



Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society

November-December 2022

Vol. 50, No. 2

President's Column

By June Summers

I apologize for the tardiness of this newsletter. The weekend of Oct. 22 and 23 Genesee Valley Audubon hosted the Audubon Council of New York State. Sixteen out of twenty-seven chapters attended, along with directors from two Audubon Nature Centers and bird clubs from two universities. Everyone enjoyed learning about the restoration work at Braddock Bay and going on a field trip to the Braddock Bay East Spit to bird watch Saturday afternoon. We had Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers and Bonaparte's Gulls.

The National Bird Migration Explorer Lets You Interact with Nature's Most Amazing Feat

Audubon has a revolutionary new tool. Anyone can now follow hundreds of species on their epic journeys and discover the challenges they face along the way. Humans have long been captivated by migratory birds, awed by the animals' biannual treks between their breeding and wintering grounds. A new digital platform, the **Bird Migration Explorer** (<http://birdmigrationexplorer.org>), brings this natural phenomenon to your screen, enabling you to pore over the movements of individual species, discover the birds at a specific locations, and learn about challenges these far-flying creatures face.

Created by National Audubon and nine founding partners, including The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and others. Using science contributed by hundreds of researchers and institutions, the platform paints the most complete picture ever of the journeys of 458 avian species that breed in the United States and Canada.

TIP: The Bird Migration Explorer home page features a handy "take a tour" tab for new visitors. The quick overview covers all the basics, so you'll be exploring in no time.

Users are met with a colorful map composed of routes of more than 9,300 birds captured by tracking devices and shared by scientists across the Western Hemisphere. The effect is astounding, says Melanie Smith, program director for the project: "You can see how birds trace the outlines of continents, rivers, lakes, mountain ridges."

Smith and her colleagues envision a broad audience utilizing the **Bird Migration Explorer**, from conservationists looking to identify and protect the places migratory birds need to members of the public curious about their seasonal neighborhood visitors.

Available in English and Spanish, the platform makes it possible to delve into the fascinating world of migratory birds. Here's some of what awaits you.

Explore by Species

On the platform homepage, simply click the "Bird Species" button, type a common name into the search field, and you'll launch a deep dive into where the species travels throughout the year and the challenges it encounters.

Choose a bird: Enter "American White Pelican," for instance, and the platform will generate an interactive version of the map that tracks the bird throughout its annual cycle. Pelicans outfitted with GPS tags (the yellow circles) reveal a geographic divide when it comes to migration: Breeding populations east of the Rocky Mountains move primarily south and east toward the Gulf of Mexico, while those to the west head primarily south to California and western Mexico.

Learn about its natural history: The platform also includes a brief description of each species. Users learn that the American White Pelican is a spectacular flier and, with a nine-foot wingspan, is one of the largest birds in North America. It occurs far inland, feeds in shallow lakes, and, unlike Brown Pelicans, doesn't dive from the air for fish. Bound to water, the piscivore is sensitive to marine and freshwater changes.

TIP: Click on a specific challenge to generate a map of where the species faces that particular obstacle and learn more about it.

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Programs

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.

January Program

Jan. 24, 2023, 7:30 pm, by Zoom

Snow Birds

Ken Elkin, Community Conservation Manager for the Menunkatuck

Audubon Society, in New Haven, CT, will enlighten us about how birds stay warm in the winter. There are methods that birds employ to keep



from freezing to the branches and freezing in general. Join us to learn more than you imagined. You need to register; email June Summers at summers@frontiernet.net by January 22. If I don't reply within several days please call me at (585) 355-1824.

February 2023 Program

Feb. 28, 2023, 7:30 pm, by Zoom

In Search of the Great Gray Owl

Kyle Dugdeon is a young aspiring writer and photographer from Oneida, NY, who set out to make a difference in

life. He found himself in Bozeman, Montana, documenting the ecosystem of the Bridgerton



Mountains range. Once he came across Great Gray Owls he became hooked. His search for them in the Bridgerton began. The photographs are fantastic. He also tells of his work to save at least part the forest from a US Forest Service project that would have wiped out all of the old growth forest the owls use.

This video was brought to GVAS by Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. You need to register; email June Summers at summers@frontiernet.net by February 26. If I don't reply within several days please call me at (585) 355-1824.

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Discover the challenges it faces: On the left side of the page scroll down to "Available Maps" and select "Conservation Challenges." That will generate a list of human activities and environmental changes the bird is exposed to throughout the year. The American White Pelican faces 10 conservation challenges, including degraded water quality and surface water management, which includes dams, river fragmentation, or disrupted water flow.

Explore by Location

The migrants that pass through your town rely on an array of habitats across the hemisphere. The Bird Migration Explorer allows you to see those links.

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Field Trips

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 fairly easy walk but are a couple of steeper Areas can be muddy if temperatures are warmer and there has 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.



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January 21, 2023, 3:00 pm

Nations Road area, Avon

Short-Eared Owls and Other Field Birds

Many non-birding people think birdwatching stops during the winter. GVAS goes birdwatching year round and winter can be especially rewarding. Once again this year we will be leading an owl and winter raptor prowl in the Nations Road area on January 21, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. Two

years ago we saw Red-Tailed Hawks, Horned Larks, Northern Harriers, a herd of White-Tailed Deer crossing a field, and the star of the show...Short-Eared Owls. It is nature and we never know what we will see, but it is always fun. If you wish to join in the fun, meet us on January 21, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the Tops parking lot in Avon on Route 5 & 20. From there we will head to Nations Rd area. Please register with June at summers@frontiernet.net or (585) 355-1824. This is a driving field trip; dress warmly because it will be cold outside. We will have Covid liability waivers for you to sign when we meet.



Bird Migration Explorer, continued from page 2

Select a Starting Point: Click the "Locations" tab on the platform home page and enter any location in the Western Hemisphere. We chose New Orleans, and the resulting map shows where American White Pelicans and other migratory birds that rest, breed, or winter in the Big Easy go throughout the year.

TIP: To see where tagged birds of a species have been reencountered as they fly across the hemisphere, select a bird and click on "Species Connections."

Spot ties: The darker the hexagon, the more species have been tracked between New Orleans and that area. Connections are derived from tracking, banding, and genetic data from millions of reencountered birds.

Dig deeper: Click any hexagon to see how many tracked birds link the two sites and what species they represent. A list of each connected species will appear, as well as conservation areas in the second location.

Discover hotspots: Certain places stand out for having a high diversity and abundance of birds. To peruse hotspots across the Western Hemisphere and learn which birds occur there, click the "Locations" tab, scroll down, and choose a featured area.

Take Action

Migratory birds' survival demands they fly long distances twice a year and find suitable habitat in between. It's a risky endeavor, one that human activities and environmental changes can make more challenging. On the platform, click the red "Take Action" button in the upper righthand corner to receive updates on how to help migratory birds, connect with Audubon locally, and become an Audubon member.

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 newsletter will be undergoing 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 Meadowlark per year the GVAS board is looking at going digital some time in 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 news letter, 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 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 opportunities to offer outreach for conservation, education, and advocacy.