

THE RIVERTOWN NATURALIST

Newsletter of the Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester



April 2011, vol. 38, no. 6

Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, Inc. is a non-profit chapter of the National Audubon Society serving the communities of Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington and Yonkers.

Our mission is to foster protection and appreciation of birds, other wildlife and habitats, and to be an advocate for a cleaner, healthier environment.

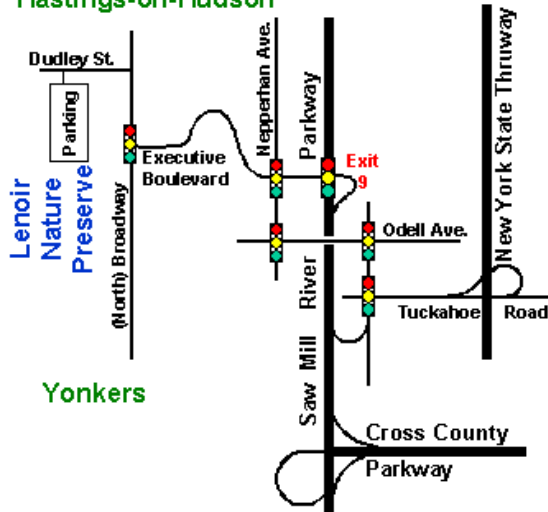
www.hras.org

DIRECTIONS TO LENOIR PRESERVE

Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, Inc. holds its meetings at Lenoir, a Westchester County Nature Preserve, on Dudley Street in Yonkers, New York (914) 968-5851.

By car: Take Saw Mill River Parkway to Exit 9, Executive Blvd. Take Executive Blvd. to its end at North Broadway and turn right. Go ¼ mile on North Broadway and turn left onto Dudley Street. Parking lot is on the left.

Hastings-on-Hudson



Welcoming Spring Walk

Saturday, April 16 at 10:00 am
Lenoir Nature Center
19 Dudley Street, Yonkers
All ages welcome

Join our educator Walter as we take a family friendly walk around Lenoir Nature Preserve to see what birds have returned from their winter homes, which wildflowers are in bloom and are the salamanders awake. We will look for nature's wonders at the preserve.



Wednesday, April 27, 2011
7:00 pm Lenoir Nature Preserve

Ask a Bird Question

By Michael Bochnik

Refreshments 7:00 – 7:30
Meeting and Program 7:30 PM

What bird sings at
1 in the morning
and why?

Do you have those questions about the birds around us but never had the opportunity to ask. Then come to Hudson River Audubon's April meeting. Our own Michael Bochnik, past president and current field trip leader, will be on hand to

answer them. He will also give an overview of the changes in bird population and distribution in Westchester over the last 100 years.

Michael has over 30 year's of birding experience and is a long time member and board member of the chapter.

Do deer
eat birds?

He's involved with many birding projects such as the compiler of the Bronx/Westchester Christmas Bird Count; and Regional Editor for the "The Kingbird;" a journal of the New York State Ornithological Association. (It highlights the migration data, breeding and distributional changes for avian species for each season).

What bird is black
with a red patch?

He has coordinated Region 9's "Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State" and helped on the first list of "The Birds of Yonkers" and maintains both the Yonkers bird list as well as a list for Westchester County. He also compiled the first "Butterflies of Yonkers" checklist and helped Westchester County develop their first Endangered Species List. Many are available of HRAS's web site at www.hras.org

In 2007 the Audubon Council of New York State, honored Michael with the Norman Stotz Award, recognizing his outstanding commitment to the both the Chapter's and the Audubon's missions.

ScienceWatch – Sleep Tight and ...

“We’re dealing with a different bug than what we were [dealing with] decades ago.” – Susan Jones, entomologist



When I was a kid the nighttime rhyme, “Sleep tight, and don’t let the bed bugs bite”, had no real meaning. I had never seen a bed bug nor knew anyone who had. Nowadays it conjures up frightening and painful first-hand experiences for many who wake up one morning with numerous painful welts.

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are 0.5 cm (0.2 in) long, wingless, night-feeding, insect parasites that live exclusively on blood. While they may feed on bats, rabbits and chickens, they much prefer the company, and blood, of humans. We have been living with them for a longtime. Well-preserved bed bug specimens have been recovered from an Egyptian village where workmen lived around 1350 BC. But scientists have speculated that the association first began much earlier when humans lived in caves and the bugs turned to them instead of bats.

