

High Peaks Audubon

Adirondack-Champlain Region of New York State

Mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems in the Adirondacks, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

Volume 34 Number 2

June-August 2006



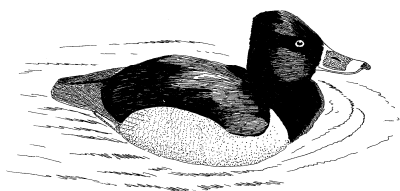
Sunday, June 25, 2006

“Defining and assessing ecosystem integrity in small Adirondack watersheds: from forests to fish”

**The Nature Conservancy/Adirondack Land Trust
Keene Valley, 1 p.m.**

Dr. Tim Mihuc will present the results of a collaborative study comparing watersheds in areas being managed for timber harvest to watersheds in the Forest Preserve. Data was gathered on plant communities, stream communities, water chemistry, geologic characteristics and other biological and physical parameters. This information may be useful in assessing the integrity of other watersheds that humans use. Dr. Mihuc and his colleagues identified some fascinating trends while comparing managed watersheds to Preserve watersheds in the Adirondacks.

Tim Mihuc is the coordinator of the Lake Champlain Research Institute at SUNY-Plattsburgh and an Associate Professor in the Center for Earth and Environmental Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Biology from Idaho State University and a M.S. degree in Zoology from Oklahoma State University. Dr. Mihuc is an aquatic ecologist who has conducted scientific research in Yellowstone National Park, the Atchafalaya River Basin in southern Louisiana and in the Mississippi River, among other places. His current research projects are focused on Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks.



Saturday, August 27th, 2006, 1:00 p.m.

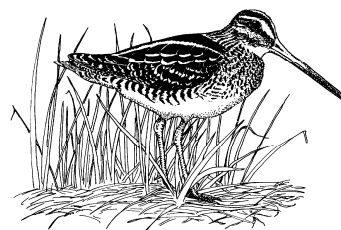
“This Land is Your Land: The Battle for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge”

Newcomb Visitor Interpretive Center

Join Sue Krause, environmental educator and president of the Four Harbor Audubon Society in St. James, New York, for a telling powerpoint presentation about one of the most hotly debated wilderness areas in the world. Sue will discuss and show photographs of the mammals and birds that breed in and migrate through this magnificent refuge, tell us about the history of the place and what we can all do to protect this stunning, unspoiled wilderness.

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All Drawings by George West

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High Peaks Audubon Society, Inc.
A chapter of National Audubon Society
serving the Adirondack/Champlain region
of northern New York, including Clinton,
Essex, Franklin and Hamilton counties.

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High Peaks Audubon Newsletter is published by
High Peaks Audubon Society, Inc.

Wickham Marsh Viewing Platform Thank You Haselton Lumber

The DEC willing and if the marsh don't rise, work will begin this summer on a long-awaited viewing platform at Wickham Marsh. Similar in design to the "Greenie" viewing platform at Ausable Marsh, the Wickham Marsh platform became a real possibility when Sam Haselton, of Haselton Lumber, in Wilmington, generously offered to donate virtually all of the materials needed to construct the platform. Membership dues paid for a tiny percentage of material.

Already a world-class birding and wildlife observation destination, Wickham Marsh will offer dramatically improved viewing possibilities from the platform. As this newsletter goes to press John Thaxton will be meeting with DEC officials to evaluate potential locations for the platform and other construction considerations.

Thanks again Haselton Lumber!

Win a Weekend at The Bark Eater Inn

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Joe Pete Wilson, former Olympic athlete and raconteur extraordinaire, HPAS is thrilled to offer as this year's raffle prize a two-night stay in *High Country*, the most luxurious (\$325 per night) offering at *The Bark Eater* and arguably the coolest accommodation in the Adirondacks. This newly-constructed and luxuriously appointed log cabin--complete with a whirlpool bath, fireplace, heated floor and a mini-kitchen--is set off by itself in the woods and so cozy and romantic the raffle winners will probably stay inside all weekend and venture out only for those delicious *Bark Eater* meals. Check out the bed in the High Country Log Cottage at the Bark Eater Inn website: www.barkeater.com.

Thank you Joe Pete Wilson!

