

Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society

Sept-Oct 2022

Vol. 50, No. 1

President's Column

By June Summers

Happy Fall everyone. We hope that you have had a wonderful spring and summer.

We hired Sheila Eagan, ENL Teacher, at RISE Community School No. 106. She ran the GVAS Audubon In Action Grant program this summer by bringing groups of children from the city to Braddock Bay Park to learn about wetlands and watersheds. Our first two groups were from the Rochester City Rise School. The next three groups were from City Recreation Centers. Many of these children have never been near Lake Ontario. They found frogs and cattails. One young man said, "It is green, really green out here." We taught them how to use binoculars. Sometimes they even got to see birds. One group got to see three Snowy Egrets. Each group got to see an eagle.

They used modeling clay to construct watersheds and then added sponges to show them how wetlands work to soak up water, impurities, and silt. All of the children seemed to enjoy this craft.

The GVAS Audubon in Action program reached 67 children and 12 adults. They were a diverse group of urban young people. GVAS hopes that we made a difference in their lives.

GVAS held two water chestnut pulls in Salmon Creek where it runs into Braddock Bay. On the first pull we partnered with the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FL-Prism) and the New York Parks Boat Stewards to pull 865 pounds. On our second pull a few of our members and the FL-PRISM pulled 1323 lbs. This brought the total for that area to 2,188 lbs, cleaning most of that area. European water chestnuts are an invasive species that would cover the top of Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Area in a few years if left alone.



Programs

September Program

Tuesday, Sept. 27, 7:00 pm, by Zoom

The Ghost Bird

If you haven't heard, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker has possibly been spotted again, this time on October 17, 2020, by Bobby Harrison. Harrison and Tim Gallagher, former Living Bird editor, the two men who had the first sighting of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in 2004, set off the large search for the bird that ended in early 2007.



Harrison showed the video he took in 2020 to a few people in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Because of that video the FWS is giving itself six more months to decide what to do about delisting the Ivory-billed from the Endangered Species list. Join GVAS for the documentary *The Ghost Bird*. This is the story of a town that hoped for good fortune, and the bird watchers and scientist who searched for the Holy Grail of birds.

This film is 1 hour 23 minutes long; therefore we are starting this meeting earlier than usual.

Register with June Summers at summers@frontiernet.net by Sept. 25 to receive your Zoom link.

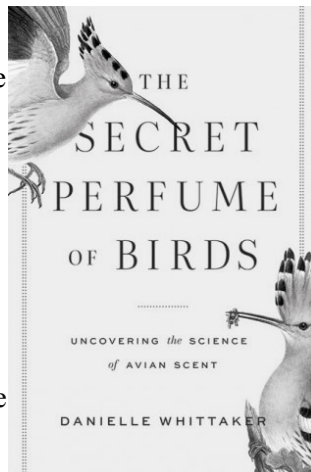
October Program

Tuesday, Oct. 25, 7:30 pm, by Zoom

The Secret Perfume of Birds, Uncovering the Science of Avian Scent

Danielle J. Whittaker, the author of this book, will join us by Zoom to tell us about the untold story of a stunning discovery: not only can birds smell, but their scents may be the secret to understanding their world.

The puzzling lack of evidence for the peculiar but widespread belief that birds have no sense of smell irked evolutionary biologist Danielle Whittaker.



Exploring the science behind the myth led Whittaker on a quest investigating mysteries from how juncos win a fight to why cowbirds smell like cookies. *The Secret Perfume of Birds* is part science, part intellectual history, and part memoir.

Whittaker engagingly describes how emerging research has uncovered birds' ability to produce complex chemical signals that influence their behavior, including where they build nests, when they pick a fight, and why they fly away. Mate choice, or sexual selection—a still enigmatic aspect of many animals' lives—appears to be particularly influenced by smell.

Who knew? This is stunning science news. Join us to learn how birds smell and make smells.

Register with June Summers at summers@frontiernet.net, by Oct. 23 to receive your Zoom link.

November Program

Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7:30 pm, by Zoom

The Magic Stump

A new birding documentary by Bob Dolgan and Turnstone Films, who brought us Monty and Rose.

The Magic Stump is a documentary about the large stump located in the middle of a large farm field in Illinois and the ecosystem that uses the stump and fields. Make no mistake, a number of raptors use the area, including the only pair of Prairie Falcons east of the Mississippi. It is an exciting film. Join us please.



