Roger Tory Peterson: His Place in the History of United States Ornithology

Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, 2009
SPECIAL LOCATION!
7:30 pm, Bronxville School

Roger Tory Peterson was born in Jamestown, New York on August 28, 1908 and went on to become America’s best known 20th Century naturalist. It’s hard to imagine anyone interested in nature who hasn’t carried a “Peterson Field Guide” with them at one time or another as they ventured into the outdoors in search of birds, wildflowers, insects or any other living or nonliving subject for that matter. Peterson was also an active birder in our area.

Jim Berry, President of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History in Jamestown, will talk about Peterson’s place in the history of Field Ornithology in the United States through an illustrated lecture and video. From a New York perspective, Jim will also talk about Roger’s boyhood days in Jamestown and his student years in New York City when he was a member of the Bronx County Bird Club. Please bring to share with Jim your correspondence, photographs and other personal memorabilia connected with Roger Peterson as well as anecdotes and “well-worn” field guides that would do Roger Tory Peterson proud!

continued on reverse...
“Seasons at Lenoir”: Eighth Consecutive Successful Year

LYNN SHAW

A steady stream of visitors attended the opening reception of the 8th Annual “Seasons at Lenoir” Photography/Art Exhibit on March 7th. As in the past, people enjoyed viewing an array of subject matter, portrayed through various media and with creative interpretations. The works were enhanced this year by new track lighting — thanks to the County and to Danniela, who made sure it was installed in time. After leaving the gallery, people “hung out” in the Nature Center and enjoyed refreshments while chatting and watching Walter Chadwick’s DVD of photos taken at Lenoir. We all loved the works done by the Foxfire 2nd graders, and especially the mobiles of their “designer birds.”

It was the coordinated effort of many people who, once again, contributed to the success of this event — those who helped with publicity, arranged and hung the works, organized and contributed refreshments, and supplied the listings. We are grateful to the staff at Lenoir — Danniela, Vanisha, Melissa, and Catherine — for their support and help. Most of all, we thank those of you who shared your art and photography talents for all of us to enjoy.

It seems far off, but spring and summer are great times to bring your cameras, sketch pads, brushes, etc. to Lenoir in preparation for next year’s exhibit.

Top Ten Things You Can Do

Individual choices can have a significant impact on global climate change. Reducing your family’s heat-trapping emissions, does not mean foregoing modern conveniences, it means making smart choices and using energy-efficient products.

We will list one or two energy saving suggestions in each newsletter. Your efforts to stabilize our climate is hard to put a price tag on.

2. Conserve Water

You can reduce your energy consumption by using less hot water. Run your dishwasher only when full and use the air dry option. Wash clothes in cold or warm water, never hot.

\[ \text{CO}_2 \text{ reduction} = 500 \text{ lbs/year} \]

When it is time to replace your washing machine, choose a new high-efficiency front-loader. You’ll see great savings on water, electricity, and detergent, and you’ll discover you can more safely wash delicate items, too.

Buy low-flow showerheads to save hot water.

\[ \text{CO}_2 \text{ reduction} = 350 \text{ lbs/year} \]

... to be continued...
Songbird migration has been extremely difficult to track. Too small to be seen by satellites or to carry radio collars, only brief snapshots of their journeys have been taken by opportunistic recapturing of banded individuals while they refuel on the ground.

But now researchers have developed a novel tracking device, a miniature geolocator, weighing 1.5 grams, less than a dime, which fits on the birds like a tiny backpack and straps to their legs. By measuring light levels the geolocators tell the researchers when sunrise and sunset occur. This enables them to determine where the birds are each day, but to do that they must recapture the birds to download the data.

Reporting in the February 13, 2009 issue of Science, a team led by Bridgette Stutchbury, a biologist at York University in Toronto, Canada, captured purple martins (*Progne subis*) and wood thrushes (*Hylocichla mustelina*) during the 2007 breeding season in northern Pennsylvania and recaptured them the next summer. Twenty purple martins (10 of each gender) and 14 wood thrushes (11 males, 9 females) were tagged. In 2008 five sensors were retrieved from the thrushes, two from the martins.

“We knew that the purple martins flew to Brazil and wood thrush went to Central America, but the details of how an individual gets there, and what routes they take, how fast they fly, how often they stop to rest — these are the kinds of details we have never been able to have,” said Stutchbury.

By reconstructing the migration routes (see figure), the team found that the birds flew faster and took more prolonged stopovers than anyone previously knew. The Yucatan Peninsula turned out to be an important stopover. The two purple martins flew south 1,550 mi, crossing the Gulf of Mexico (over 500 mi) to the Yucatan Peninsula in just 5 days, and spent 3 to 4 weeks there before continuing on to Brazil. Four of the five wood thrushes spent 1 to 2 weeks in the southeastern U.S. before crossing the Gulf. Two of these birds then spent another 2 to 4 weeks in the Yucatan before heading to Central America.