Raffle tickets are \$5 each, \$25 for a book of 6. For more information visit our website www.highpeaksaudubon.org



Message from the President

I can't imagine heading out during breeding season without a blank (or frayed and taped) Atlas 2000 field card and several #2 pencils with good erasers in my pockets. It was a fun, and often surprising, six years that taught me to observe birds differently and found me exploring places I hadn't explored before.

Now that the Atlas 2000 observation period is over, I can only think of sharing the knowledge and experience I gained with others. Leading field trips for newer or visiting birders to the various Adirondack habitats is a very rewarding way to spend the next couple of months. HPAS birders will be busy leading field trips for the Adirondack Birding Celebration and the Adirondack Birding Festival the first two weekends in June (see articles this issue) as well as HPAS field trips throughout the season.

And remember, if that pencil is burning a hole in your pocket, the Atlas is not the only outlet for the bird surveyor. Take a look at the North American Breeding Bird Survey (Charles Smith, crs6@cornell.edu), the Adirondack All Taxa Biological Inventory (milewsc@paulsmiths.edu) or Mountain Bird Watch (www.vinsweb.org/cbd).

Your expertise is needed for all of these worthwhile initiatives. Get involved and have fun while serving a good cause, again.

—Pat Thaxton

June-July Field Trips

Friday, June 30, 2006

Low's Ridge/Upper Dam Trail in Piercefield-Colton

Time: 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Directions: Meet at the Bog River Falls parking area on Route 421. Take Route 30 (between Long Lake and Tupper Lake) to Route 421. Follow Route 421 for a little over a half mile to Bog River Falls. Participants can car pool or car-caravan from this location to the trailhead.

Bring: Water, food/snacks, sunscreen, bug repellent, binoculars, appropriate clothes and waterproof hiking shoes.

Distance: Five miles round trip on a level dirt road. There is an optional 1.5 mile round trip hike up Low's Ridge for views of the Bog River Valley and High Peaks.

Hike Leaders: High Peaks Audubon Society members Joan Collins & Amy Freiman

Register by calling the Newcomb VIC at (518) 582-2000.

Jointly sponsored by High Peaks Audubon Society, St. Lawrence-Adirondack Audubon, and the Visitor Interpretive Center at Newcomb.

Saturday, July 1, 2006

Hudson River to Opalescent River

Time: 8:00 a.m.

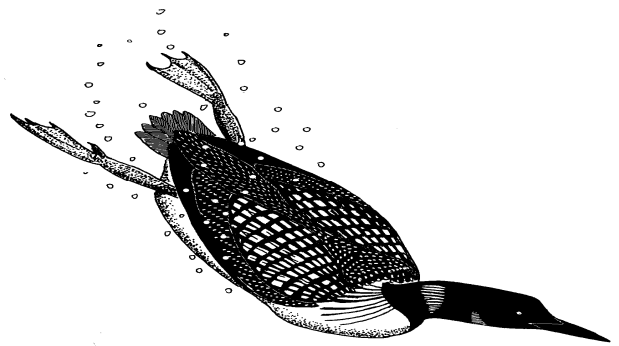
Directions: Meet at the parking lot for the Hanging Spear Falls approach to Flowed Lands and Allen Mt—0.5 miles (on the right) before the end of the road at the Upper Works parking lot. Take Route 28N 5 miles east from the Town Hall in Newcomb to the access road to Tahawus; or from I-87 exit 29 take the Blue Ridge Road 18 miles west. Take the Tahawus Road 6 miles and bear left at the fork (sign for Mt. Marcy and the High Peaks); go 3 miles to the parking lot on the right.

Bring: Water, snacks/lunch, bug dope, sunscreen, appropriate attire for the weather, sturdy/waterproof hiking boots, binoculars.

Description: 7.4 miles round trip. The terrain varies from old logging roads to trails through the woods with easy to moderate changes in grade; we'll cross the Hudson River on a suspension bridge, Lake Jimmy on a long wooden bridge and circle Lake Sally before arriving at the Opalescent River. Last year on this trip at this time we saw many species of warbler including Mourning and Canada, Olive-sided flycatcher, a nesting loon and many other species.

