Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, Inc is a non-profit chapter of National Audubon. Our mission is to foster protection and appreciation of birds, other wildlife and habitats, and to be an advocate for a cleaner, and healthier environment. www.hras.org

DIRECTIONS TO LENOIR NATURE PRESERVE

Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, Inc. holds its meetings at Lenoir Preserve a Westchester County Nature Preserve at 19 Dudley Street in Yonkers.

Capturing the Spirit of Birds

Wednesday, Sept 25th
Refreshments 7:00pm; Program 7:30pm

Marie Read, noted wildlife photographer and author for over 30 years, is renowned for her bird images that combine beauty and storytelling. In her recently released instructional book, Mastering the Art of Bird Photography, she explains and simplifies the process allowing unskilled photographers to capture top-notch bird photos. Learn the secrets from a master or simply sit back and enjoy her exceptional photographs. But don’t miss this program.

Live Hawk Day

Saturday, Oct 5th
Program 1:00pm

Learn all about Hawks and then watch in awe as live hawks soar high into the sky and swoop down again - a sight to remember as they zoom just over your head. Good for all ages.

Sexual Selection in Birds

How the Peacock Got its Tail

Wednesday, Oct 23rd
Refreshments 7:00pm; Program 7:30pm

Dr. Saul Scheinbach will discuss how birds select mates. Who decides, male or female? What is preferred, strength or beauty or something else? He will cover competing theories that began with Darwin and are still debated today. Saul, an active long-time member of the chapter, has served as President and is currently Vice President.
“Paying attention to cues from the outside is important to survival.” – J. C. Noguera

It’s a tough world out there, especially for the young. The mortality rate in the first year of life is about 60%. Eggs and nestlings are especially vulnerable so zebra finch (Taeniopygia guttata) and superb fairy wren (Malurus cyaneus) parents warn their unhatched embryos about the environment to better prepare them to survive and reproduce (see http://hras.org/sw/swnovdec2016.htm).

Alberto Velando, evolutionary ecologist at the University of Vigo, Spain, and others have studied survival strategies in a colony of yellow-legged gulls (Larus michahellis) nesting on a Spanish island. The colony has a history of intermittent predation by invasive minks (Neovison vison). In response to a predator the parents fly off the nest and emit alarm calls to lure it away. In 2018 the researchers found that mothers exposed to predators before egg-laying could enhance the survival behavior of their offspring. Chicks from exposed mothers crouched faster when they heard alarm calls.

Now Velando and Jose C. Noguera show that the developing embryos can influence survival strategies even among themselves. In the July 22, 2019 issue of Nature Ecology & Evolution, they demonstrate that embryos exposed to alarm calls warn their sibling embryos by vibrating their eggs.

Nesting gulls lay three eggs over a period of a week and earlier findings indicated the middle embryo would be more responsive than its siblings. So the researchers collected the second egg from 90 nests. They created 30 clutches of three eggs each, which they kept in temperature controlled incubators. For half the clutches (exposed) the same two eggs were moved to another incubator and exposed to alarm calls for three minutes, four times a day, for the seven days before hatching. The third egg in the clutch was kept in silence. They manipulated the other clutches (unexposed) the same way, but the two eggs were simply moved back and forth to a soundproof incubator with no alarm call exposure. Excluding the brief exposure times, all the eggs in each clutch were in constant contact.

Thus the researchers created two sets of gull clutches. Exposed clutches had two embryos that were “warned” of possible predators, while the third was naïve. Conversely, all three embryos were naïve in unexposed clutches.

In the exposed clutches the “warned” embryos exhibited a host of physical and physiological changes, all of which were mirrored in the naïve third embryo. Eggs exposed to alarm calls showed higher vibration rates caused by increased embryo movements, which was soon mimicked by the naïve embryo, and just prior to hatching all three did less vocalizing. Embryos in the unexposed clutches did not show these behavioral changes.

