

The Blue Jay



Bergen County Audubon Society
LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Winter/Spring 2021

Volume LXXX, Issue 1

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH



THE NEXT 80 YEARS

2021 marks the 80th Anniversary of Bergen County Audubon Society. As we begin to celebrate eight decades of birds and conservation, we all have to reflect on the many changes that have come upon our wildlife, our birds and our environment in those many years.

Although we like to dwell on our losses and there have been many, yet incredibly, unlike our fathers and grandfathers, we have witnessed the incredible comeback of the Bald Eagle, Osprey and Peregrine Falcon. We have much cleaner water and air than we did 80 years ago and we have also been blessed to see the comeback of our New Jersey Meadowlands. A place I grew up and still call home was once left for dead and is now one of the best birding habitats in the country. And we all know by now we have much to do - from stopping the devastation of climate change to halting the loss of wildlife habitat and saving endangered species, not only here but all over the world. Since conservation begins at home and we are a local conservation organization, there is much we need and can do right in our own communities to be sure future generations get to enjoy nature and make things even better for birds, butterflies and people into the future.

If this horrific pandemic has taught us anything it is how much we need nature in our lives to sooth our soul and heal our hearts. And although we know saving natural resources in the Arctic and the Amazon are important, we need to start putting more efforts into working just as hard to save, protect and enhance the natural world right in our own community. We need places that we can walk to, bike to, take a bus or a short drive. These last of our wild places are not only important to us but even more critical to the ultimate survival of migratory birds, butterflies, pollinators, native plants and all wildlife. Much more is known about the wildlife that lives in the Amazon than thrives in your own backyard and now more than ever we will need to restore the ecology of our neighborhoods if we ever hope to make things better. This can only be accomplished by a grassroots effort that helps everyone understand that birds are more important than buildings. Monarchs are more important than a big green lawn and our pollinators are worth more than a quick fix of pesticides. Only by changing our culture and an overwhelming public outcry will we be able to save the places and the wildlife we love.

Free public environmental education programs open to everyone in every community will move us toward a better environment and healthier future for all. Our schools and nature centers play a critical role but can only do so much. We must all help bring the love of nature to everyone, both children and adults free of charge to learn about the nature that resides in the community they live in. This will only be accomplished by volunteers and volunteer organizations who will give their time to help connect people to nature which in the end will be the only way our environment will survive. We can't ask people to care about the threat of climate change if they don't understand the wonders of nature right outside their doors.

If we are to really help migratory birds, butterflies and pollinators we have no choice but to landscape with native plants. All wildlife has evolved with them and they are the foundation of a true healthy habitat. We must in some way come up with more habitat and the easiest way to do that is to grow natives in our backyards, schools, churches, businesses, anywhere we can. We also will need to think differently about what our parks look like. Tennis courts, dog parks, playgrounds - there should be native plant gardens placed around those areas as a remediation for those park facilities. Again education and awareness open to everyone will change the hearts and minds and allow people to better understand that everything is connected to everything else in nature.

BERGEN COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY—

Officers, Directors & Committee Chairpersons

PRESIDENT: Don Torino

201-230-4983

VICE PRESIDENT: Marilyn Sadowski

201-9820483

TREASURER: Dave & Nancy Hall

973-226-7825

RECORDING SECRETARY: Patrice Torino

201-414-0534

CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY:

Julie McCall 201-639-4647

FIELD TRIPS: Chris Takacs

201-207-0426

BLUE JAY: Nancy Salvati

201-840-0542

PUBLICITY, WEBMASTER:

Alicina Memar 201-747-5651

CONSERVATION CHAIR: Karen Nickeson

201-886-1748

EDUCATION: Marie Longo

201-498-0809

LEGISLATION: Dave Hall

973-226-7825

FIELD WORK: Dave Hall

973-226-7825

FUNDRAISING: Peggy O'Neill

201-868-5829

MEMBERSHIP: Joseph Koscielny

201-337-3405

Published quarterly by the Bergen County Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Send articles to PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653-0235 or email editor, Nancy Salvati at nancys@nj.rr.com.