Hike Leaders: John & Pat Thaxton

Register: Call 518.576.4232 or email JPThax5317@aol.com



July 29, 2006

West River Trail (Adirondack Mountain Reserve/Ausable River)

Time: 8: a.m.

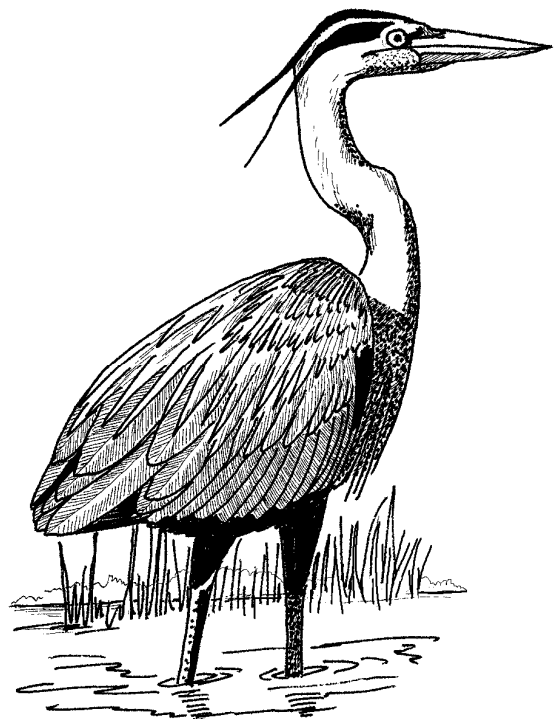
Directions: Hiker's parking lot on Ausable Road, off Route 73, opposite the Roaring Brook Trail/Giant Mt. parking lot.

Bring: Water, snacks/lunch, bug dope, sunscreen, apparel appropriate for the weather, sturdy/waterproof hiking boots, binoculars.

Description: 8 miles round trip. Located entirely on Ausable Club property, this beautiful hike follows Lake Road Trail and then the west side of the Ausable River to the dam at Lower Ausable Lake. The West River Trail passes Beaver Meadow Falls, skirts a densely vegetated marshy area where we've found a stunning diversity of bird species. From Lower Ausable Lake we can take a side trail to Rainbow Falls.

Hike Leaders: Pat & John Thaxton

Register: Call Pat or John Thaxton--518.576.4232; or email JPThax5317@aol.com



Saturday, July 8th, 2006
Annual Meeting/Outing
W.H. Miner Agricultural Institute, 8:30
a.m.
Altona Flat Rock

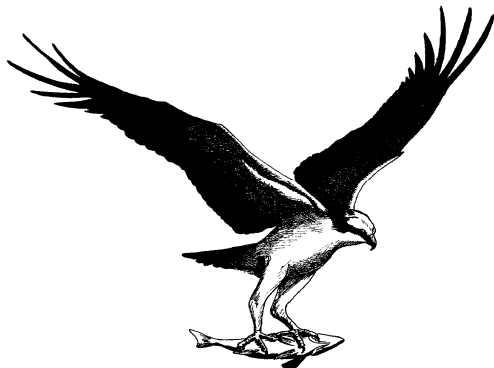
Join HPAS members for our annual meeting/outing at Altona Flat Rock, an 18-mile long, 3-mile wide sandstone barren created by the catastrophic drainage of proglacial Lake Iroquois 12,000 years ago. Almost 5,000 acres of pine barrens and forests owned by the Miner Institute surround the Flat Rock area and support 120 species of birds, 30 species of mammals and 15 herptiles.

The day begins at 8:30 a.m. when we meet at the entrance to the Miner Institute, from where we will drive 8 miles to Altona Flat Rock and go on a birding field trip led by Dr. Kenneth Adams of SUNY Plattsburgh. Dr. Adams will select the ecosystem in the upper Little Chazy watershed (forest, riverside, bog, fen, pine barren) that seems most promising for the day and spend the morning birding with us. Dr. Adams has seen 126 species of birds at Flat Rock. When we're there many birds will have young in their nests and be active foraging and feeding the chicks, while other species will have newly fledged young.

