



Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society
May-June 2018 Vol. 45, No. 5

President's Column

by June Summers

In the beginning of March, I was given a scholarship to go to the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, Great Lakes Lobby Days in Washington, D.C. Seventy-five or more professionals and volunteers from the Great Lakes states gathered in Washington to talk to their Congress members and Senators. We lobbied for the legislation that works to clean and protect the lakes.

The legislation I advocated for most was the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). We need to keep this fund at the \$300 million level to continue funding the clean up of the Areas of Concern. The area directly north of the mouth of the Genesee is considered not up to standard for clean lake water. GLRI funds also pay for restoration of wetlands and control of invasive species. Here in Rochester GLRI funds paid for the \$9 million restoration project in Braddock Bay and paid for much of the research used to remove what are known as Beneficial Use Impairments (BUI) from the Rochester Area of Concern (AOC). Beneficial Use Impairments are the criteria by which the AOC was determined. The GLRI funding allows studies to continue removing BUI on Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae.

We advocated for doubling the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. Great Lake communities face an infrastructure crisis. The eight Great Lakes states face more than \$179 Billion in needed improvements to meet the clean water goals of people and businesses in the region. Sewage contamination and leaking pipes continue to plague communities. A failure to invest in drinking water and waste water infrastructure puts people's health at risk.

Finally we advocated for the Farm Bill funding to be restored, so more farmers can be paid for conservation programs that take specific actions to protect soil and water quality. Some of these programs help farmers to

reduce excessive farm fertilizer and sediment runoff from entering the Great Lakes. This bill has the largest amount of conservation funding of any piece of U.S. legislation.

Thoughts on Climate Change

In February Tom McDonald came to speak to GVAS on Snowy Owls. At the end of his presentation Tom showed us pictures of the tundra where Snow Owls nest to give us an idea of how climate change has changed the tundra and impacted the Snowies. Pictures of the tundra a decade ago showed a frozen tundra with short vegetation. Recent pictures showed that the tundra wasn't frozen any more; it had standing water for mosquitoes to breed in. The frozen tundra protected the owls and their owlets from the mosquitoes. Now they are eaten alive by the mosquitoes. Changing climate has also affected the population of lemmings, the main food supply for Snowy Owls while breeding. Many ornithologists that study Snowy Owls are becoming concerned about the population of Snowy Owls in North America.

The above shows the impact of climate change on the tundra but can you identify what the effects of climate change have been in the Great Lakes region? The last five years or more have been warmer than previously recorded, causing the lakes to warm a few degrees. Warming just a few degrees means more evaporation into the atmosphere, causing more frequent and severe storms. Find your Spring 2018 issue of Audubon Magazine and read, "National Parks, Reinvented," on page 14. This is a study Audubon did for the National Parks about the future of birds and climate change.

Most of us are looking for ways to reduce our green house gas emissions. Some of us might be able to afford electric cars, others of us keep our thermostats in the 60's and have replaced our windows with energy efficient ones. In order to really make a difference we need to change to green energy, wind and solar, but we have to do it right, protecting wildlife and people.

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Wind turbines, birds, and bats don't always mix. The proposed Lighthouse Wind farm on the shore of Lake Ontario and straddling the Orleans – Niagara County line is in a migratory pathway for raptors and passerines. For a wind turbine project to be really safe for birds it should not be located in migratory pathways. The wind turbine industry has developed a number of high tech methods to avoid hitting bird and bats while turbines are running such as radar, thermal cameras and artificial intelligence. Most of these technologies are still under development and these technologies can't come on line soon enough. To learn more about these new technologies and the challenges they face, turn to page 28 of the Spring Issue of Audubon Magazine.

The Board of Genesee Valley Audubon has commented on the Lighthouse Wind document filed with NY Public Service Commission. We hope our comments about the work that the owner has done and the location will stop this Lighthouse Wind Farm. There are other locations that are acceptable away from the lake.

Well-fed birds are happy birds

It's finally planting season, after a long cold winter. When you plant bushes, shrubs and flowers in your yard, think of the birds. Plant native plants instead of exotic plants. Native plants will provide food and will attract more birds to your yard. Some of your plants will provide food directly, as berries and seeds. Other plants host insects that birds will eat. Exotic plants attract many fewer species of insects.

It might seem that fewer insects would be a good idea. But an oak tree can host 530 different species of caterpillar. If you were a chickadee with hungry babies to feed, where would you go—to the yard with the oak tree or the yard with the Japanese maple?



Also, if that dead tree is not a hazard, leave it standing to provide nesting and feeding opportunities for woodpeckers.

How can you decide which native species are best for your location? National Audubon Society has a handy web site to answer that question. Go to <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants> and enter your 5-digit zip code to get a list and description of the best native plants for your area.