Bed bugs are not native to North America, but were carried here by early European colonists. As evidenced by the well-known nursery rhyme, they were an accepted, albeit detested, part of life. The widespread use of DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) following World War II, virtually eliminated the bug from many countries, but by 1972 DDT use was banned in the US and globally in 2004. However, even earlier, bed bugs began a worldwide resurgence, and cases of infestations are increasingly in the news. The reasons most often cited for their upsurge are increased human (and luggage) travel, exchange of used furniture and a shift from broad-spectrum, longer-lasting pesticides to more selective agents that are rapidly degraded*.

Pesticide resistance has also been implicated in the bug’s resurgence. For example, in 2008 researchers found that bed bugs collected in New York City are over 200-times more resistant to deltamethrin, than those from Florida. Deltamethrin is a widely used synthetic pyrethroid, commonly found in household insect sprays, that poisons the nervous system by blocking the nerve cell pores that conduct the nervous impulse. The bug’s resistance was found to stem from a nerve cell mutation that makes the pores impervious to the insecticide.



Now a study, published in the January 19, 2011 issue of the online journal *PLoS ONE* (www.plosone.org), by a team from The Ohio State University, Wooster, OH, shows that modern, urban bed bugs are difficult to kill because they have undergone profound genetic changes, which make them resistant to commonly used pesticides. The researchers used a rapid, state-of-the-art DNA sequencing method to catalogue the bug’s genome. They also looked at the expression of genes known to be involved in insecticide resistance. They compared gene activity from bed bugs taken from a recent infestation in a Columbus, Ohio apartment complex with those from a colony of pesticide-susceptible bed bugs kept in a laboratory free of pesticide exposure for 40 years.



The team focused on two genes known to produce enzymes that degrade chemical toxins. By measuring their activity they found that a gene producing a detoxifying enzyme, cytochrome P450, was over 50-times more active in the urban bed bugs than in the laboratory bugs. This class of enzymes is ubiquitous to life and is commonly found at high levels in insects resistant to pesticides. Another gene, which produces the toxin-degrading enzyme glutathione S-transferase, was found to be more active in the early developmental stages of the urban bed bugs. The urban bed bugs had undergone mutations in genes that make them harder to get rid of. “This is the first study to elucidate the genetic make up of the insect and to obtain fundamental molecular knowledge regarding potential defense pathways and genes that may be involved in metabolic resistance to commonly used pesticides”, said Omprakash Mittapalli, Assistant Professor of entomology at The Ohio State University and one of the study’s authors.

The hope is that by understanding bed bug resistance at the genetic level, scientists can develop new control methods that are more effective. But right now the only good news in this story is that, to date, bed bugs are not known to transmit any human diseases.

Meanwhile, “Don’t let the bed bugs bite”.

Saul Scheinbach

*For ways to combat bed bugs see: www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7454.html.

FeederWatch

Please join us for the last two FeederWatch sessions of the season at Lenoir. We will be sitting inside, looking out and counting the birds at our feeders. These sessions are also fun social events, usually with refreshments! For the actual times, please contact Carol Lange at 668-5101 or CarolLange@aol.com.

We hope to see you there.

Thurs., Apr. 7 -- Carol Lange

Fri., Apr. 8 -- Yvonne Lynn

Gardening through the seasons with a Master Gardener

Volunteers needed for our Butterfly Garden

Come and learn about the needs of a garden throughout the seasons by helping in the maintenance and care of the Beverly Smith Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden at Lenoir Nature Preserve. Planting, transplanting, types of plants, history of medicinal and edible plants of the garden, soil, addressing microclimates are some of the topics that will be addressed during the maintenance.

Join us in the garden between 11 Am and 3 PM on the following dates:
 Sundays May 1, May 22, June 26, August 7, September 25 and October 23, 2011
 Contact Mary Harrington at tctallon@aol.com for more information

National Audubon's 2011 Bird-a-thon

Now is the time to form a team to help raise funds for our chapter. A team can be just yourself or a small group that will seek out pledges from friends, neighbors, strangers and family to support the Hudson River Audubon Society. Then, on Saturday May 14, instead of walking or biking a set of miles, the team tries to see as many bird species for the day. You can collect pledges for a standard amount or they can pledge a certain amount of money for each bird seen.

You don't have to be a great birder or see a long list of birds to form a team. You can collect pledges based on just the birds in your backyard, or maybe your local park. Then let your pledges know what you found! It is a great way to raise funds and teach people what birds are around them.

