

Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society

March-April 2020

Vol. 47, No. 4

President's Column

By June Summers

Start the Conversation

In the Fall 2019 Audubon Magazine there is a guide to climate change action starting on page 69. The first thing you can do is start the conversation. Talk to your neighbors and friends about the signs of climate change and what they can do to help reverse the warming.

Last year we watched as fires burned 146,279 acres in California, which was in the fourth year of a hot drought. The drought was caused by changes in the usual La Nina ocean cycle in 2011 creating a high-pressure system off the coast of California. This high-pressure system interfered with the storms and wind flow that usually come ashore on California, sending them off course to hit elsewhere.

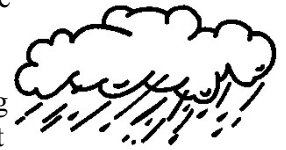


This high-pressure system rerouted cold air away from the California coast, thus keeping the offshore water warm, contributing to the "Blob." The "Blob," a large area of warm water, brings rain in the winter instead of snow; snow melts in the spring and is collected for use, so getting rain instead of snow adds to the drought. California needs to use every method possible to keep the rain from these large rainfalls from running off into the ocean to help mitigate the heat by keeping this rainfall on land.

In December 2019 and January we watched in horror as southern Australia burned. It had been suffering from a three-year drought due to a change in the El

Nino weather pattern offshore. Australia is no stranger to droughts because it receives subtropical dry sinking air that results in very little rainfall. Analysis shows the increased likelihood of rainfall deficits in Southern Australia related to human-caused climate change. The many unique creatures that live there have adapted to the droughts but not the fires and we can only hope that enough of each species survived to reproduce.

Closer to home the Great Lakes are not immune to the effects of climate change. In the spring of 2019, most of the Great Lakes region saw increased severe storms, raising the lake levels by at least a foot in the upper lakes. Unfortunately, Lake Ontario is downhill of the other lakes, so it went up three feet.



The average air temperature of the region has gone up 2.3 degrees F since 1951. Lake surface temperatures have been increasing faster than the surrounding air temperature. This could cause low-oxygen "dead zones" and toxic algal blooms. The warmer temperatures will lead to less precipitation falling as snow, and more falling as rain.

Variability is how to look at the climate in the Great Lakes region for the future. There will be an increased risk of droughts, more frequent severe storms, and flooding events that may increase the risk of erosion, sewage overflow, more interference with transportation, and more flood damage.

I think you can see each of these examples are driven to climate change. With these examples in mind talk to your friends and neighbors. Point out that climate change is here and our towns can help by putting in green infrastructure such as rain gardens. Personally try driving less, eating less meat and plant more trees.

Programs

Survival by Degrees, 389 Birds Species on the Brink

Sunday, March 8, 2020, 2:00 pm

24 State Street, Pittsford, NY 14534

Our February program is being repeated at a new location. If you missed it in February, come see it in March.

March Program

Due to permitting issues the restoration project in Cranberry Pond will not be built until next winter so GVAS has postponed the previously scheduled talk on Cranberry Pond until next year. We decided instead to bring you a program on how birds migrate.

Magnetoreception in Migratory Birds

Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 7:30pm

Irondequoit Public Library, Rm 114, Densmore Creek Room, 1290 Titus Avenue, 14617

How do birds know which direction to migrate in the spring and fall? Like us, they can distinguish north from south by watching the sun, moon, and stars, and by remembering the locations of geographic landmarks. They are also somehow able to find their way by sensing the direction of Earth's magnetic field, an ability known as magnetoreception.

Recent experiments suggest magnetoreception in migratory birds involves the optic nerve and light-activated enzymes called cryptochromes, which are found in the retinae of birds. The biochemical mechanism by which cryptochromes send signals

about the strength and direction of magnetic fields to the brain is unknown. At SUNY Geneseo, Dr. Brandon Tate and students are using chemical synthesis to make artificial cryptochromes and studying them to improve our understanding of how birds perceive magnetic fields.

