



THE KESTREL

Onondaga Audubon Society

A Chapter of National Audubon

*Serving Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison,
Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Counties and other areas of Central and
Northern New York for 61 years.*

*The National Audubon Chapter of Central New York and the
Eastern Lake Ontario Basin*

New Series Volume 44 - Number 1

February / March / April 2013

PROGRAMS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE NOTE: *Speakers and venues are subject to change. Please check www.onondagaaudubon.com for the most current information. All programs last 60 to 90 minutes.*

MARCH 2013 PROGRAM MEETING

Wednesday, March 13, 7:00 PM

Onondaga Hill Public Library
4840 West Seneca Turnpike Syracuse, NY 13215

APRIL 2013 PROGRAM MEETING

Wednesday, April 10, 7:00 PM

Fayetteville Free Library
300 Orchard St. Fayetteville, NY 13066

Both programs are to be determined. Please check www.onondagaaudubon.com for more information.

NEEDED: KESTREL EDITOR

Onondaga Audubon is looking for a volunteer to manage the publication of up to three issues a year of the chapter's newsletter - *The Kestrel*. The editor would work with article authors, edit and proofread content, and prepare each issue for printing. Experience with digital publishing software and print production would be helpful. An appreciation for the written word and a concern for good grammar and spelling are important. Materials and guidance to start will be provided!

Contact Tom Riley at (315)784-5036 or
OnAudubonCom@gmail.com to learn more.



CONSERVATION

IS THE RAZORBILL 2012'S CANARY?

by Maryanne Adams, Conservation Chair

The Razorbill is a large, pelagic bird that lives primarily in the cold waters of the North Atlantic. Individuals from North America's population rarely venture south of Cape Hatteras, NC. Before December 2012, the state of Florida had only 14 records of this species, so when more than one Razorbill appeared in Florida last month, it was clear that something very odd was going on (1). Other northern species are also turning up in Florida waters, including Black Scoters, Dovekie, and Thick-billed Murre. Although storms may cause alcid to end up in unusual places, large-scale invasions like this are more typically driven by food shortages in the birds' normal range. Of particular note are the first records from Florida's Gulf coast and the first records from the Florida Keys. The sizes of the groups of Razorbills being reported are also noteworthy:

- 50 at South Inlet Park, Ft. Lauderdale, 12/14/12
- 200 at Boynton Beach Inlet Park, Palm Beach Co., 12/14/12



© Lillian Stokes, 2012

Lillian Stokes photographed this Razorbill at Sanibel Island lighthouse beach on December 23, 2012.

(<http://stokesbirdingblog.blogspot.com/>)

Conservation continues on page 3

THE KESTREL

Vol. 44 - No. 1

Feb / Mar / April 2013

Editor

Julie Covey

Officers, Chairs & Directors - 2013

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Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc. is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Meetings will be held at various sites primarily within Onondaga County on different dates during different months from September to May, excluding January and February. Please check *The Kestrel* and/or <http://www.onondagaaudubon.com> for details on each monthly meeting's date and time. Meetings usually run approximately two hours long. Field trips are held year round to observe birds and other interesting aspects of nature. All programs and field trips are free and open to the public.

OAS owns and operates two sanctuaries on Lake Ontario: Derby Hill Bird Observatory and Richard A. Noyes Sanctuary. Derby Hill is an important site for spring hawk migration. Noyes Sanctuary provides a variety of scenic and birding opportunities in all seasons. Both sanctuaries have maintained trails and are free and open to the public, dawn to dusk.

Chapter only members receive *The Kestrel* newsletter. Joint members with National Audubon receive *The Kestrel* plus Audubon Magazine. Onondaga Audubon encourages membership in both National Audubon and the local chapter. Members are encouraged to actively participate as volunteers in all functions of Onondaga Audubon.

Problems with subscriptions should be referred to the membership chair.

Letters to the Editor may be sent to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse, NY 13201
Phone 315-696-8065
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>

The mission of the Onondaga Audubon Society is to engender in the people of the Central New York Community a greater appreciation of wildlife, land, water, and other natural resources. The members of Onondaga Audubon believe this will lead to the wiser use of these resources and encourage this result through our programs, field trips, sanctuary management and environmental education.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Deadline for submissions for the next issue is
April 1, 2013.*

ATTENTION SNOW BIRDS!!!!

Would you be interested in receiving the Kestrel online? We don't want you to miss the winter issues while you are enjoying the sun somewhere warm. Please send your email address to whitstrivia@yahoo.com so we can ensure that you are kept up-to-date.

