



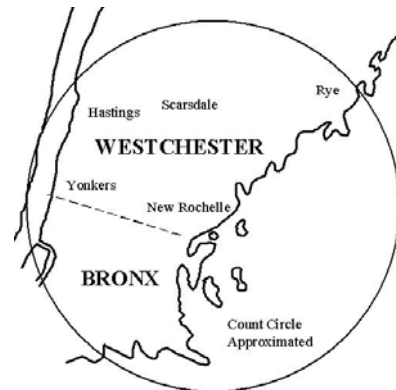
The Newsletter of the Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society
Serving the communities of Bronxville, Eastchester, Edgemont, Hartsdale, Larchmont,
Mamaroneck, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Pelham, Scarsdale and Tuckahoe

BRSS Volunteers Join 83rd Bronx-Westchester Christmas Bird Count

On the recent warm Saturday morning before Christmas, 15 volunteers from the Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society headed out to count birds. The BRSS volunteers, led by Doug Bloom, counted 69 species and a total of 6,477 birds in our area. These results were reported to count-area compiler Michael Bochnik. Within the entire 15-mile Bronx-Westchester count circle radius, more than 75 volunteers recorded 116 species.

The recent warm weather might have been expected to increase the numbers of birds in species that prefer the warmth, like catbirds, warblers or possibly even flycatchers, but with the exception of a record high 952 American robins, there were no other species that were recorded at record highs.

Our area bird count is a part of the National Audubon Society's longest-running wintertime tradition, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), the 107th of which just took place throughout the Americas from December 14, 2006 to January 5, 2007. Results from the over 2,000 individual counts enable Audubon and other conservationists to assess the population status of both resident and migratory birds across the Western Hemisphere, as well as the state of the habitat that is critical to these birds.



Wood Duck at Scarsdale High School on count day. One of only three reported in the Bronx-Westchester count circle.

Annual Americas Bird Count

At almost 2,000 locations, from Baffin Island to Tierra del Fuego and from the Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean to St. John's, Newfoundland, more than 57,000 observers participated in the most recent 107th Christmas Bird Count, an all-day census of early-winter bird populations. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas.

Simply put, the Christmas Bird Count, or "CBC", is citizen science in action. Prior to the turn of the century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of

the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations.

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them. So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied a total of 90 species on all the counts combined. Last year, the 106th count, a total of 652 species were reported.

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Community Preservation Act Offers Local Governments Opportunity to Save Open Space

The Community Preservation Act is one of those rare pieces of legislation that wins plaudits across the political spectrum. Yet it languishes in the New York State Senate. Originally submitted by Governor Pataki in 2005, the Community Preservation Act passed the Assembly in 2005 and again in 2006, but for two years has remained stalled in Senate Rules Committee. Supported by a broad-based coalition, including Audubon New York, the bill will be once again be reintroduced in 2007.

The Community Preservation Act legislation enables local government and citizens of cities, and towns to self-impose a real estate transfer fee of up to two percent of the sale price of real property to fund the establishment and preservation of parks, nature reserves, recreational areas, open spaces, agricultural areas, wetlands and arshes, watershed areas, beaches and shorelines, rivers, forest lands, waterfronts, historic places and wildlife habitat. Community preservation fund monies could also be used for the management and stewardship of such lands. The bill also includes a mandatory planning component and approval of any tax via a local referendum.

The bill is modeled after the wildly successful legislation that in 1998 authorized the five East End towns on Long Island to implement a real estate transfer tax, the proceeds of which are dedicated to the purchase of open space. On the East End, the transfer tax is widely supported and highly successful in raising the million of dollars necessary to enable the local community to set aside and preserve the open space of its choosing. In the seven years of its existence, it has enabled the five towns to protect more than 7,500 acres of open space and farmland. This past November, with support from the banking, real estate brokerage and conservation groups, East End citizens approved a referendum extending their Community Preservation Fund through 2030.