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM 2020 BCAS BOARD MEMBERS.



From top : Julie McCall, Marilyn Sadowski, Karen Nickeson, Chris Takacs, Don Torino, Patrice

Torino, Joe Koscielny, Dave Hall.

Front row: Peggy O'Neill, Nancy Hall, Nancy Salvati, Marie Longo.



shown at left

Alicina Memar, Webmaster, Publicity

PRESIDENT'S PERCH cont'd

Now and in the years to come, all of us will have to be sure that everyone, every ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation and every socioeconomic background are welcomed to become part of the environmental movement and have the same opportunity to love and appreciate the birds and butterflies. For too long people of color, urban families and the poor have been ignored when it comes to the environment and yet we know they have suffered more than anyone when it comes to the crimes against nature such as air and water pollution. We have come a long way in recent years but we have miles to go. Unless our goal of including EVERYONE is achieved, all our dreams of a better, healthier environment will certainly fail.

We will need to start now and continue to save, protect and enhance the habitat that is still left in our neighborhoods. Think of what our towns and communities would be like if our priorities focused on our connection to the natural world. Study after study shows how important spending time in nature is with our mental and physical well being for both adults and children. Making sure our elected officials know and understand that the future of wildlife and our own quality of life will be decided by the habitat that is saved and restored. This will be and is our most important imperative and toughest challenge.

Our future will depend on how well we are able to connect future generations to nature. Our biggest threat to date is not climate change or plastic bags or any politician, it's the danger of our disconnect to nature. Unless we are still able to bring the love of nature to all people, educate our kids about the wonders of the natural world, and convince our elected officials that nature is our most important asset, we can never hope to have a better world for future generations.

I have realized long ago that nature is the great healer and the great equalizer that brings us all together no matter where we live, how much money we make and even if we live in a red or blue location. When we are together enjoying nature, nothing else matters and the better angels of our nature will always appear.

I firmly believe that these goals are not just a dream but will be accomplished by everyone working together, caring about the wild things around us, and especially by all of us understanding and caring about each other.

DON TORINO

Stay tuned for our next Zoom Chapter Program on March 3rd. at 7:30 am with Rob Fergus PhD. Topic : What its like to be a Bird . How birds see the world.

EDUCATION

Marie Longo, Chair

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

This year, BCAS received a generous donation from **SUEZ** to sponsor the Audubon Adventures program for the 2020-2021 school year. Nine schools/groups will be participating this year with some ordering kits for virtual learning given the current pandemic situation.

Participating schools/groups are: **Anna C. Scott School-Leonia, Norman A. Bleshman School-Paramus, Upper Greenwood Lake School-Hewitt, Midland School #1-Rochelle Park, West Ridge Elementary School-Park Ridge, Van Vleck House & Gardens-Montclair, Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County-New Milford, Ridgefield Memorial School-Ridgefield., St. Joseph Regional High School-Montvale**

The kits this year entitled **Nature's Connections: Water, Plants and Climate** offer printed student magazines, teacher guides, standards, quizzes and interactive web based materials. Each kit serves 32 students and is free of charge. If your school or group is interested in ordering, please contact Marie Longo

MLongo8383@aol.com.

Many thanks to **SUEZ** for sponsoring this valuable educational resource!

Project Feederwatch Donations:

Thanks to a donation made in memory of beloved member **Peg Dalton**, BCAS donated five Project Feederwatch kits to local schools enabling them to learn more about birds and take part in this important citizen science program.

CONSERVATION

Karen Nickeson, Chair

Joyce Killmer Had It Right

January brings us ducks and a few wild geese to chase, but we'll have to wait for our gardens to revive and the migratory birds and butterflies to return. This is a good time to consider and appreciate the quiet dignity of trees.