In general, the trip north was 2 to 6 times more rapid than the southern flight. One female martin flew 4,660 mi in 13 days, averaging an astonishing 360 mi/day. Nine days were spent flying, 4 days on stopovers, so her true speed was even greater. Most wood thrushes returned to the breeding territory in only 13 to 15 days, and averaged 140 to 165 mi/day. But one female thrush avoided the Gulf, taking 29 days to complete the 2,850 mi overland trip. While the longer route was less risky, this female paid for it by breeding 3 weeks later than those who flew over the Gulf.

Studies like this that can accurately map migration routes and wintering locations will greatly aid scientists in predicting the impact of climate change and habitat loss that is threatening many migratory species.

“This is the first time anyone has been able to track these tiny birds. For the first time now we can find out what threats they face”, said Stutchbury.

The researchers pointed out that a ten percent return (2 out of 20) for the purple martins is much lower than the ~50% return for non-tagged birds, and they plan to fit another 50 birds with an even lighter sensor for a second round of tagging. “We’re trying to learn whether they molt and are therefore taking their time going south,” said Stutchbury.

By contrast, I drive to Florida each winter as fast as I can, and come back rather slowly.
Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion

Audubon recently released a new study using Christmas Bird Count Data. These analyses would not have been possible without the hard work of CBC participants and the many chapters that organize and lead counts. We thank all that have participated over the years for their effort. The study explored if birds had shown significant shifts in their winter distribution over the last 40 years. As we all know, birds are good indicators of the environment. We think birds provide important information to people on changes in the environment and human quality of life. Audubon has a goal of working bird indicators into regular reviews of how the environment in the US is doing and hopefully helping drive policy and funding that benefits the environment and birds. These analyses of the CBC dataset on winter distribution are part of that effort.

The report, Birds and Climate Change, is available on Audubon’s web site at http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/cbcanalysis.html and provides more details on the analyses and results. To download the report from this web site, click on the “Download Report” link on the left side of the page or on the image of the report cover.

We will continue to undertake scientific analyses of these data to learn more about the status of birds and conservation needs. Please consider donating through the web site to help us continue using the CBC data to move a conservation agenda.

Sanibel Island, Ding Darling & Corkscrew Swamp Refuges Trip

MICHAEL BOCHNIK

Kelli and I needed to get away from this long winter and Kelli needed to use up some vacation days held over from last year. We decided on southwest Florida since she has never been to Ding Darling and Corkscrew Swamp refuges, well known birding locations. I had only been there once, about fifteen years ago.

We kept our cost low which meant we had to get up at 3:30 am on Tuesday, March 10 for our 6:10 AM flight out of JFK on JetBlue. Our flight was on time and we headed to Cape Coral, home of many Burrowing Owls. I had contacted the Caloosa Bird Club and was given some great birding information and some locations on where to look for them. They live in developed suburbia, in empty lots between homes. Our first stop was a success! As we drove up two Burrowing Owls were out of their burrow. They were nearly oblivious to our presence. One even flew up and posed on a nearby perching post. This was a lifer (a species of bird seen for the first time) for Kelli.

In all we saw 95 species of birds and many other wonderful nature sightings. We already can’t wait to get back.

For a full trip report with many pictures, please go to http://www.hras.org/tripreports/sanibel09/sanibel09.html
Hudson River Audubon’s Bird-a-thon will be held Sunday, May 17 (rain date: May 16) to raise money for the chapter. You can help by making your pledge today.

A Bird-a-thon is like a Walk-a-thon, Bike-a-thon or any other “thon” in that we ask people to pledge X amount of money per lap, mile, or as in our case, bird species seen on a given day.

The combined list for the teams should be between 100 to 150 species. Pledges can be given for a flat rate such as $25.00 or you can pledge per species such as 25¢ a bird. If we see 120 species, your pledge will come to $30.00. We will send out reminders after the Bird-a-thon on how much you pledged.

You can also help by becoming a Bird-a-thon’er yourself. Ask your friends and family to pledge then try to see as many species on the Bird-a-thon. Call Michael Bochnik at 914-237-9331 or email him at bochnikm@cs.com for more details.

Thank you for your generous support!

A vulture once collided with a jetliner at 37,000 feet over West Africa.

Vultures have the world’s slowest wing beat — 1 beat per second.