Whit's Trivia

Rules: Email your answers to whitstrivia@yahoo.com by **March 15**. Two winners will be chosen at random from all correct answers (one for each question). The winners will win a bird related prize! Be sure to include your name and address in your email.

Winners and answers will be announced in the next Kestrel (first names and last initials only).

Previous Answers:

Q1: How old was the last individual Passenger Pigeon when it died? *Martha was 29 years old* Winner: K. Sears

Q2: What bird family shares the same common name as the Chupacabra? *Nighthawks & Nightjars*

Winner: V. DeBenedictis

Question 1: What bird has a long hind toe allowing it to climb trees?

Question 2: This bird species, that went extinct in the 1980s, lived in the marshes of western Florida.



Onondaga Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

For information on National Audubon Society membership please visit the OAS website:
<http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN:

To enroll as a member of the Onondaga Audubon Society chapter only please send your name, address, and a check for \$15, made payable to the Onondaga Audubon Society, to:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Syracuse, NY 13201

You will receive The Kestrel newsletter several times per year.

Onondaga Audubon Society Chapter Code:
RO5
7XCH

CONSERVATION from pg 1

- 450 off Miami, 12/14/12
- 500 off Palm Beach County, 12/14/12
- 32 at Government Cut, Miami, 12/15/12 (1)

Why have Razorbills turned up in Florida this year? Was Hurricane Sandy a factor? The huge storm most certainly had an effect on migrating birds following the Atlantic Flyway. Obviously, high winds may have blown birds off course or prevented them from following traditional flight paths. Also, according to Daniel Ashe, the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, damage from wind and heavy rain degraded important resting areas for geese, ducks and other migrating birds. Tens of thousands of acres of coastal refuges, from Chincoteague in Virginia to the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex in New York, were “heavily impacted” (2). Ashe is very concerned about the impact of Sandy on “marginal” species with declining populations, like the American Oyster Catcher. About 1,000 birds were in refuges along the New Jersey shore when the storm hit, but it is unclear where they are now.

Additionally, heavy ocean surges from Hurricane Sandy pushed salt water into coastal freshwater refuges. The immediate result of this was the decrease of good stopover habitat. But over time, such surges could also increase the number of vegetative and invertebrate invasive species. This would change food sources for birds and could have an effect on migration. Dale Humburg, chief scientist with Ducks Unlimited, says that he is concerned about the long term negative impacts of salt-water intrusion on coastal habitats and storm-surge impacts on barrier islands and vegetation (2).

Although the Razorbill invasion of Florida has created a lot of excitement among Florida birders, it is not clear whether this is a one-time event or the “beginning of a frightening trend” (1). There is speculation that the southward movement of the alcids is food driven, just like the irruption of crossbills, redpolls, and Pine Grosbeaks that we are seeing in the northern parts of the U.S. The article on ebird.org offers an in-depth look at how an unusual Sea Surface Temperature (SST) anomaly (almost 4 degrees Celsius above normal) in the western North Atlantic area where Razorbills usually winter could have resulted in “significant changes in the distribution and types of fish and other food available for foraging” (1). At the same time, SSTs in Florida have been abnormally cold. This may result in better foraging opportunities for Razorbills along the Florida coast because the cooler water may

produce more small fish.

This past year has been filled with extreme weather. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) Climatic Data Center, in 2012, the United States experienced seven severe weather/tornado events, two tropical storm/hurricane events, a year-long drought and associated wildfires – each of which caused more than \$1 billion in losses (3). As climate-related changes become more extreme, it will become more challenging to mitigate for them. Daniel Ashe points out that ‘Whether it is Hurricane Sandy or drought in the Southwest or fires in the West and Midwest, this kind of large-scale disturbance’ is a ‘more frequent facet of wildlife management’ (2).

As of December 31, 2012, nineteen Razorbills had been brought to the Conservancy of Southwest Florida in Naples and to the Clinic for Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) on Sanibel. Unfortunately, almost all of the birds have died. Necropsies performed on several of them indicate emaciation and stress as causes of death. In response to a personal e-mail inquiry, Dan Wolf, veterinarian for Florida Fish and Wildlife, gave 45 as the total number of dead Razorbills reported to FWC as of January 2. If any Razorbills brought to rehabbers do survive, CROW staff does not even know how or where they would be released (4).

According to a recent study by scientists John Fasullo and Kevin Trenberth at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), climate model projections indicate that those “showing a greater rise in global temperatures are likely to prove more accurate than those showing a lesser rise” (3). If this is true, there will be even more changes in the weather for us and for species like the Razorbill.