The Allegany Nature Pilgrimage

The 60th Annual Pilgrimage will occur on June 1, 2, and 3 this year. It is an outdoor learning experience for the whole family at Allegany State Park. There are workshops for all ages that go on throughout the weekend. The topics include butterflies, old growth forests, flowers, beavers, birds, geology, astronomy and many more. There are long and short hikes led by avid and very capable naturalists. There are evening presentations in the Main Tent on Friday and Saturday nights as well as owl prowls, insects by black light, and exploring the night sky. Many nature enthusiasts return year after year. Registrants can book a cabin or campsite in the park or stay in an area motel.

If you are interested, go to alleganynaturepilgrimage.com for details and more information. The Allegany Nature Pilgrimage is sponsored by four nature organizations -- The Buffalo Audubon Society, Jamestown Audubon Society, Presque Isle Audubon Society and the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club located here in Rochester. Any questions? Call Julie and Dean Clayton at 249-9489.



Workshop participants at Allegany Nature Pilgrimage

Field Trips

Mt Hope Cemetery

Sunday, May 20, 8:00 am

Join us at the North Gate of Mt. Hope Cemetery for birding and history as we stroll through the older section of the historic cemetery for two hours. The large old trees and bushes along the hillsides are very attractive to migrating birds. Bring your binoculars and \$10 for the tour fee to Mt. Hope Cemetery. (The fee goes toward restoration projects in the cemetery.)

The North Gate is located on Mt. Hope Ave. across from Robinson Rd., which runs through Highland Park. (This is NOT the gate that is across from The Distillery.) No advance signup is needed. Call June at (585) 865-6047 by Saturday evening May 19 with questions.

Volunteer opportunities

Braddock Bay—Remove invasive plants and plant shrubs

This summer GVAS will be working with the DEC to remove invasive European water chestnut plants from Braddock Bay and helping to plant shrubs on the new breakwater to stabilize it. We haven't set any dates yet so keep your eye on the GVAS Facebook for dates so that you can join us.

Become a Falcon Watcher

Join the Falcon Watchers this year for the experience of your life. After the young falcons on Rfalconcam.com leave the nest and start to fly, the real family dynamics start. It is an exciting experience to watch the adults catch prey to feed the young and watch the young learn to fly. Sometimes falcon watchers help rescue the young if they get into trouble while learning to fly.



Join us Saturday, June 2, 2018, at 9:00 am at the Time Square Building on the corner of Exchange Blvd. and W. Broad St. Call June Summers for more information, 585-865-6047.

1ST SUNDAY NATURE WALKS

The first Sunday of every month GVAS will host a nature walk through a local park. Join our adventure as we stroll through the park looking for birds and other wildlife. See the beauty that nature has to offer. We will visit a different location each month. Listed below are upcoming walks:



May 6, 2018 9:00 a.m. – Island Cottage Woods – Meet on Island Cottage Park Rd near the Lake Plains Waterfowl Association.

June 3, 2018 8:00 a.m. – Black Creek Park – Meet in parking lot near Woodside Lodge

July 1, 2018 8:00 a.m. – Highland Park – Meet on Reservoir Ave near the Lamberton Conservatory.

August 5, 2018 8:00 a.m. – Thousand Acre Swamp – Meeting location to be determined.

Follow GVAS on Facebook or Twitter for updates or email Lisa at lisamck0503@gmail.com. Also feel free to call or text Lisa at 585-899-9616.

NewYorkWild.org

NewYorkWild.org is a web site that offers several regional wildlife web cameras. This spring there are cameras on a squirrel's nest, Osprey at Montezuma, Purple Martin, and Blue Bird nests. Visit the site often to learn about these families as they grow. The cameras are solar powered so you

Montezuma Festival

Join GVAS at the Montezuma Audubon Center on Sat., May 5 from 10 am to 3 pm to see live animals, go canoeing or on guided bird watching walks, enjoy crafts, games, a climbing wall, live music and food trucks, local artisans and vendors, and a native plant sale.

Price is \$5/person and \$20/family. The center is located at 2295 State Rt 89 in Savannah, NY.



Genesee Valley Audubon Society

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P.O. Box 15512, Rochester, NY 14615-0512

GVAS: A chapter of the National Audubon Society

The vision of Genesee Valley Audubon Society (GVAS) is to promote environmental conservation. Our mission is to educate and advocate for protection of the environment, focusing on birds, wildlife and habitat.

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program and field trip reminders and much more.**

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The Meadowlark is published the 1st of September, November, January, March, and April. Articles for the Meadowlark should be submitted four weeks prior to the date of publication. Send articles to Joanne Mitchell, 169 Black Walnut Dr., Rochester, NY 14615, or at jwmitchell@rochester.rr.com.

Meadowlark staff: *Editor & Layout*, Joanne Mitchell; *Business Editor*, vacant; *Printing*, Minuteman Press; *Distribution*, vacant.

Ornithological Association Meeting

Our friend at Burroughs Audubon Nature Club and Rochester Birding Association are hosting the 71st Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association on Oct. 5-7, 2018 at the RIT Inn and Conference Center. They have invited GVAS members to join them.

For more information visit

<http://rochesterbirding.com/nysoa-reg/>