In this part of the state, it's rare to find town council members or property owners who care to remember the sentiments of New Jersey's native son and poet who wrote the lyric poem, "Trees." Perhaps if they appreciated the many benefits that trees offer us, more would be inclined to preserve them. According to a summary of research published Oct. 2019 in *Plants People Planet*, by Turner-Skoff and Cavender:

- Trees reduce energy use and remove pollution from air and waterways
- Trees increase property values
- Trees provide a decentralized, natural stormwater management infrastructure
- Trees help regulate environmental temperatures
- Trees in a community can improve the mental and physical health of residents
- Trees in a child's environment can improve cognitive development and academic achievement, as well as reduce attention disorders
- Trees help mitigate climate change through many processes, including carbon sequestration
- Trees provide habitat and food for wildlife

In one "natural experiment," epidemiologists associated excess cardiovascular and respiratory deaths with the infestation of ash borers and the demise of ash trees in counties in 15 states. Another well-publicized study found that hospital patients had better health outcomes if trees were visible outside their window.

My town, Edgewater, where development is rampant, has no tree preservation plan. I discovered that Tenafly, Closter, Leonia, and Mahwah do. A sample of one regulation is here <http://www.tenaflynj.org/content/7628/7798/7949.aspx>. Does your town have a tree protection plan? Perhaps Joyce Killmer could be memorialized by preserving more of our neighborhood trees rather than by just a turnpike rest stop.

This column is dedicated to all those members who in some way have enhanced, preserved, conserved, protected, educated or elevated our experiences of those things we love, the beauty of the natural world.

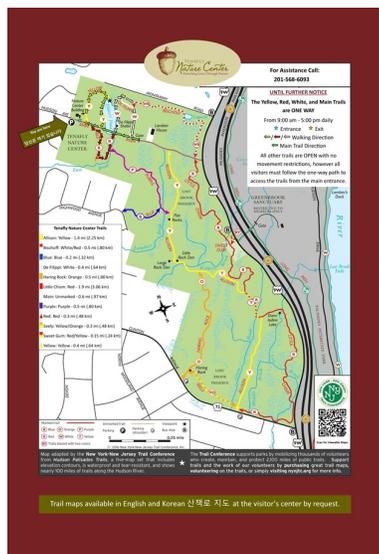


This time we learn how the motto of Tenafly Nature Center - **Preservation, Recreation and Education** – has been carried out in the midst of a pandemic by Debora Davidson, Executive Director, Tenafly Nature Center, shown here with Mitzi, the Barred Owl. And by the way this is their 60th Anniversary year!

Let me take you back to March, April and May 2020. The Pandemic rages and the Governor locks down most of our State - All state and county parks are closed. This is the time of migration so for birders this is even more of a catastrophe.

But wait there is one parkland open - Tenafly Nature Center. They never closed! I asked Debora Davidson how they could stay open during this period of lockdowns. She said that they were able to stay open as a private, nonprofit, independent, organization that has been charged with stewardship of land owned by the borough of Tenafly. Therefore the decision regarding their ability to stay open was up to the local mayor and a town council. While the borough owns the land, the Tenafly Nature Center are the long term lease holders and stewards that maintain the biodiversity found within the almost 400 acres of land, interwoven by 7+ miles of trails. Their professional staff feed and care for over 30 animals, including three permanently injured raptors. Their founding mission was to provide stewardship of the nearly 400 wooded acres for the purposes of conservation, education and recreation and they annually have an average of 1200 environmentally based programs, both on and off site, for children, adults, and families.

Debora saw a great public outcry from social media and realized there was a need for people to get out and exercise, commune with nature and have a place in which to take their family. On the eve of the state shut down, she reached out to the mayor and council and voiced her opinion that while the indoor facilities should close, the trails should be kept open and accessible to fill the communities need for nature and open space.



The nature center staff worked fast (with 12 hours' notice) and came up with a plan to maintain the trails with one way loops and a center connector from entrance to end. The plan they enacted was to provide short, medium and long walking opportunities throughout the preserve. These one-way loops (1/3 mile each) totaled about one mile and would be appropriate for people of all ages and abilities. Safety, the ability to maintain social distancing, and land preservation were the most important factors taken into consideration as trails were redesigned and a plethora of signage was created.

They started counting visitors and regularly tallied over 740 people daily on weekends in March/April/May and over 500 people daily during the weekdays. It was clear that there was an enormous need for the natural world. Even after the Governor lifted state, county & municipal park restrictions later in May and other parks were reopened, Tenafly Nature Center still tallied 300-350 visitors daily (which was a huge increase in daily visitors prior to the start of the pandemic).