SOURCES

- (1) <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/razorbill-invade-florida>
- (2) <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/11/04/sandy-hits-migrating-birds-refuges/1677553/>
- (3) <http://ens-newswire.com/2012/12/31/2012-u-s-had-11-billion-dollar-weather-climate-disasters/>
- (4) <http://www.postcrescent.com/usatoday/article/1800097>

Interesting Fact:

A group of Razorbills is called an “edge” or a “strop.”

<http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/884/overview/Razorbill.asp>



O.A.S. AWARDS

Judith Lockwood is the recipient of the O.A.S. Distinguished Service Award for 2012. Mrs. Lockwood has always maintained a keen interest in birds and protecting their habitat since she was a child. She and her late husband, Dr. Robert Lockwood set aside 50 acres of their own property as a conservation easement under the Finger Lakes Land Trust. Judith is active in supporting nature education as a donor under the memorial scholarship set up under her Mother, Ruth Englebrecht. The Onondaga Audubon Society and its Board of Directors express our gratitude to Judith Lockwood for her interest and generosity in supporting teachers who guide the next generation to a better appreciation of nature.

The recipient of the Ornithology Award is Bill Purcell. In the last sixteen years, Bill has served as Editor for the Region 5-Oneida Lake Basin regional report. Four times a year, Bill would have the over-whelming task of sorting through reports from at least 53 contributors. Sixty-six reports under his authorship have been published in *The Kingbird*, a peer-reviewed journal of The New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. After 30 years of birding, he considers the Magnificent Frigatebird to be his most memorable sighting. The Onondaga Audubon Society and its Board of Directors convey our thanks to Bill Purcell for his superb reports on the status of bird life in central New York.

Gene Huggins, President of O.A.S.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

**FOR 2013 BIRD FESTIVAL AT DERBY HILL,
MAY 11, 2013**

The 2012 festival was a great success and 2013 will be even better! We need volunteers to help with:

- finding sponsors
- finding vendors
- making contacts for educational exhibits
- obtaining raffle/silent auction donations
- working at Derby Hill on May 11 (help with setting up, parking, shuttling visitors, staffing booths)

If you'd like the opportunity to help with this event, please contact us by e-mail at oabirdfest@gmail.com

OR by US mail at:

Onondaga Audubon Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Syracuse, NY 13201

OR by phone at: 315-474-3778

Looking forward to hearing from you!
All help is welcome.

2013 OAS Bird Festival Committee



ONONDAGA AUDUBON BIRD FESTIVAL AT DERBY HILL

Mexico, NY

When: Saturday
May 11, 2013

Time: 10 AM – 5 PM

Family fun!

- Hawk Watching and ID
- Birding/Nature Walks
- Hawk Talks
- Raffles
- Silent Auction
- Craft Vendors
- Live Birds of Prey
- Chomppers Smokin' Barbeque



**FREE PARKING
FREE ADMISSION**

Check out
www.onondagaaudubon.com
in the coming weeks for more
information!

Long-eared Owl & Osprey photos by Julie Covey.



Save the date:

BIRDATHON 2013!

Even though there is still snow on the ground and the Fall migration has hardly ended, it is not too early to start looking forward to what Spring will bring. That of course includes Birdathon! This year, the event will be held on May 18th, so don't delay, and mark your calendar today!



This event is scheduled to occur at the peak of migration, when the greatest variety of birds can be found in our area – a great day to be out birding. Early migrants are still trickling through while later migrants are just starting. Not only is there more variety than on that recent Christmas count, the weather is better to – well probably better. So, plan your route and make it a date!

How Birdathon Works

Who: Birdathon is open to all birders and birdwatchers. Family groups, students and experienced birders are all welcome.

Where: Bird any locations you like within Kingbird Region 5, Including Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, Oneida, and Herkimer Counties, plus Cayuga County north of Route 31. Online map is at www.nybirds.org/regionmap.htm

When: May 18, the third Saturday in May, from midnight Friday to midnight Saturday, for as many hours (or few) as you like.

Count: Record the name of each species that you identify by sight and/or sound – no need to count individual birds! Honor system please! Report only those species that you are sure of.

Rules: Sign up in advance. Have fun! Stay safe!

Fund-raising: This is an important funding source for OAS. Lining up sponsors is optional, but definitely encouraged!

To inquire or sign up, contact Ken or Rose Burdick, at (315) 685-5571, via e-mail at OAS.Birdathon@verizon.net, or by mail at 5 East Lake St., Skaneateles, NY, 13152. Please let us know if you prefer receiving materials by e-mail.



