

# Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society  
November-December 2015 Vol. 43, No. 2

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## President's Column by June Summers, President of GVAS

### Fall Migration and News You Might Have Missed

This fall the migration was excellent to watch, from the Bonaparte's Gulls and loons along the lake, to the Wilson's Warblers, Brown Thrasher, White-throated Sparrows and Brown Creeper in my backyard in September. Of course, the robins. The robins that were here for the summers left to go south in mid to late August. September brought flocks of robins from up north. Flock after flock came through my yard. These migratory robins had different markings from the robins that spent the summer in my yard. Each robin is an individual with slightly different markings. I hope you had as much fun watching the fall migration as I did. Keep your eyes open this winter for the winter robins and the redpolls from farther north.

Several news worthy events happened this fall that you might have missed. Please read on.

### Protection Restored for the Bald and Golden Eagle

In December of 2013 the Department of the Interior and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) passed rules to provide wind energy companies and other industries with 30-year "take permits" that would allow for incidental killing of Bald and Golden Eagles at their facilities. This was a 25-year increase over the current permit timeframe. The companies had argued that 5-year permits hampered their ability to finance long term projects.

However, in August, US District Judge Lucy H. Koh ruled that the FWS violated federal laws when approving the 30-year permits. The American Bird Conservancy filed a lawsuit in June 2014 alleging that the new rule was a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The court decision affirms that inappropriate shortcuts were taken in developing the 30-year rule and that laws meant to protect these eagles were not properly followed, putting Bald and Golden Eagles at risk. The court decision invalidates the 30-year rule.

### Good News: Shell Oil has Suspended Drilling in the Arctic

The economy has done something that millions of environmentalists haven't been able to do for nine years: stop oil drilling in the Arctic Ocean. In late September Royal Dutch Shell (Shell Oil) suspended its efforts to explore for oil in the Alaskan Arctic. Over nine years Shell Oil has invested \$7 billion in drilling in that area. Shell decided to suspend its drilling program for now, reflecting the realities of lower global oil prices.

The amount of damage caused by the Deep Water Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 would be small in comparison to what would happen if an oil drilling accident happened in the Arctic Ocean. Shell had several accidents in 2012 while drilling shallow wells there. It took days for the oil company to shut off the oil coming out of the Deep Water Horizon well; it would take days or weeks to get repair ships to wells in the Arctic Ocean to shut off the well. The ecosystems there are very fragile; it would take centuries for them to recover. The polar bears and whales are breathing a sigh of relief.

### A Conservation Plan of the Greater Sage-Grouse

In the 1800s, the Greater Sage-Grouse numbered in the millions, but habitat destruction has dropped those numbers to between 200,000 and 500,000. A recent study found that the bird's population dropped 50 percent between 2007 and 2013, making the bird a candidate for a federal management listing under the Endangered Species Act.

In September Federal management plans were unveiled that are crucial for the conservation of the Greater Sage-Grouse. They protect sagebrush habitat from industrial development and wildfires, and adopt new management standards that advance conservation and habitat restoration across over 50 million acres of the species' range on public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service conservation plans represent cooperative efforts of federal agencies, states, private landowners, industry, and green groups to safeguard the chubby, chicken-sized bird.

*Continued on page 2*

# Programs

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM

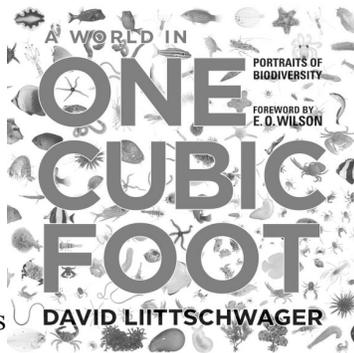
### ONECUBICFOOT, the Genesee River

MONDAY, Nov. 16, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Brighton Town Hall, UPSTAIRS Auditorium  
2300 Elmwood Ave., Brighton

This summer the Seneca Park Zoo embarked upon an amazingly interesting project to examine life in the Genesee River and introduce you to it.