“Warned” and naïve chicks from the exposed clutches were all quicker to crouch in response to an alarm call as compared to those from unexposed clutches. They also exhibited higher levels of the stress hormone corticosterone and by five days post hatching had fewer mitochondria for energy production and were smaller. Their DNA showed epigenetic changes as well.

According to Noguera and Velando, although embryos may share information while still in the egg by vocalizing, that only begins three days before hatching. In contrast, eggs begin vibrating 10 days pre-hatching. This warns younger clutch mates whose sense of hearing is not yet developed and reduces the risk of predation for the entire brood. “Even before hatching embryos can use different sources of information—for example, those coming from their parents but also from their siblings—to prepare themselves for the future,” said Noguera.

Although chicks that develop a defense strategy suffer a growth penalty due to higher levels of stress hormone, they can better survive an extremely hazardous period and so are more likely to reproduce.

In nature, making babies is all that matters.

Saul Scheinbach
Michael Bochnik: Stepping Down but Not Away

September brings change – back to school, birds heading to their winter homes and even changes to the Hudson River Audubon Society. Michael Bochnik has stepped down from being president. It’s a good moment to reflect on the enormous amount of work that Michael has done over the nearly 4 decades that he’s been a member of HRAS.

Michael says he’s filled every position on the board. Specifically: president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, chairman of too many committees to list. You’ve heard him introduce our speakers at programs. He’s our technology chief. He is our webmaster, keeper of our email list and manages two Facebook pages – HRAS’s and the Butterfly Garden’s.

If you’ve participated in our walks and field trips, you’ve been lucky to be with one of Westchester county’s finest birders. Michael was the leader of the first expert led bird walk that I went on. I didn’t know what a stroke of luck that was. Michael is a superb birder and an excellent teacher. He takes to heart the first rule of birdwatching: be kind to neophytes. There are no foolish questions on a walk with Michael. No one is made to feel ignorant. Since starting out with Michael, I’ve been on walks with a number of leaders. From those experiences, I can say birding with Michael is a privilege.

Michael joined HRAS in 1983 when it was the Yonkers Audubon Society. He started birding when he was 18, in Tibbetts Brook Park in Yonkers. His spark bird – the bird that lights the fire in the heart of a birder – was a white-breasted nuthatch. We all owe that little bird a debt of gratitude for the enthusiasm, the fun and the work it inspired.

Michael is a life-long Westchester resident, born in Yonkers, living there now. He has a master’s degree from Fordham in chemistry and is now a senior scientist at Benjamin Moore. His wife, Kelli, is also a superb birder. Michael has been the NY State regional editor of Kingbird, he’s run the Bronx-Westchester Christmas bird count for 26 years (2019 will be his 27th), he’s been a past president of the Center for the Urban River at Beczak (on the Yonkers waterfront), board member of the Friends of Marshlands and the Federated Conservationists of Westchester. He does a 140-mile round-trip commute every weekday. And he manages Benjamin Moore’s thirty plus bluebird boxes.

Michael has assured us that although he is stepping down from the presidency he’s not going away. He will still be leading HRAS field trips. He’s remaining on the HRAS board as Treasurer, which he likes to point out, is actually more work than being president. He should know. He’s been both.

I’ll be HRAS’s new president. I’m so glad Michael will be in charge of our checkbook, and that I have both his cell and home phone number and can turn to him for advice.

- Fran Greenberg
Hudson River Audubon Upcoming 2019-2020

Field Trips

Call Michael Bochnik at 914-237-9331 for more information
Visit our web site at www.hras.org

All field trips are free and open to the public. Bring binoculars, some are available for loan. Bring lunch and refreshments for all day trips. Dress appropriately for the weather. More details about the trips can be found on our web site and in our newsletter.