OAS LOCAL MEMBERSHIPS *FOR 2013 ARE DUE*

OAS local memberships are on a calendar year basis. These memberships help us conduct the many programs of OAS locally. The limited dues split we receive from the dues of National Audubon members only assigned to the chapter does not cover our cost of providing *The Kestrel* to these members.

Please consider becoming a local OAS member if you are not already one. The board looks forward to serving our members and the communities of our service area in the coming year.

*PLEASE JOIN US AS A LOCAL MEMBER AND
RENEW YOUR LOCAL OAS MEMBERSHIP.*

*WHITNI SMITH, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, MAY
BE CONTACTED THROUGH THE INFORMATION
LISTED ON PAGE 2.*



AN EDUCATOR'S OPPORTUNITY!

Are you interested in learning new techniques to engage your students? Enjoy an incredible week of learning and sharing ideas with other educators at Audubon Society's Hog Island's "Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week." Located off the coast of Maine, Hog Island offers a unique location to explore teaching and nature. Workshops will investigate connecting students with nature through art, music, theatre and journaling. Citizen science will be explored. Field trips will be used to introduce educators to new ideas for inspiring students.

Onondaga Audubon Society is pleased to offer a scholarship to help an educator attend "Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week." Applications are available on the OAS website <http://onondagaaudubon.com/> under "About" and "Scholarships" or on page 7 of this newsletter. Applications are due February 15, 2013.

Additional information on Hog Island can be found at <http://hogisland.audubon.org/>



Winter Wonderland Programs!

To register or for more information about the Montezuma Audubon Center or its programs please call 315-365-3588 or e-mail montezuma@audubon.org.

Space is limited. Registration is required.

The Center is open Tuesday-Saturday 10 AM - 4 PM.

Selected programs are listed below. Please check <http://ny.audubon.org/montezuma.htm> for more information.

****50% Discount for Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex applies to programs with an asterisk.***

2/9, 1-3 PM Girl Scout Snowshoe Spectacular

Girl scouts of all ages are welcome to attend this exciting event that will include indoor and outdoor fun! Fee: \$10/scout (includes snowshoe rental).

2/14, 10 AM-Noon, 2/15, 10AM-Noon & 1-3 PM

Home School Nature Series:

Opening Up to a Short-eared Owl

Designed for home-schooled children ages 5-12, this series will examine the habitat needs of the endangered Short-eared Owl, including a snowshoe around the grasslands in search of the owl's prey. Fee: \$10/child includes snowshoe rental.

2/18, 1-2:30 PM Hot Cocoa & Snow: Great Backyard Birds

Participate in our Great Backyard Bird Count and help scientists get the big picture of what is happening with bird populations while snowshoeing through our forests and grasslands. Then, warm up with a cup of hot cocoa! *Fee including snowshoe rental: \$5/child, \$7.50/adult, \$20/family; *Fee without rental: \$3/child, \$5/adult, \$15/family.

2/20, 9 AM-4 PM - Winter Breakout!

Winter break is here and the fun is heating up! Children ages 6-12 will enjoy a winter adventure program that includes snowshoeing, Winter Olympics games, hands-on exploration, and winter crafts. Come for the entire day (bring your lunch) or just the morning or afternoon session. Fee: \$25/full day; \$15/half day.

2/22, 10AM – Noon - Cub Scout Winter Break Snowshoe

Scouts will learn the basics of snowshoeing and then we'll discuss how animals survive the winter as we take off through the snow. Warm up with a cup of hot cocoa after the program. Fee: \$10/scout (includes snowshoe rental).

2/23, 1-2:30 PM Hot Cocoa & Snow – Howland's Island Snowshoe

Snowshoers will be led around Howland's Island to

explore the beauty of this winter wonderland. See which birds call the island home all year round. Afterwards, warm up with a cup of hot cocoa. *Fee including snowshoe rental: \$5/child, \$7.50/adult, \$20/family; *Fee without rental: \$3/child, \$5/adult, \$15/family.

3/9 9, 1-4PM - Boy Scout Mammal Study Badge

Boy Scouts are invited to complete the requirements for the Mammal Study Badge. As one of the badge requirements, Scouts will take part in a conservation project that helps improve habitat for mammals as well as other wildlife. Fee: \$7/Scout.

3/16, 9 AM-Noon - Montezuma Birding Van Tour

Hop in our van for an excursion to Montezuma's birding hotspots where hundreds of thousands of waterfowl can be seen! Participants are encouraged to bring their camera and binoculars. Fee: \$7.50/child; \$12.50/adult.