More towns throughout the state are fighting on their own to receive State permission to allow them to raise the funds via a transfer tax to save their open space. Warwick citizens being among the most recent to win State permission, just this November passed a referendum to enact a transfer tax of 3/4 of a percent, with the first \$100,00 of any sale of a home exempt and the first \$50,000 of any vacant property exempt.

The Community Preservation Act would provide authority to all local communities to acquire open space for preservation via this taxing method. It's important to recognize the Act does not impose a tax. It simply gives local communities the opportunity to decide whether they wish to impose the transfer tax on themselves. Whether to tax is entirely a local decision. Want to know more about the Community Preservation Act, and what you can do to support it contact Sean Mahar at smahar@audubon.org

Welcome New BRSS Members

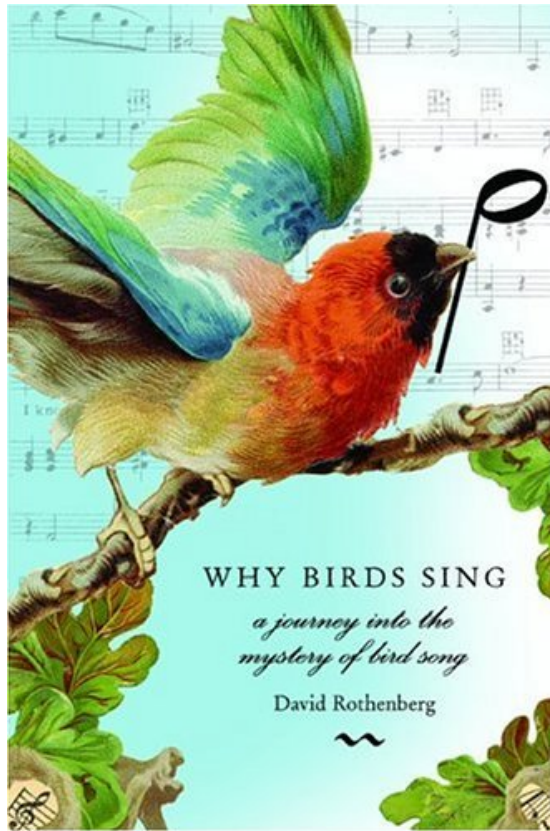
Bronxville: George Brooks, Ellen Edwards, Linda Harrison, Mary Johnston, Susan Junjulas, Brenda Laws. **Hartsdale:** Nina Bleiweiss, Nancy Brown, Francis Figliola, P. Hand, Pearl Rosengren, Jeffrey Siegel. **Larchmont:** Bill & Marianne Irwin, Ronald Lenney, Alecandra Oppenheimer, Rui Reis & Mandy Forlenza. **Mamaroneck:** Joel Banker, Ruth Church, Stephen Corrison, Orlando Hildago. **Mount Vernon:** Antonio Arizmendi, Samuel Caudle, A. Hamilton Blessitt, Anthony Caprioli, Winnifred McLean, Joe Loissen. **New Rochelle:** Trisa Laughlin, Helen Piermont, Deborah Wan. **Pelham:** Angelina Clark, Estelle Dariani, Meryl Nova. **Scarsdale:** Michael Kutzin, Caroline Lindholm, M.F. Maroof, Marie Pecoraro, Karen Pickelle, Barbara Schwartz, Robert Shea. **Tuckahoe:** Diane Murgalo.

Upcoming Evening Programs for You

This spring we have schedule two programs and are working on a third. All three promise to be very interesting and come highly recommended.

The first of these is on Thursday, February 15th at the Scarsdale Library. Dr. Joy Reidenberg, an Associate Professor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, will present a program on **Marine Mammals**. Dr. Reidenberg has had extensive experience in this field through her research on the comparative anatomy of animals, including humans. We will start to gather at 7:00 PM with the program to begin at 7:30. This program is being presented in conjunction with the Central Westchester Audubon Society.