In this talk, Dr. Tate will summarize the current scientific consensus on avian magnetoreception and its implications in conservation science, describe his ongoing research on artificial cryptochromes at Geneseo, and discuss strategies to use this project to provide opportunities for career advancement to students who belong to groups that are underrepresented in science due to systemic bias.

April Program

Nature Walk along the Brickyard Trail at the Sandra Frankel Nature Park

Tuesday, April 28th, 2020, 7:00pm-9:00pm

Meet in the front of the Brighton Library Parking Lot, 2300 Elmwood Avenue, 14618



A casual evening nature walk to watch for birds and early spring flowers while listening for frogs and other wildlife. This short easy walk of about a mile and a half round trip will give us a chance to explore an urban wetland at dusk. Who know what we will find? We will visit a local restaurant for hot cocoa afterwards.

Thank You!

Thank you to all who gave to the GVAS 2019 Annual Campaign. We know that each and every gift came from the heart.

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Field Trips

Field Trip to Montezuma Audubon Center 2259 NY-89, Savannah

Sunday, March 22, 9:00-11:00am

Several species of duck use Montezuma NWR as a stopover during migration. Montezuma Audubon Center will be hosting a guided van tour to see how species we can find. If demand is high enough that we need to car pool behind the van, we will be utilizing conference calling through Sync so every one can take full advantage of having a tour guide. Bring your own binoculars, if you have them. We have a few to lend, if you don't. Spotting scopes will be available. Wear appropriate footwear for cold, snow and possible mud. Short walks for better vantage are possible. \$20.00 per person to ride in the van. Van seating is limited to nine adults. \$15.00 per person to take part in the car pool. Reservation is secured with full payment. Payment in full must be received by Monday, March 16. Questions? Contact Loretta Morrell at 208-6461 or loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com. Checks made out to to Genesee Valley Audubon Society, c/o June Summers, 208 Rhea Crescent, Rochester, NY 14615,



Bird of Prey Days at Braddock Bay April 24-26, 2020

<https://bbrr.org/bird-of-prey-days/>

Please come visit us Saturday or Sunday at our GVAS table. We'll be in the main lodge. We look forward to meeting you.



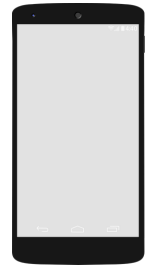
City Nature Challenge 2020

Friday, April 24 through Monday, April 27

Take part in an annual, global, community science competition to document urban diversity. The challenge is a bioblitz that engages residents and visitors to find and document plants, animals and other organisms in urban areas using iNaturalist. You can shoot pictures with your phone or camera.

Nature Stroll, Turning Point Park, 260 Boxart St Monday, April 27, 10:00am-11:00am

In celebration of City Nature Challenge 2020 we will use the iNaturalist app on our phones. We will meet in the parking lot at Turning Point Park and enjoy a stroll along the river trail. Trail surface is a combination of tarmac and boardwalk. There is a gradual hill near the parking lot. The remainder of the walk is level. If you prefer to use a camera, feel free. Photos can be uploaded by going to the iNaturalist website. If possible, please have app downloaded onto your phone before meeting up. Questions? Contact Loretta Morrell at 208-6461 or loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com.



Nature Stroll, Zoo Road, Durand Eastman Park Tuesday, May 5, 10:00am-11:00am

Celebrate winter turning into spring with a easy stroll along a level paved road. Meet at the parking lot situated on the right before the barricades. We'll be looking for early migrants. Wear comfortable footwear, and bring binoculars, if you have them. Questions? Loretta Morrell 208-6461 or loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com.

Mt Hope Cemetery Sunday, May 10, 8:00am

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. The North Gate is located on Mt Hope Ave. across from Robinson Dr. (This is NOT the gate that is across from The Distillery.) No advance signup is needed. Questions? Contact Joanne Mitchell, (585) 621-1906 or jwmitchell@rochester.rr.com.



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.

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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.

Meadowlark—Go Green

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