The nature center staff's natural responsibility was to preserve trails that were getting overused by the increased visitor numbers. Many needed redesign to preserve trail stability. Since the nature center staff wanted to ensure the preserve is inclusive to all and to assist with local language barriers the signage was redone in Korean. Since papers couldn't be handed out, QR codes and other technology was used to offer visitors alternate contact free ways of accessing the trail maps on phones.

To maintain the education component of their mission and despite the restrictions in place due to the pandemic, during March thru May, the nature center staff was still able to run 177 programs virtually. Online programs, such as Critter Cams, allowed individuals to watch live animal feedings on Facebook and continued to connect children and adults to the natural world.

Making A Difference Cont'd

From June through early September they opened their in-person children's day camp and ran it for children entering 1st-8th grade. For this fall they added new in-person enrichment programs for school children and started a Forest preschool for a small number of kids.



Some history - Tenafly Nature is celebrating their Sixtieth Anniversary in 2021. This tract of East Hill land was purchased by this community minded town and its mayor back then, Mayor Booth. Preservation, Recreation and Education has been its motto since the beginning and they have been true to their mission especially as local school children have been enjoying programs in this natural world over the last sixty years.

Note on Debora, who came out of a beautiful part of our country, Colorado and was schooled in Oregon. Fortunately for us, she took her first job with New Jersey Audubon at Weis Ecology Center and has stayed in these parts ever since.

HAPPY 60th ANNIVERSARY TO TENAFLY NATURE CENTER and thanks for upholding your motto. We salute you and your staff.

FUNDRAISING- DONATIONS, TRIBUTES AND MEMORIAL GIFTS - 2020

Difficult times for everybody today. Your generosity and support, whether monetary or volunteer is greatly appreciated. In a way your donations help our organization now and are an investment for the future of the native wildlife in Bergen County and the surrounding area.

Peggy O'Neill Fundraiser

Memorial Gifts

JILL HOMCY - all expressed sadness at her untimely passing and mentioned her love of birds and her passion for nature photography.

from: Andrusin Family, Dr. & Mrs. Blackman, Bonnie Coe, Joe & Lorraine Koscielny, Alice Leurck, Robert Masiello, April Santoro, Kate Santoro, Chris Soucy, Tim Dalton - \$1180.00

Tribute Gifts

Lindsey McNamara, Birthday FaceBook Fund	\$605.00
Don Torino, Birthday Facebook Fund	2225.00
Network for Good, Facebook	875.00
Joe Haemmale, Facebook	200.00
Year End Appeal, Facebook	<u>\$1100.00</u>
	<i>Total</i> \$5005.00

General Donations

Edna Berkovits, Elizabeth Biggio Sean Burke, Richard Borowski, Benjamin Burton, Byer Family, Helen Cantor, Rosemary Caulk & John Trosky, Tod Christie, Catherine Corra, Marion Costanza, Pedro Cruz, Pamela & James Dalessio, Robert Dent, James Foley, Carl Hagelin & Joan Hessing, Leonard Intorre, Patricia Knight, Frank Libert. Diane Louie, Richard Lynch, James Macaluso, David Malcolm, Mary Matsui, John & Claudia Moran, Carol Mueller, Dennis Murphy, Anel Nerurka Andrea Ohi & Laurie O'Byrne, Maria Parrello, Ravi Potluri, Christine Ramos, George & Julie Reskakis, Paul Rubock, Elizabeth Sabagh, Sipra Saha, Jonathon Silver, Electra Small, Martin & Linda Stio, Marcia Stream, Suez Water Works, Sally Teschon, Jenny Thomas, Marguerite & Gary Van Wonk, Anne Vezza. Thomas & Anne Winner.