The Zoo Society hosted environmentalist and photographer David Liittschwager and members of the Smithsonian Institute as they replicate Liittschwager's efforts to identify the biodiversity found in one cubic foot.



David Liittschwager has been documenting the biodiversity of ecosystems around the globe for more than a decade. Using a one-cubic-foot frame set into nature, he records everything that moves in and out of the cube within a 24-hour period, and creates a stunningly beautiful portrait of the rich biodiversity of one tiny piece of the world, whether in the rainforest in Costa Rica, in a treetop in Capetown, in the coral reef, in Central Park, and now, in the Genesee River. Liittschwager is author of *A World in One Cubic Foot: Portraits of Biodiversity* and numerous other books of photography of endangered plants and animals. His work has been featured by National Geographic.

David and his crew documented macro-invertebrates, small creatures you can hardly see, and large fish and other wildlife. Many of these creatures would not have been found in the river 20 to 30 years ago when the river water wasn't as clean as it is now.

Join GVAS and the Seneca Park Zoo on Nov. 16 to discover the biodiversity of the Genesee River ecosystem and the quality of the water that supports it.

### Beach CleanUp Update

At the Beach CleanUp at Braddock Bay on Sept. 19, GVAS had 34 volunteers from Girl Scout Daisy Troop 6052 and the ECOS Club from SUNY Brockport. They picked up 185 pound of trash. Think about joining us next year.

## JANUARY PROGRAM

### Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake in Bergen Swamp

Jan. TBA

The Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake is an endangered species that is still living in Bergen Swamp because it has been untouched by farmers and developer's drainage shovels. This pristine wetland hosts rare native plants and other animals as well.

John Adamski, Seneca Park Zoo herpetologist and assistant curator, who has been surveying Massasauga rattlers in the swamp since 2008, believes the population in Bergen is in danger of extirpation. John and a small crew of volunteers search the swamp an average of 26 hours to locate one rattler. John is using electronic technology to help him keep track of the rattlers.

The Board of Directors of the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, which owns Bergen Swamp, has decided that informing friends and neighbors of the swamp about the importance of the Massasauga Rattlesnake to the ecosystem might be the best way to save it from extirpation. Join us to learn what you can tell your friends and family in the Bergen area.

## FEBRUARY PROGRAM

### Native Americans, the First Conservationists

Feb. TBA

Harvey Limbeck, a volunteer at Ganondagan State Historic Site, will talk about how the Native Americans were the first conservationists, using everything, wasting nothing.

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*President's Column, continued from page 1*

That includes the Bureau of Land Management's 14 new sage-grouse recovery plans—consolidated from 98 distinct land use plans, all of which were officially formalized—that will conserve 35 million acres of federal lands across 10 states. In total, the collective plans to protect the bird “significantly reduced threats to the Greater Sage-Grouse across 90 percent of the species' breeding habitat,” enabling the FWS to conclude that the bird did not warrant listing as an Endangered Species, FWS stated in their release announcing the decision. Conservationists and others were worried that a formal listing could undermine the serious—and pioneering—voluntary efforts taken to protect the bird's sagebrush habitat in recent years.

# Field Trips

## Chickadee Walk

**November 14, 2015 @ 12:00 noon**

Come and join Joni & Jon Dubner for a walk in the woods, no more than 2 hours in Mendon Ponds Park. Walk a trail and feed the chickadees, tufted titmice & nuthatches while enjoying nature. Fun for the whole family!! All are welcome to participate in this outdoor adventure on Saturday, November 14, 2015.

**We will meet at noon in the Nature Center Parking lot on Pond Rd off of Clover St** (the southernmost of the 3 park entrances off Clover) Dress for the weather (wear boots, warm clothes, etc.) Seed will be provided – donation optional.