Bring lunch and join us at a gazebo on the Miner Institute's property, then stay if you like for the short annual meeting, after which we'll probably go birding again or explore this fascinating geological area further.

Dr. Kenneth Adams is a professor at Plattsburgh State University where he teaches courses in Plant Ecology, Forest Ecology and Management, and Wildlife Ecology and Management. His primary research interests are the effects of disturbances on ecosystem development. Since 1974, Ken has utilized forest stands owned by the William H. Miner Research Institute in Chazy, New York to study ecological effects of silvicultural treatments, fire, and most recently, ice storm impacts. Ken received a Ph.D. in forest ecology from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York.

Directions: Meet in front of the Miner Institute Building at the intersection of Ridge Road and Route 191; take the Northway to Exit 41, then go west on Route 191 for .8 miles.

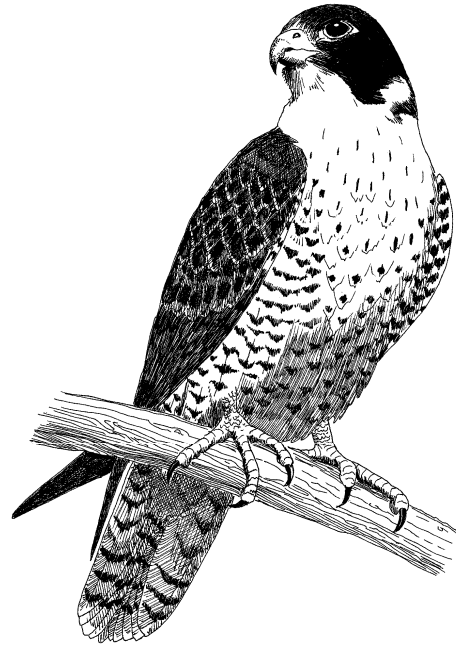


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Great Adirondack Birding Celebration

Plan to participate in the 4th annual Great Adirondack Birding Celebration, which will offer workshops, lectures, a social hour, a barbecue lunch and 16+ field trips. Headquartered at the Paul Smiths Visitor Interpretive Center, the festival runs from **Friday, June 2nd through Sunday, June 4th**. As it has since the festival's inception, HPAS members designed and will lead the field trips, which include such exciting destinations as Spring Pond Bog (Spruce grouse), Whiteface Mountain (Bicknell's thrush), the Osgood River by canoe (Black-backed woodpecker, Northern three-toed woodpecker) and Bloomingdale Bog. The featured speaker is Dr. Kevin McGowan, co-editor of *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*, who will share his insights into data gathered during *Atlas 2000*.

For more information visit the Great Adirondack Birding Celebration website at: <http://www.northnet.org/adirondackvic/birdfest.html>.



Adirondack Birding Festival

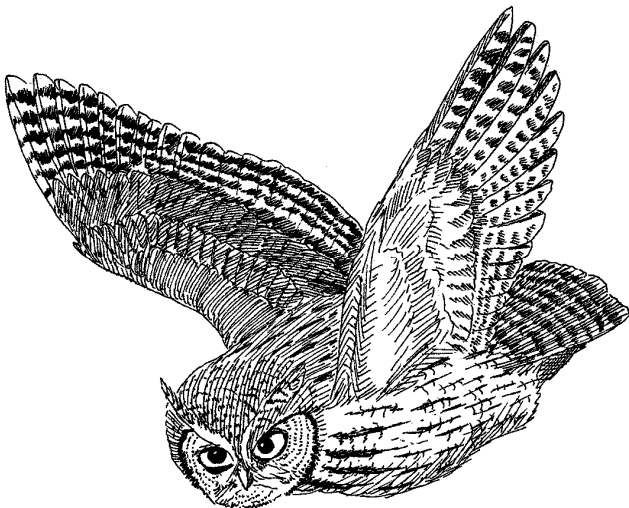
Inspired by the success of the Great Adirondack Birding Celebration, the Hamilton County Department of Tourism started its own Adirondack Birding Festival last year and hit a home run. HPAS members designed and led the field trips for the Hamilton County festival and will lead them again for the 2nd annual festival, which runs from **Thursday, June 8th to Sunday, June 11th**. Activities include canoe/kayak trips on the Bog and Sacandaga rivers, hikes up Blue Mountain, along the Northville/Lake Placid Trail and to Ferd's Bog, a Night Owl Hoot, lectures on Loons and small mammals and slide shows on birds and landscapes.