3/20, 9-11AM - Howland's Island Backcountry Hike

Howland's Island is 3,500 acres of state land that offers countless recreational opportunities and excellent habitat for birds of prey, waterfowl and songbirds. A 3-mile guided hike over uneven terrain through the backcountry of Montezuma is a great way to welcome the first day of spring! *Fee: \$3/child; \$5/adult; \$15/family.

3/27, 10AM-4PM & 4/25, 10AM-4PM

Derby Hill Hawk Watch Van Trips

Travel in the Montezuma Audubon Center van to witness hundreds and perhaps thousands of Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Turkey Vultures and many more! If weather conditions do not cooperate, the program will be moved to Thursday, March 28. This program is offered in cooperation with the Onondaga Audubon Society. Fee: \$15/child; \$20/adult. Please pack a lunch.

5/4, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

7th Annual Wildlife Festival – Celebrating Important Bird Areas



KESTREL ONLINE? YES!

Help Onondaga Audubon Society save money by taking your *Kestrel* online. Those taking the *Kestrel* online receive an email with the link to the latest *Kestrel* when it becomes available.

An added bonus is that all the pictures in the electronic, online version are in full color!

Please contact our membership chair, Whitney Smith at whitstrivia@yahoo.com for more information. In the email, please include your postal mailing address, so we may be certain of whom we are taking off the postal mailing list. **THANKS!**



RUTH ENGELBRECHT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship Application for *Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week*

Hog Island, Maine

July 18-23, 2013

Sponsored by the Onondaga Audubon Society

Deadline for application: February 15, 2013

Part I:

Name of Applicant: _____ Email: _____

Home Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

School/Nature Center: _____

School Address: _____

Subject(s) taught: _____

Grade(s): _____ How many students do you teach each day? _____ Each week? _____

Part II:

Please answer the following questions below (feel free to attach a separate piece of paper if necessary). In what ways do you anticipate that attending this educator's workshop will help you as a teacher and be of benefit to the students you teach?

Part III:

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions to assist us with our educational outreach efforts.

1. Please describe your current level of birding skill: _____

2. Have you ever counted birds for citizen science projects or programs? _____ If so, please explain: _____

3. Have you ever used nature education in your classroom and, if so, how? _____

4. How did you hear about this scholarship? _____

5. Are you familiar with Onondaga Audubon and have you ever attended any programs sponsored by them?

6. Would you be willing to attend an Audubon meeting after the course to share what you've learned? _____

Please send your application to:

OAS, c/o Gene Huggins

PO Box 620

Syracuse, NY 13201

*If you are selected, you will be notified by phone before February 28, 2013.
If you are not chosen as a recipient this year, we urge you to try again next year.*

Thank you for your interest.

Onondaga Audubon Society
P.O. Box 620, Syracuse NY 13201

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THE KESTREL



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FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are free and open to the public. Novice birders (and non-birders too!) are welcome. If you are planning to join us on a field trip, you should notify the leader whose telephone number is listed with the trip details. Please call at a reasonable hour as most birders turn in early. Carpooling from the meeting place is encouraged. If your schedule allows you to join the carpool, do remember to offer to help the driver with the cost of gas.

Occasionally changes in published field trips and/or additional trips are announced on the OAS website <http://www.onondagaaudubon.com>.

BEAVER LAKE NATURE CENTER

Saturday, February 16th 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Gene Huggins 315-696-8065

Gene Huggins will lead a winter field trip for beginners to Beaver Lake Nature Center. Trip will start at the Nature Center building at 8:00 AM and should last between 4 and 5 hours. Please contact Gene for additional details

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Sunday, February 24 1/2 Day
Bernie Carr 315-469-9379

Bernie Carr will lead a field trip to the southern highlands. The trip will be looking for winter finches, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike, Horned Lark, Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur. Meeting place will be at the Nice N Easy in Tully at 8AM. Please contact Bernie for additional details.

DERBY HILL

Saturday, March 30 and April 27 10 AM – 3 PM
Gerry Smith 315-771-6902

Gerry Smith will lead two trips to Derby Hill. The trips will last from 10 AM to 3 PM. Dress warmly as DHBO can be very cold at this season or very warm by afternoon. Please contact Gerry for additional details.

Beginning in March, look for days with a good South to Southeast wind. These should be good days to come watch the hawks on Derby Hill!

Derby Hill is located just off State Route 104B near Texas, NY. Look for the green Derby Hill Bird Observatory signs! Address at the North Lookout (to plug into your GPS) is ***36 Grand View Ave., Mexico, NY 13114.***