This walk is followed by the GVAS Anniversary Party. Come to either one or preferably both.



## GVAS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party

Wild Wings, Inc.

27 Pond Road, Honeoye Falls, NY,

Saturday, November 14, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

Join GVAS at Wild Wings in Mendon Ponds Park to celebrate our fortieth anniversary with the birds of prey. Where better to celebrate this special event than with an organization that shares our belief in the value of teaching environmental stewardship. Come see hawks, owls and have some cake.



Forty years ago GVAS was started as Genesee West Audubon Society to stop a landfill from being built in the area that is currently Black Creek Park in Chili. We have done much more since.

Wild Wings is located next to the Nature Center in Mendon Pond Park, on Pond Rd., off of Clover St. (Rt. 65). Go to <http://www.wildwingsinc.org>; click on Visit Us on the left for directions.

Free admission.

## Owl Prowl at Crowfields

**Feb. 20, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.**

GVAS will be joining Genesee Land Trust for this field trip at Crowfields, a property that the land trust has an easement on; they don't own it but are allowed to bring visitors. We will walk along the drumlin in the woods and try to call an owl in. It should also be good stargazing. Crowfields is located in the Town of Arcadia in Wayne County. More information will be in the Jan.-Feb. 2016 newsletter.

## FALL PROGRAMS AT THE MONTEZUMA AUDUBON CENTER

The Montezuma Audubon Center's autumn programs are a great way to connect with nature and help conserve and restore this Globally Important Bird Area! Registration required, space is limited.

Call 315-365-3588 or e-mail [montezuma@audubon.org](mailto:montezuma@audubon.org).

### Sunset Birding Van Tour

**Nov. 20, Friday, 2:00 p.m.—4:30 p.m.**

The peak of the waterfowl migration is upon us. Join MAC education staff for a van tour to see dozens of ducks, geese and swans as they settle into Montezuma's marshes for a good night's rest. Participants are encouraged to bring their camera and binoculars. Fee: \$8/child; \$13.50/adult, \$35/family.

### Wine and Wings-Montezuma Raptor Van Tour

**Dec. 19, Saturday, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Join us for a raptor van tour! We'll head out in our van to look for elusive Short-eared Owls, hunting Harriers, Bald Eagles, and more! On our tour we'll stop at The Montezuma Winery for tastings and to learn how vineyards and Important Birds Areas happily exist side by side. Must be 21+. Fee \$20/adult, includes tasting fee.

## FREE Audubon Bird Guide Bird App

By June Summers

I have used version one for years and find it very useful. How can you go wrong with a free app?



National Audubon Society is excited to announce that Audubon has released an updated version of the Audubon Bird Guide app and it's now FREE to bird lovers nationwide.

With 821 species profiles and 3200-plus world-renowned bird photos, Audubon's award-winning app instantly turns any mobile device into the most trusted field guide in North America.

To download the Audubon Bird Guide, go to:

[www.audubon.org/apps](http://www.audubon.org/apps)

- Quick bird IDs with filters by shape, region and color
- Thousands of bird calls, by region and season
- Seasonal and migratory range maps
- Recent local bird sightings through eBird
- Sightings posted by Audubon NatureShare friends and followers

# Genesee Valley Audubon Society Meadowlark

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.

Keep up-to-date with our web site, [www.gvaudubon.org](http://www.gvaudubon.org)

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## Board of Directors

### Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Inc.

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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](mailto:jwmitchell@rochester.rr.com).

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

## Season's Greetings!



### Meadowlark Opt-Out/Go Green

If you would like to Go Green and reduce the amount of mail you receive, send GVAS an email to [gvaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:gvaudubon@gmail.com). Put Opt-Out in the subject line, include your name, nine digit zip code and email. If you don't have email call June at 585-865-6047, leave the above information, and phone number.

Follow Genesee Valley Audubon Society on Facebook for program and field trip reminders and much more.