Hummingbirds, on the other hand, beat their wings up to 90 times per second.
Beczak Environmental Education Center Upcoming Events

Beczak Center is located on the waterfront, one block north of the Yonkers train station. Parking available. Their address is 35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701. Phone: (914) 377-1900

River Explorers: Hunt for the Hatchlings
Hands-on Nature Programs for Curious Kids
Saturday, April 11, 2009  Ages 5–12
11:00 am – 12:30 pm & 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm
$5/person (non-participating adult chaperones are free)

Spring is around the corner, now is the time many baby animals are born. Learn about animals that lay eggs and see the differences between various species. Come on a scavenger hunt in the park to search for your Hudson River egg, and then decorate it! Register for the morning or afternoon session with Dorene Sukup at DSukup@Beczak.org / (914) 377-1900 ext. 13.

Earth Day at Beczak
Sunday, April 19, 2009  10:00 am – 2:00 pm  Free

Join the Beczak staff in celebrating Earth Day at our tidal marsh, beach and lawn! Volunteer your time to help keep the Hudson River clean and safe for everyone to enjoy its true beauty. Refreshments will be provided.

Catch of the Day Seining
Saturday & Sunday, April 25–26, 2009  3 pm – 5 pm
(check www.beczak.org for additional weekends in May)
$5/person (non-participating adult chaperones are free)

Put on chest waders. Walk into the river. Find out who and what lives in the Hudson by dragging a 30-foot seine net through the water. The times vary because of the Hudson River’s tides. Find the morning or afternoon program that works for you. Led by trained educators, rain or shine.

Saturdays by the Fire: The Great Saw Mill River Cover-up
A Hudson Quadricentennial Lecture
Saturday, April 25, 2009  7 pm – 9 pm
$5 admission

Joan Jennings, President of the Friends of Philipse Manor Hall, reveals how the river that powered Adriaen van der Donck’s saw mill became the hub of Yonkers. Includes live music and refreshments.

Saturdays by the Fire:
Dutch Influence on the American Kitchen
A Hudson Quadricentennial Lecture
Saturday, May 30, 2009  7 pm – 9 pm
$5 admission

Food historian Peter G. Rose explores the foods brought to America by the Dutch more than three centuries ago, and the way these were adapted to new circumstances. Slides of 17th century Dutch art works depicting various foodstuffs are part of this lecture. Includes live music and refreshments.

Check www.beczak.org for program descriptions and last minute schedule changes or additions.
**Green Week: Tibbetts Brook Park Bird Walk**  
**Saturday, April 25, 2009**  
**MEET IN FRONT OF THE POOL**  
**AT THE FLAG POLE AT 9:00 AM**

Tibbetts Brook Park is located off Midland Ave in Yonkers between Yonkers and McLean Avenues.  
(See [http://www.hras.org/wtobird/tibbetts.html](http://www.hras.org/wtobird/tibbetts.html) for map and directions).

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**Delmarva Weekend Trip**  
**Friday, May 1 to Sunday, May 3, 2009**  
**DRIVE DOWN ON THURSDAY EVENING,**  
**OPTIONAL ONE-DAY-EXTENSION ON MONDAY, MAY 4**

We’ll spend Thursday night in northern Delaware and visit Bombay and Little Creek NWR’s on Friday then head south for two nights in Chincoteague, Virginia. Black-necked Stilt, Prothonotary Warbler and the famed Chincoteague Ponies are just some of the wildlife we’ll find! On Monday, we will visit Blackwater NWR in Maryland. See our web site for details ([www.hras.org](http://www.hras.org)) or call Michael Bochnik at 914-237-9331.

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**Tibbetts Brook Park, Yonkers**  
**Friday, May 8, 2009**  
**MEET IN FRONT OF THE POOL**  
**AT THE FLAG POLE AT 6:00 PM**

Relaxing evening bird walk at Tibbetts Brook Park. Enjoy nature after a long week at work. Spring migration is underway and we’ll search for colorful spring warblers, orioles, spotted sandpipers and more.

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**Mother’s Day Warbler Walk**  
**Sunday, May 10, 2009**  
**MEET AT LENOIR NATURE PRESERVE AT 8:00 AM**

Our traditional walk around Lenoir Nature Preserve is one of our most popular events of the year. The walk should yield colorful migrants such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting and spring warblers.  
Afterwards joins us for some coffee, bagels and other delights. Binoculars are available for loan so bring Mom and other family members.

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**NOTICE**

The Sunday, April 26 trip to Celery Farms, NJ has been cancelled.  
We will try to reschedule this trip for next year.

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Although the swift can reach speeds of up to 170 mph, most experts agree that the world’s fastest bird is the Peregrine Falcon. It can fly at speeds in excess of 200 mph. The world’s slowest flying bird is the American Woodcock.  
At top speed it can move at 5 mph.
Join The Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, other wildlife and natural habitats. Membership includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine and affiliation with National Audubon. As a member, you will also receive our chapter newsletter, *The Rivertown Naturalist*, and an open invitation to all our guest lectures, field trips and events.

**SIGN ME UP AS A NEW MEMBER.**
**ONE YEAR FOR $20.**

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Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

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