Of course, we will have the returning teams who will try to see over 100 species for the day. The Raven Loon-a-tics and Team Eagle will challenge each other to see who will see more, and collect more donations. These teams will start in the early morning, well before sunrise and bird all day, traveling through a number of counties from Sullivan, through Westchester and out to Queens and Nassau.

Our pledge form will also be in our April and May newsletters. Make copies for your friends and neighbors. Don't forget to make your own pledge too!

For more information call our Bird-a-thon coordinator Michael Bochnik at (914) 237-9331 or contact him at bochnikm@cs.com. The pledge form can also be found on our web site at www.hras.org/trips/birdathon.html

National Audubon Birdathon Pledge Card

- I am happy to pledge \$ _____ per species in support of your bird-a-thon.
- I prefer to pledge the enclosed gift of \$ _____ .
- I will give you an additional \$ _____ if the _____ team spots a _____ (bird species).

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Send to: Hudson River Audubon Society, P.O. BOX 616, Yonkers, New York 10703
 Make Donations Payable to HUDSON RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY.

Remember, if you're not participating, please pledge to the Bird-a-thon to make our efforts worth it.

Field Trips

Spring is here and we are approaching the peak of migration. This is a perfect time to join one of our field trips. Beautiful and colorful wood warblers will delight first time bird watchers. Outdoor activities such as birding and hiking with a group are a wonderful way to share your interests with like-minded people to learn more about nature, and to enjoy many preserves and natural areas. Hudson River Audubon Society field trips are free. Non-members/ newcomers are welcome

Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Some are available for loan for those who need them. Dress appropriately for the weather. For more information call Michael Bochnik at (914) 237-9331 or contact him at bochnikm@cs.com. Additional information with maps and directions to each location is available on our web site at www.hras.org.

Saturday May 7, 2011

Celery Farm, Allendale, New Jersey

Meet at Celery Farm at 8 AM. Allow at least 45 minutes drive time

1. From Tappan Zee Bridge - Take I-87 north 19.7 miles to Exit 15 (I-287 South/ NY-17 South).
2. Stay left and take Route 17 South 7.3 miles into New Jersey and take the exit toward Allendale.
3. Stay straight to go onto E Allendale Road / Road 90.
4. Take E Allendale Road /CR-90 for 0.6 miles and turn right onto Cottage Place; in 0.1 of a mile, at the T-intersection, turn right onto Franklin Turnpike; and in 0.1 of a mile turn right into the parking area. If parking lot is full park on street well off the road.



Sunday May 8, 2011

Mothers Day Warbler Walk

8 AM Lenoir Nature Preserve

19 Dudley Street, Yonkers – off North Broadway just north of Executive Blvd.

A Hudson River Audubon tradition! We will walk around the park; and will include a visit to the butterfly garden. Refreshment served afterwards at the nature center.

Sunday May 15, 2011

Doodletown Road, Rockland County

Meet at the trailhead at 8AM, Bring lunch, drinks.

Coming in May and June

Birds and Other Animals of East Africa

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

7:00 pm Lenoir Nature Preserve

Kenya and Tanzania are the premier places to see African wildlife. Recently returned from a 3-week tour, our own Dr. Saul Scheinbach will describe what he saw and provide some insight into the ecology of the 5,000-square-mile-plain.

Member's Night

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

7:00 pm Lenoir Nature Preserve

Get your best digital pictures ready! Members will show 10 - 20 of their best nature photos.

10th Annual "SEASONS AT LENOIR" a Grand Success

Over 70 people attended the Opening Reception of this year's art/photography exhibit. Many volunteers contributed their time, efforts, and talents to assure a day of viewing 62 works, enjoying delicious refreshments organized by Fran Greenberg, and relaxing while watching DVDs prepared by Walter Chadwick and Lyn Christie. This year's artists were:

Gunthur Kilsch	Ardeth Schyler	Paul Oehrlein	Judi Veder	Frank Gerasia
Katherine Kilsch	Mabel Cohen	Kelli Bochnik	Jamie Corb	Berenice Cohen
Barbara Schulz	Tomiko Goldman	Michael Bochnik	Charles Murray	Toni Govan
Aija Sears	Harriet Hammerstein	Danneila Ciatto	Pat Dundas	Fran Greenberg
Lillian Masters	Walter Chadwick	Saul Scheinbach	Dana Fazzino	

Works by the children in our education programs (Foxfire's 2nd graders) were a welcome addition.

HRAS Thanks You All!

Be sure to bring your cameras, paint brushes, pencils, etc. on your visits to Lenoir so that you can join us next year.