The next program is on Wednesday, March 28, at the Bronxville Library and is being presented in conjunction with the Hudson River Audubon Society. David Rothenberg, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, will give a program on



“Why Birds Sing”. Professor Rothenberg is a noted writer, ecologist and jazz musician. He is the author of the book of the same title as the program *Why Birds Sing*. A social period will start at 7:00PM with the program to begin at 7:30.

The last program is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 3, at the Bronxville Library. Taldi Walter, Alaska Field Coordinator for the National Audubon Society will give a talk on the **Birds and Wild Places of Alaska**. The time will almost certainly be the same as the other programs.

For more program information, call Mike Bryson at 337-0333.

Fall Bird Seed Sale Nourishes the Birds and BRSS

The Bronx River Sound Shore Fall 2006 bird seed sale was one of our most rewarding ever. 39 members ordered 4,347 pounds of seed. BRSS profit on the sale of the seed totaled \$1,695.30,. Together with additional generous donations of \$847.50, a grand total of \$2,542.80 was raised for the conservation, education and advocacy work of the BRSS.

Special thanks go to those BRSS members who made cash donations of \$50 or more: Sheema Bhattacharya, Cece Fabbro, Lorraine Iwema, Lois Kroll, Diane Morrison, Neil Powell, and Sam Suharto.

Thanks also to Doug Bloom, bird seed sale coordinator and Hank Weber, proprietor of the Wild Bird Center, 400 Central Park Avenue, Scarsdale (across from Office Depot) for organizing and making our birdseed sale fund raisers possible.



Winter Seed Sale Kicks Off — Order Form Enclosed

Deadline is January 29th

Because many of you asked to receive your seed earlier in the winter, we have moved the seed sale deadline up to Monday, January 29. Now, you will be able to pick up seed from Thursday, February 8th to Sunday, February 11th. Seed sale profits benefit BRSS.

An order form is enclosed. Please return the enclosed order form together with your check to Doug Bloom, 22 Myrtle Ave., Larchmont, NY 10538 by January 29th.

If you have a question, please don't hesitate to call Doug days at 713-0630 or evenings 834-5203

Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society

(formerly Scarsdale Audubon Society)
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Autumn Field Trip Reports

Greenwich Audubon Center, November 5

Seven participants had 45 species of birds. It was a cool November day with some low clouds. At the Quaker Ridge hawk watch, we saw seven species of raptors including Bald and Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks and Turkey Vultures. On a walk through surrounding fields and woods, we also had several species of sparrows, including numerous Lincolns, flocks of Bluebirds and many Kinglets.

Jamaica Bay Refuge, November 12

16 Participants had 54 species of birds. It was a warm cloudy day, but it was nice. There were a lot of ducks and American Coots. Some of the other species seen were Bufflehead, Wigeon, Horned Grebes, Green-winged Teal, Pintails, Shovelers, Gadwall. We also had Northern Harriers and Sharp-shinned Hawks.



Bufflehead



American Wigeon

Upcoming Field January Trips

Montauk, January 14

Meet at the Scarsdale Village Hall parking lot at 6:30 to car pool for the approximately two-hour drive to Montauk. Dress very warmly as we will be viewing alcids and other wintering sea birds from the beautiful bluffs and beaches surrounding Montauk lighthouse overlooking Block Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Viewing through spotting scopes will be available to all. We expect to also see seals. If you are considering or planning to attend, please call trip leader Neil Powell 777-2206.

Pelham Bay Park Owl Walk, January 28

The Hudson River and Central Westchester Audubon Societies are co-sponsoring a Sunday morning owl walk. Meet at 8 am in the Orchard Beach parking lot. For more information, call Mike Bochnik at 237-9331.

Novices and non-birders are always most welcome and especially encouraged to attend any and all field trips. It's always a great day and good fun in the outdoors whatever your level of interest.