Register with June Summers at summers@frontiernet.net, by Nov. 13 to receive your Zoom link.

Field Trips

Wednesday, October 19, 10:00am

Genesee Riverway Trail and Boardwalk, 110 Petten Street (River Street Marine) – Hoping to catch the beauty of the river gorge in autumn we will be enjoying the Charlotte end of the trail between River Street Marina and Turning Point Park. The highlight of this portion of the Genesee Riverway Trail is the boardwalk that divides the river channel from marshes along the shoreline. This multipurpose trail is stroller and wheelchair friendly, the grade changes are few, and the slopes are gradual. Trail surface is a combination of tarmac and boardwalk. Anyone interested in a longer walk or perhaps lunch can head north along the trail that eventually terminates at the Charlotte pier with a slight detour to get around the Port of Rochester marina entrance. Sunscreen is recommended. Binoculars could enhance your enjoyment. No facilities immediately available. Registration is required no later than Monday, October 17. For questions or to register, contact Loretta Morrell at loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com.

Saturday, November 26, 10:00am

Tinker Nature Park, 1525 Calkins Road, Pittsford, NY, 14534 Though we don't hear much bird song this time of the year our winter residents are still out and about. We will have a walk through this beautiful park woodland and wetland and see what birds remain with us during these cold and sometimes snowy months. Bring binoculars if you have them. Wear warm and sturdy footwear to protect your feet from getting wet and cold. Terrain is relatively flat and is a combination of crushed stone, natural surface, and boardwalk. Facilities are available. Registration is required no later than Wednesday, November 23. For questions or to register, email Loretta Morrell at loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com.

Wednesday, December 14

Mendon Ponds Birdsong Trail, 27 Pond Road Come enjoy a nice stroll in the woods and take the time to feed some of our hungry winter feathered residents that have been acclimated to eating from our hands in this popular park. Most of the trail is a fairly easy walk but there are a couple of steeper areas. Areas can be muddy if temperatures are warmer and there has been recent rain or snow. Birdseed will be provided for participants (donation for seed would be appreciated). Binoculars will enhance your enjoyment. Dress for possible wind and standing in snow, and or icy conditions. A shortened walk will be offered if conditions are too icy, so that we can still enjoy

feeding the birds. Facilities are available. Reservations are required by Monday, December 12. Contact Loretta Morrell at loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com for questions or to register. I

Carol A. Merkel

7/12/41 – 7/2/22

Carol Merkel was an animal lover and a member of the Genesee Valley Audubon Society Board. Carol was our Publicity Chair since 2015. She was also a decades long volunteer at the Seneca Park Zoo. Her work with these two organizations made a difference for the environment.

Braddock Bay Cleanup Volunteers Needed

Join GVAS at Braddock Bay for the annual International Coastal Cleanup on Sept. 17 at 9:00 am at Westpoint Marina, 105 E. Manitou Rd. in Greece.

We will meet in the public parking loop before the Marina. GVAS has picked up over a ton of trash at Braddock Bay over the years and we need your help this year to keep the bay clean. Trash entangles wildlife and plastic bags cover the bottom of the bay, preventing plants from growing. We have now learned that plastic trash that enters the lake can be ground down into small plastic pieces called micro plastics. Micro plastics get into the food chain from the bottom then into the fish and into people who eat them. Help us stop this process. Thank you to the event sponsor, the Helen and Ritter Shumway Foundation

So join us on Sept. 17. Register with June by Sept. 16 at Summers@frontiernet.net, or call (585) 355-1824 to let me know you are coming. We will provide trash bags and data sheets. Please bring work gloves.



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.

GVAS GREEN INITIATIVE

The Meadowlark will undergo changes over the next few months. In an effort to conserve production and transportation resources that it currently takes to print five issues of the newsletter per year the GVAS board is looking at going digital some time the early part of 2024. We understand that everyone doesn't have easy computer access. If you would still like to receive a hard copy of the newsletter, please send a note stating your name and address using the PO return address on this newsletter, or email Loretta Morrell at loretta.morrell.gvas@gmail.com. Note that depending on demand we may elect to charge a fee just large enough to cover our costs. The cost of printing the newsletter has increased exponentially over the past few years. Freeing up this expenditure will allow GVAS to offer more outreach opportunities for conservation, education, and advocacy.