Saturday, August 24, 2019
Lenoir Nature Preserve
10 AM Beverly Smith Memorial Butterfly Walk
Meet at the Nature Center. We will walk up to the garden that Beverly started. We will look for butterflies as well as eggs, caterpillars and chrysalis. Learn about the Monarch Butterfly’s remarkable migration to and from Mexico.
http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html

Saturday, September 14, 2019
Lenoir Nature Preserve
8 AM Walter Chadwick Memorial Nature Walk
Meet at the Nature Center. We will look for birds, butterflies, dragonflies and nature. We’ll end up at our hawk watch site at 10 in front of the mansion
10 AM Broad-winged Hawk Migration
We will search the skies for Broad-wing Hawks that will be making their 4,300 mile migration to South America
http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html
1 to 3 PM Pre-Season Feeder Watch
Brush up our bird identification and counting skills

Saturday, September 21, 2019
Lenoir Nature Preserve
10 AM Hawk Watch
Search the skies for hawks making their journey South
http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html

Saturday, September 28, 2019
Lenoir Nature Preserve
10 AM Hawk Watch
Search the skies for hawks making their journey South
http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html

Saturday, October 5th
Annual Hawk Day
Lenoir Nature Preserve
19 Dudley St. Yonkers
10:00 AM to 12:30 PM - Hawk Watch. Look for hawks heading south
1:00 PM - Live Hawks Program
Meet hawks from Pace.
http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html

Saturday, October 12, 2019
Lenoir Nature Preserve
The BIG SIT and Hawk Watch
10 AM behind the Lenoir Mansion
The objective of the “BIG SIT” is to tally as many bird species as we can in a day from a single position. We'll be out on the Lenoir lawn (at our hawk watch sight) overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. Bring a chair, drink and snacks and join us anytime on that day and help us find the birds! Spend an hour all day.

Stateline Lookout is directly across the Hudson River from Lenoir on top of the Palisades. The hawk watch is only a few steps away from the parking lot. Hawks migrate sometimes at eye level, giving a different point of view from most other hawk watches. Bathrooms and concession stand nearby.

Sunday, September 22, 2019
State Line Lookout, NJ
Meet at 8:30 AM for a bird walk and/or at 10 AM for a Hawk Watch
Saturday, October 19, 2019
Lenoir Nature Preserve
Hawk Watch
19 Dudley St. Yonkers
Meet at 10 AM behind the Lenoir Mansion
http://www.hras.org/wtobird/lenoir.html

Saturday, November 2&3, 2019
Cape May Weekend – Late Fall Migrants
Drive down Friday evening for early start on Saturday morning. Details to follow

Saturday, December 7, 2019
Westchester Winter Waterfowl Potpourri
Meet at 8 AM
Begin at Five-Island Park in New Rochelle. Then work our way north to other productive Westchester waterfowl locations. Pizza for lunch.

Saturday, December 22, 2019
Bronx-Westchester Christmas Bird Count
A census of birds in the area. Help gather information on local bird populations in the 90th year of the count.

Sunday, May 10, 2020
28th Annual Mother’s Day Warbler Walk
Lenoir Preserve
10AM Short stroll looking for spring migrant followed by refreshments

Saturday, May 16, 2020
Annual Bird-A-Thon

Saturday/Sunday, May 30/31
Bashakill Marsh
Overnight trip includes evening and early dawn birding looking for Common Nighthawks, Whip-poor-wills, rails and other marsh species

Saturday, March 28, 2020
Jones Beach – Early Spring Arrivals
New President’s Message

Summer is almost over, this is the first newsletter after HRAS’s usual July-August break. We’re heading into the season of change, leaves turning color and falling, birds leaving for their winter homes, some already gone. The cold weather will bring our winter residents: white-throated sparrows, juncos. And many more eagles.

If you look at our masthead, you’ll notice a change - I’m now president. I’ve been a member of HRAS for over 15 years; I’m honored to be president.

I have my brother to thank (or blame?) for my joining HRAS. Knowing I had become a birder, he gave me a membership to National Audubon as a birthday present. National assigned me – based on my zip code – to what was then the Yonkers Audubon Society. By pure chance I wound up being part of an active, warm and welcoming local chapter.

It’s now the Hudson River Audubon Society, a name change to reflect that our membership then and now extends further north into the Rivertowns and south into the Bronx. I hope that I’ve given HRAS as much as it’s given me over the years.