The amazing adventure of Judi Veder & Saul Scheinbach

“From the snows of the Bronx to the snows of Kilimanjaro...”- Jan 22-Feb. 14

Ever since I was a little girl growing up in the Marble Hill projects and ever since he was a little boy growing up on Crotona Park East, Judi and Saul dreamed of going to Africa. She wanted to see the people; he wanted to see the animals. The closest either of them had come were visits to the Bronx Zoo and to the Museum of Natural History.

But opportunity presented itself- a trip with a group to Kenya and Tanzania. It meant time away from family in a far off place; it meant vaccinations and pills; it meant visas and insurance; but it also meant a dream could come true and we were ready!

We packed and repacked, being restricted to about 30 pounds because of little planes we had to take. It meant carefully putting together a carry-on with an extra outfit, necessities, and our drugs. We did lots of research but we were amazingly surprised, overjoyed and prepared once we got there.

We flew from NY to London and then to Nairobi and the reverse way, home. Yes, it was a hard trip but with what we saw, felt, and did, we'd do it again! From Nairobi we flew to Masai Mara where we actually began the safari, in those open-top vans, everyone looking the same wearing beige or light green travel garb, dust covered. We all had binoculars, cameras, water bottles, repellent, sunscreen, and the desire to see all there was to see and more.

After 5 days in the Mara, we flew back to Kenya and then onto Tanzania. We visited Lake Nakuru National Park, Amboselli, Lake Manyara, Ngorongoro Crater, the Great Rift Valley, Oldupai Gorge, the Serengeti, and then came back to Nairobi.

And we saw it, all, and more- “the big five”, close up and personal, some sleeping, some prowling, some walking nonchalantly around. Lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, jackals, baboons, vervet monkeys, colobus monkeys, hippos, rhinos, giraffes, zebras, gnus, elephants, wart hogs, crocodiles, hyrax, and more hoofed and antlered species than we can name, from the huge eland to the tiny dik dik. Most were a touch away. The different antlers, the color patterns, the shapes were incredible. After a time, we all learned to recognize them. The scenery certainly looked better than those dioramas at the museum or the zoo environments.

We saw about 200 birds species, “lifers” for us. We are avid birders and members of the Hudson River Audubon and cannot wait to share these finds. There was the pink of flamingos, spoon bills, pelicans, huge hawks, and the incredible colors of starlings, little bee-eaters, sunbirds, weavers, love-birds and parrots and many more, including ostrich, secretary birds, vultures, bustards, go-away birds, rollers and whydahs.

We saw many trees and will remember for some time, the whistling acacia, which hid, until we passed, the famous tse tse flies (my acquaintance with them, crossword puzzles). They are insidious, even biting through our clothing, in spite of waging war on them, leaving us with red, itchy welts. We also got to admire the baobab, the candelabra trees, palms and flowers - and a dead dung beetle.

We not only saw the land and the animals, but the people were amazing. The city folks and our guides and drivers all had a wealth of knowledge they were eager to share, and pride in their land and their accomplishments. The native peoples we met, mostly Masai and Iraqw showed off their customs, their determination to survive in a changing world, and their way of life. I loved the children I met in the schools we visited with this tour, in their small villages and on the roads. They were as curious about me as I was about them. We sang, danced, and explored each other during our too short time together. So much we have here could help change their lives- school supplies, pumps for their wells, simple medicines. Everyone spoke some English, learned in school, and so we could talk, watch them make their crafts or show us how they live. We went on a hunt with three bushmen one morning but I declined tasting the speckled mousebird they shot down with bows and arrows and then roasted.

We visited Oldupai Gorge, the site of the first discovery of a hominid, and I stood there, in the beginning of time it seemed, in the same place as Louis and Mary Leaky when this find was made. We also saw the Turkana Boy bones and skulls, not the casts I was so used to looking at when I studied anthropology or visited the museum.

Our accommodations were cabins, tent camps and hotels, more than luxurious and comfortable. They were literally in the wild and at night, you had to have a Masai tribesman accompany you to evening meals or walks. The food was great; the service, excellent, the settings, romantic and gorgeous.

It is 2 weeks now that we are home, in the Bronx. I have unpacked, have a winter cold, am still sorting through my photos and souvenirs. And I am still pinching myself, asking “was really there?” I see this as only the beginning of a dream come true. There is still much more of Africa and a big world left to see.

Judith Veder

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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**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ Zip: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Please make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

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