting with nature. Between hawk watches, owl walks and the annual Christmas Bird Count, there should be at least one listing here that captures your interest, drives you outdoors and inspires you to stand completely in awe of all that happens to surround you at the moment. Please join us and don't hesitate to bring a friend!

Sibbie O'Kane

IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

This is your last paper newsletter unless you contact us and let us know you want to continue receiving our newsletter via postal mail. Otherwise, in the future, we will send only via email.

Citizen Science Update

Citizen science can involve nature and science based projects that allow the public to partner with nature and conservation based organizations, like the National Audubon Society. The North Fork Audubon Society loves citizen science and we have several projects happening this fall and winter so plan to get involved and do "Citizen Science." Our current projects include:

HMANA Hawk-Watch - See the calendar for an opportunity to take part in the counting of migrating hawks at a formal hawk-watch site. These counts are recorded in a database to track the trends in population for each species.

eBird Training - See our newsletter and website for the scheduling of free eBird training, the premier bird sighting, reporting and tracking system.

Orient Christmas Bird Count - Perhaps the oldest and most famous of all Citizen Science projects, the Orient Count is one of the oldest in the country. The count will be held on December 31 this year so plan now to participate.

Great Backyard Bird Count - We plan to organize an event around the count and provide training for recording your sightings in 2017 so watch for announcements regarding this count.

Citizen Science projects are fun and provide critical data to nature and conservation based organizations and, to help our involvement in these projects stay fresh, I will be providing regular updates with interesting stories and articles in both the newsletter and the website. I look forward to seeing you involved in a project!

*Pat Hanly, Citizen Science Advocate
North Fork Audubon Society
pat@mattpres.com*

eBird Training

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society collaborated in 2002 to launch the most comprehensive online bird sighting and tracking system in existence today. This online system, called "eBird," is used by thousands of birders and naturalists worldwide to report, track and share their bird sightings and eBird has become the standard for recording bird sightings.

The North Fork Audubon Society loves this type of citizen science and, to assist our members in maximizing the local use of eBird, will offer free eBird training, once every quarter, at different locations on the North Fork. All you need is a laptop and a desire to record and share your bird "checklists" with other birders. Recording your sightings with eBird is fun and exciting, so watch for dates and times for this training.

Native Plant Gardening Update

This past spring the NFAS received permission from the Village of Greenport to install two native "Pollinator Gardens" within the Village.

I'm happy to report that in spite of the near-drought conditions and a lot of benign neglect, the plants in both of these gardens are thriving.

The last time I looked at the planting in front of the green "Welcome to Greenport" sign just outside of the Village, the Showy goldenrod, Seaside goldenrod and "October Skies" aster were all about to bloom, and seed heads had shot up above the clumps of Little Bluestem. The Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*, a milkweed) had just a few flowers left and was beginning to form seed pods.

I brought water to this site a few times a week for the first month or so after the plants went into the ground, to get them established. Since then - mid July - they've been on their own and doing well. There has been some minor deer browsing. Overall, these plants are very happy.

The Larry Tuthill Park (next to the Railroad Dock) was also growing well when I saw it, but so, unfortunately, were the weeds. This area does get watered by an underground sprinkler system (I was unaware of this until after I planted), which is one reason the weeds were so profuse, even with some thick mulch. Some of the plants there did not do as well as I thought they would, because they prefer drier soil.

The wide variety of different plant species I used at this site this year enabled me to see that would thrive there, and what won't. Next year's plan will be comprised of a smaller selection, and fewer species, resulting in a more cohesive look, and compostable landscape paper will be put down when replanting this site, with mulch on top, to help with seed suppression.

Diana Van Buren

Welcome New and Returning NFAS Board Members

Christine Kelly and her husband, Peter Sacks, came out to Greenport in the fall of 2004 to spend two days here. At the time, they lived and worked in Manhattan, Peter as a professor at NYU College of Dentistry and Christine as an IT professional with a California-based software company. They liked it so much, the day they arrived they bought a home for themselves here, with the intent of one day retiring in Greenport. One of the big attractions was all the great birding opportunities on the North Fork, as they had just started birding. In 2013 they retired and now live full time in Greenport. Christine is happy to help out the NFAS to give back for all the great birdwalks and other events that they have enjoyed over the years.

Rick Kedenburg is happy to be rejoining the Board of North Fork Audubon. My late wife, Linda Vardy-Kedenburg, always enjoyed the work we did for NFAS, whether it was the Endangered Species Program, the Great Backyard Bird Count at the Red House or just leading field trips. We always thought this was a great way for people to connect with nature and become aware of the beauty that is all around us. I hope to carry on in Linda's memory by leading more field trips and participating in NFAS events.