About me: I’m a retired graphic and web designer, a New Yorker, except for college and graduate school, all my life. I started birding in Florida some 25 years ago. A friend and I needed a break from our family visits. We left our kids with our husbands and went to the Everglades. Our first stop was Anhinga Trail – and that was my spark bird. Anhingas everywhere, swimming, flying, drying out their wings like clothes on a line. Over the years, visiting my parents in Florida, each time finding them more ravaged by age, I found a meditative peace in birding, an acceptance of what life throws at us.

HRAS showed me the birds of Westchester County, while not being as big and showy and easy to spot as birds in Florida, had distinctive charms. There was more variety than I’d thought, what I assumed were house sparrows all around, might be warblers or kinglets. No anhingas (not yet at least) but eagles, cedar waxwings, song sparrows, orioles and much more, I just had to look.

I’m glad, as president — and former treasurer — to be helping HRAS continue to do the fine work it’s been doing, bringing people together who appreciate birds and nature, and who understand the importance of being advocates for the environment.

Frances Greenberg, President

photo by Judith Ebenstein

Member Linda Brunner submitted this poem for your enjoyment:

The Darkling Thrush
Thomas Hardy 1840-1928

I leant upon a coppice gate
When frost was spectre-gray,
And winter’s dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.

The tangled vine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-throated evensong
Of joy illimited;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small
In blast beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.
Join the Hawks

As hawks, falcons and eagles begin their southern migration, the Hawk Watch Site at Lenoir Preserve is the best local to observe this spectacular.

Every year, we spot thousands of hawks, falcons, eagles, about 20 species of raptors including up to 60 Bald Eagles and a few Golden Eagles. Last year, on our peak day, we spotted over 2,000 Broad-winged Hawks flying past overhead.

Volunteers maintain the Hawk Watch on weekend days and are available many weekdays as well. The watching takes place on the lawn directly behind the Lenoir mansion where there is an unobstructed view across the Hudson River to the New Jersey Palisades as well as many miles up and down the river.

Stop by for a few minutes or a few hours

**Peak Hawk Migration Times**

Hawks don’t migrate on a fixed schedule and they don’t migrate in flocks. Each individual hawk decides when is the ideal time to fly south. You can’t predict exactly when, but they do follow general trends. The following chart shows what are typical the best times for certain species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Best Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-winged Hawk</td>
<td>mid Sept</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kestrel</td>
<td>mid Sept – early Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osprey</td>
<td>late Sept – early Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooper’s</td>
<td>early – mid Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-tailed</td>
<td>early – mid Nov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey Vulture</td>
<td>late Oct – mid Nov</td>
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New Feeder Watch Season

The kick-off session for the 2019-20 Feeder Watch season at Lenoir will begin on Sat. Nov 9th from 10AM – Noon hosted by Kelli and Michael. We will gather again in indoor comfort to watch, identify and count the birds coming to our overflowing feeders.

Carol Lange, our Feeder Watch guru, is somewhat concerned that the long lay-off since last season’s Feeder Watch may have somewhat eroded our identification skills. She fears, for example, that we may no longer be able to instantly differentiate between a chicken and a chickadee. Or an English sparrow and an American sparrow.

So, just as major league baseball managers schedule pre-season games to brush up skills, Carol has scheduled some pre-season Feeder Watches to fine-tune our bird ID techniques before the pressure of the real Feeder Watch season begins.

Two pre-season (remedial) Feeder Watches, ruled over by Carol, are scheduled for:

- Saturday, Sept 14  1:00 til 3:00PM
- Saturday, Oct 12   1:00 til 3:00PM

Join us to refresh your ID skills or just for an enjoyable time.
## Audubon Board Members

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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### At Large
Jane Metzger, Kelli Bochnik, Gerry McGee, Alegra Dengler, Jackie Bruskin, Cathy Mazella, Mark Testa, Lynn Shaw, Sandra Wright, Joe Rothstein

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Don’t Forget Hawk Day Saturday, Oct 5th.