	Total \$7,930.00
Grand Total	\$14,115.00

I apologize for any mistakes, please let me know and they will be corrected in the next issue. Thanks to Joe Koscielny, Julie McCall, Nancy Hall and especially Don Torino for all their help.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2020 CAPTURES THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The 72rd annual Hackensack/Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held Dec 19, 2020, amid a turbulent year for virtually every activity. Holding this event was tricky due to the COVID-19 rules, but we still hoped to hold a fairly regular event despite extraordinary circumstances. With help from many BCAS members, the CBC was a smashing success, actually outstanding in all respects. Our date coincided with a rapid switch for many bird populations. Harsh winter weather was just setting in. Several BCAS members were active in advance of Count Day to uncover the presence of lingering fall residents just before the event. A surprising array of warblers were still present, plus a Baltimore Oriole, scattered across Bergen County. However, a major snowfall just 2 days prior to Count Day pushed many birds southward, or killed them in their tracks. At the same time, winter finches were arriving and much attention shifted to them. The contrasting species variety prior to or after Count Day has never been so dramatic. We recorded a record number of “**Count Period**” species, missing on Count Day itself, but seen just before or afterwards.

Conditions for the CBC were not bad, with cold clear weather greeting us, plus snow-covered trails and icy ponds and waterways. Many waterfowl had fled south in days before the Count, so numbers were down across the area. But clear weather gave great views of raptors, and of the remaining birds of forest and meadows. Our principal leaders were working almost alone at the major sites, but many members volunteered to cover other smaller parks in depth. In addition, the importance of bird feeders was never more evident, as arriving winter birds were flocking to them. These included species that were very hard to find away from feeders.

I have listed the most surprising finds in our list in **bold face**, including those found in really high or low numbers compared to average. Feeder counts surely bolstered some of the more common yard birds, such as the Cardinal, but many expected feeder birds were actually rather low, like the Goldfinch. An Orange-crowned Warbler was at one feeder for at least a month prior to Count Day, feeding on suet. Some winter finches arrived just in time at feeders, but others were found out in the field, feeding on native plants. The most prominent were the Common Redpolls, numbering only 2 birds on Count Day, but swelling to over 100 birds in the days thereafter. Hiding among them was one Hoary Redpoll, high in the birches at Losen Slote. This is an exceedingly rare bird, but was well seen by multiple observers late in Count period. Evening Grosbeaks were seen in flight near Oradell Reservoir on Count Day, but apparently not found thereafter. Bald Eagles were well seen all across the County, plus an unusual number of Red-shouldered Hawks, and a record number of Merlin. The variety of sparrows was better than usual in local meadows and fields, due to the close inspection by our volunteers.

I want to make special mention of Jimmy Macaluso, Denise Farrell and Chris Takacs, who have been doing outstanding work every day to discover the most interesting finds, including most of the Count period highlights. I also thank Gerry Byrne, who worked to secure us access to the United Water properties in the center of our circle. This event proved a record high for species, adding the Count Day plus Count Period birds.

This was truly an awesome result, and I thank everyone who contributed their sightings!

DAVE HALL

BERGEN COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 235
Paramus, NJ 07653-0235



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 28
Hackensack, NJ

www.bergencountyaudubon.org

Dated Material
January 2021

As Members of Bergen County Audubon Society, we share a love for birds and a concern for the environment. Our mission is to promote and protect wildlife in their natural habitat by providing opportunities for observation and conservation.

All field trips and programs are open to the public and free of charge.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2021

Please enroll me as a member of the Bergen Audubon Society and/or the National Audubon Society. My check is enclosed for:

Chapter Sustaining Member. \$20.00 - Single or \$35.00 for Family Membership. All funds stay in our area, helping us to support local efforts and provide services in Bergen County. Make check payable to Bergen County Audubon.

\$20.00 - National Audubon Society Member. (1st year rate for new NAS members only). Includes Chapter membership. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address : _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

E-mail (I would like to be notified of upcoming events online and receive the newsletter electronically.)

Please mail to : BCAS Membership Chair, PO Box 235, Paramus, NJ 07653-0235

Volunteer opportunities in local chapter activities or committees are available. Please circle the following and mail with your subscription or see any officer or chair at one of the meetings.

Conservation Membership Publicity Field Trips

Education Newsletter/Website