NFAS Officers & Directors

Debra O'Kane, President
Gwynn Schroeder, Vice President
Pat Hanly, Secretary
Bernadette Deerkoski, Treasurer
Tom Damiani, Director
Mark Haubner, Director
Rick Kedenburg, Director
Christine Kelly, Director
Nancy Conradi Pearson, Director
Ed Ward, Director

Long Island Commission for Aquifer Protection (LICAP)

LICAP was created by the Nassau and Suffolk County Legislatures to address issues of ground water quality as well as to quantify and to “advocate for a regional approach to groundwater resource management.” As many of our members know, our ground water is our sole source for drinking water.

This is important to everyone who lives on Long Island. We know this limited resource is threatened by overdevelopment and pollution. The eventual management entity will make decisions about where new water mains will be installed and who will be required to hook up to “public” water. It could potentially influence where new development can take place.

The members of LICAP include County and DEC representatives and members of the water supply industry. LICAP meets on a quarterly basis and there are a number of subcommittees which meet between commission meetings.

Many groups and individuals are advocating for the creation of a management entity that is more representative of the general public and should include scientists and environmentalists as well as government representatives and water purveyors.

LICAP is expected to issue their *State of the Aquifer* report in late September which will be posted on their website: <http://www.liaquifercommission.com>. LICAP also has a link to WATER TRAQ where you can check out water quality in your area.

A series of public hearings are scheduled on the report on the following dates:

Thursday, October 13, 2016, 6:00 p.m., W.H. Rogers Legislature Building, Building #70, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, NY

Monday, October 17, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Nassau County Legislature Chambers, Theodore Roosevelt Executive & Legislative Building, 1550 Franklin Ave., Room 102, Mineola, NY

Thursday, October 20, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Evans K. Griffing Building, 300 Center Drive, Riverhead, NY

Plum Island Still For Sale

There isn't an elected official we can find that favors selling Plum Island, but because of a few lines slipped into a federal spending bill* in 2008, the General Services Administration continues its marketing campaign to offer this national ecological, historical and cultural coastal treasure to the highest bidder. If you haven't read the recent articles in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* about what is going on, here are some links to them (subscriptions may be required to open the link).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/15nyregion/plum-island-home-to-top-secret-lab-faces-uncertain-future.html? r=0>

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/an-uncertain-fate-for-plum-island-1473901101>

Email us info@northforkaudubon.org if you don't have a subscription and we'll send you copies of the articles.

Several organizations have filed a lawsuit to stop the sale, and our representatives in the Senate and House of Representatives also are applying pressure. The Preserve Plum Island Coalition, of which we are a member, has been very active all year, working all angles to keep Plum Island in our hands - the public's hands. what you can do is write letters - letters to the editors of the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the local papers and your congressional representatives. We must stop the sale. The legislation requiring the sale should be repealed.

There will be a special meeting hosted by Southold Town on Thursday, October 20, to learn about the amazing array of endangered, threatened, rare and fascinating species that depend on or live on Plum Island. Matthew D. Schlesinger, Ph.D., of the New York Natural Heritage Program, will present the findings of a four-season biological and natural history survey at Peconic Landing at 7:30 p.m.

Plants and Animals of Plum Island, NY
Thursday, October 20, 2016, at 7:30 p.m.
Peconic Landing Community Center Auditorium
1500 Brecknock Road, Greenport

*PL110-329, part of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance and Continuing Appropriations Act.

Correction: there will not be a birdwalk at 8AM on October 22.

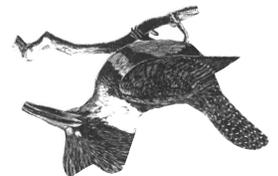
CALENDAR OF EVENTS FALL 2016

- Saturday, October 8, 8:00 a.m.** - Bird Walk with Rick Kedenburg, Meet at Red House
Friday, October 14, 7:30 p.m. - Falcon Program, Red House
Tuesday, October 19, 8:00 a.m. - Raptor Bird Walk, meet at Office Max, Riverhead, to carpool
Saturday, October 22, 8:00 a.m. - Bird Walk at the Red House
Saturday, October 22, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Open House at the Red House
Saturday, October 22, 2:00 p.m. - Bird Walk at the Red House
Saturday, October 22, 4:00 p.m. - Owl Program, Red House
Saturday, October 29, All Day - Fire Island Hawk-Watch
Friday, November 11, 7:30 p.m. - Gull Island Project Program, Peconic Landing Auditorium, Gpt.
Tuesday, November 22, 8:00 a.m. - Goldsmith's Inlet Bird Walk
Sunday, December 11 - Annual Holiday Party, Case's Place, New Suffolk Waterfront
Tuesday, December 20, 8:00 a.m. - Indian Island County Park Bird Walk

All programs held at Inlet Pond County Park are presented by North Fork Audubon and Suffolk County Executvie Steve Bellone.



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