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.

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.

Meadow Walk
Saturday, September 10, 2011
Lenoir Nature Preserve ~ 10 am

Bring the family and enjoy an easy walk through Lenoir’s meadow. We will search for flowers, insects and other wild critters that are at home in the meadow. Bird migration will be under way and we’ll watch the sky for raptors and songbirds on their way south. Bring binoculars if you have them.

FeederWatch

Now that Fall is approaching, HRAS will be getting back to our Project FeederWatch. From November to April we count birds and species at our feeders at Lenoir, and the data is sent to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It has become a great social event to help beat the Winter blues, and we hope to get everybody out once again this year to have fun while we are contributing to a valuable Citizen Science program.

We generally count for two hours two days in a row, every couple of weeks. Most of the counts are on weekends, although we do have a few on weekdays. We gather in the “observation” room at Lenoir and look out the picture windows to see the birds. We also have refreshments and plenty of conversation.

Anyone interested in being a count leader (recorder), please contact Carol Lange at 914 668-5101 or CarolLange@aol.com. Or, if you just want to be on our email list to be contacted regularly with the date and time of each FeederWatch session, that’s fine, too. Just contact Carol and let her know.

The schedule for Nov. and Dec. is as follows:
Nov. 19 and 20, Dec. 3 and 4,
Dec. 17 and 18, Dec. 29 and 30
Hudson River Audubon Upcoming

Field Trips

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 and are encouraged to join us as members ($20 introductory offer).

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.

Directions for most trips can be found on our web site at www.hras.org.

LENOIR HAWK WATCH
every Saturday & Sunday, starting around 10 am, from Sept. 18 through October, 2011
Join the bird experts from Hudson River Audubon to watch and count hawks flying down the Hudson Valley.
Meet us out on the lawn overlooking the Hudson River.

HAWK DAY
Saturday, October 1, 2011
9:00 am – 12:00 pm : Hawk watch out on the lawn.
You can join us at any time.
1:00 pm : Live hawk talk and flight demonstration

THE BIG SIT!
Sunday, October 9, 2011, 8:00 am
Meet at Lenoir Hawk Watch as we try to see as many bird species in a day.

HILLSIDE WOODS, HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON
Saturday, October 29, 2011, 8:00 am
Meet at the pool/tennis court parking lot.

JONES BEACH
Sunday, December 4, 2011, 8:00 am
Meet at the Coast Guard Station in the West End II section.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS
Peekskill, Saturday, December 17, 2011
Greenwich, Sunday, December 18, 2011
Bronx-Westchester, Monday, December 26, 2011

GEORGE’S ISLAND
Sunday, January 22, 2012, 7:00 am
Eagle viewing on the Hudson River.

PELHAM BAY PARK
Sunday, January 29, 2012, 8:00 am
Owl prowl.

EAGLE FEST
Saturday, February 4, 2012
8th Annual Hudson River Eagle Fest at Croton Point Park

HEMPSTEAD LAKE STATE PARK
Saturday, April 28, 2012

TIBBETTS BROOK PARK
Friday, May 4, 2012, 6:00 pm

CENTRAL PARK
Saturday, May 5, 2012, 8:00 am

ROCKEFELLER STATE PARK
Saturday, May 12, 2012, 8:00 am

MOTHER’S DAY WARBLER WALK
Sunday, May 13, 2012, 8:00 am

BIRD-A-THON
Saturday, May 19, 2012
Science Watch: The Cost of Life at the Top

"We’ve known for decades that alpha males have an advantage in reproduction, but these results show that life at the top has a real downside, and that being an alpha male comes at a cost.” —S. Alberts

The effect of socioeconomic status on health has bedeviled scientists for decades — and tortured many a poor primate in the process. For example, experiments in the 1950’s comparing “executive” rhesus monkeys able to decrease the likelihood of electrical shocks with others passively receiving them, led scientists to believe that “executive distress” syndrome could cause ulcers. The work was later discredited because the monkeys were preselected for their greater emotional response. By the 1960’s the opposite became the prevailing view. It was believed that individuals of lower rank experience greater stress from being “picked on” by those above them. This too proved to be an incorrect generalization.

Now a team headed by evolutionary biologists Laurence Gesquiere from Princeton University, and Susan Alberts from Duke University, show that top-ranking alpha male baboons have much higher levels of stress hormones than second-ranking beta males. The researchers measured levels in feces of the male sex hormone testosterone and cortisol, a stress hormone, which in high amounts is associated with hypertension, diabetes and suppressed immune function. The study, published in the July 15, 2011 issue of Science, is considered notable by other scientists because it involved many individuals for a long time. The team followed 125 adult males over a 9-year period from five troops of savannah baboons (Papio cynocephalus) living wild in Kenya’s Amboselli National Park. The large sample size and long time-frame means the study wasn’t skewed by the quirks of any particular male, but rather reflected the effects of his rank in the troop.

Baboons live in a nerve-wracking environment. Males constantly compete to raise their rank within the troop, resulting in high levels of aggression and a shifting of dominance hierarchies. High-ranking males also vent their anger on females as well as lower-ranking males. When the scientists compared testosterone levels with rank, they found that higher-ranking males had higher levels than lower-ranking males. Alpha and beta males had the highest levels. This is expected because the alpha and beta males perform most of the matings and are aggressive toward all the lower-ranking males.

In general, cortisol levels also showed a predictable pattern. Higher levels of this stress hormone were found in lower-ranking males because they are harassed by those higher in rank and have limited access to food. However, the cortisol levels of alpha males were surprisingly high, much higher than the beta males, even surpassing those found in the lowest-ranking males.

Alpha males do not make “executive” decisions for the troop, but they do engage in more sexual contacts and therefore spend more time guarding mates than beta males. They also fight with other males more often. Both behaviors use up more energy leaving less time for eating, which generates more stress, according to the authors. “Alpha males have higher reproductive success than other male baboons, but those benefits come at a significant cost”, said lead author Gesquiere. Whatever the cause, alpha males are under a lot of stress.

Other studies had shown that during periods of shifting dominance among top males within a troop their stress levels increase. Gesquiere et al. say that the nature of their study, i.e., following many males for the long-term, eliminates these short-term perturbations and teases out what really happens to a male when he becomes top dog.

While it is tempting to make human comparisons (for example, are vice-presidents healthier than presidents?), we are not a strictly hierarchal species. Those who rank lower on the job may gain status in other venues like coaching, teaching or playing a sport. Furthermore, baboon bosses may be stressed out, but human bosses shouldn’t be — that is unless they are having sex with lots of women and yelling at their subordinates.

Know anyone like that?
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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Send check and this application to:
National Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 422250  
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society.