For more information visit the Adirondack Birding Festival website at: <http://www.adirondackbirds.com>

The Adirondack All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory

An innovative and ambitious initiative, the All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI), has been planned to inventory all of life in the 6 million acre Adirondack Park. Globally, conservation of biodiversity is becoming increasingly relevant to human life as air and water quality, climate change, land use and development, and invasive species continue to be issues affecting life. These issues are equally relevant to humans and biodiversity in the Adirondacks. However, more reliable and detailed biological knowledge is needed for informed conservation of biodiversity and there exists a clear understanding that citizen support is critical to that outcome. Undoubtedly, an All-Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) will enhance biological knowledge and increase citizen support for sustained conservation of Adirondack biodiversity. Acknowledging the comprehensive nature of an ATBI, a diverse community of public, private, academic, and governmental individuals and groups came together with the intention of initiating an Adirondack ATBI. A thorough discussion about an Adirondack ATBI concluded that several critical elements are essential to success. Foremost, the ATBI will focus on all taxonomic groups, encourage citizen participation, create multi-faceted educational opportunities, and seek public/private collaboration. The mission of the Adirondack ATBI is: *Surveying the diversity of life and connecting people to the natural world through participation in biological inventories and related activities in the Adirondack Park of New York State.* Given the magnitude of this mission, a diversity of stakeholders will be required to successfully implement the plan, and volunteers are sought to help with many aspects of the project. Currently, 5 committees exist: steering, science, community outreach, education, and database. A variety of taxonomic working groups are beginning to organize, each with a focus on a different group of organism. So, if you would like to join one or more of these committees, a taxonomic working group, or simply remain informed then please contact Craig Milewski at Paul Smith's College, 518-327-6104 or milewsc@paulsmiths.edu.

—Craig Milewski



Poetry Corner A Bird Came Down The Walk

A bird came down the walk
He did not know I saw,
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And at the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glance with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,—
They looked like frightened beads, I
thought
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger, cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean
Too silver for a seam
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim.

—Emily Dickinson

Nominating Committee Report

The nominating committee is pleased to present the following slate for the Board of Directors. How could we possibly thank our two departing board members, Joan Collins and Amy Freiman, enough? They both had an enormous impact on HPAS and the Adirondack Park and, a little bird told us, will continue to do so in the future.

We will vote for the slate at the HPAS booth at the Paul Smiths VIC on June 3, 2006 at 2 p.m

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Book Review

The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth, by Tim Flannery (2005, Atlantic Monthly Press).

It is no coincidence that this book was written by Tim Flannery, an Australian. First of all, Australia was one of only four countries, along with the United States, that failed to ratify the Kyoto accord on climate change. He was a global warming skeptic until recently, when he decided to immerse himself in the scientific evidence for climate change. He became a convert as a result of this research, and a personal event: he revisited one of his high altitude study sites on New Guinea, discovering that it had shrunk in size, likely because of global warming. He is an expert on New Guinea mammals, but this is not the first book he has written on a topic outside his field of expertise. His book *The Future Eaters*, an ecological history of Australia, and his frequent appearances on the radio, have made him somewhat of a celebrity in Australia. He's also written *The Eternal Frontier*, an ecological history of North America, which grew out of a course he taught while a visiting professor at Harvard. And not insignificantly, he began his college career as an English major.

As would be expected, there are some errors. For example, he refers to an increase in acidity as an increase in pH (It's the other way around). Like this one, the errors are minor, and certainly do not detract from the validity of the message.

The discussion begins with Gaia, the theory advanced by James Lovelock and named for the Greek word for earth, that views the earth as a self-regulating super-organism. Flannery's intent is not to validate the theory – Lovelock himself has acknowledged many of the criticisms from other scientists – but to use it to emphasize what is now a strong consensus in the scientific community: that human activities have replaced other biological and physical forces as the most important factors determining climate change.

I am no authority on global warming, but I have a two-foot-high stack of scientific papers and articles on the subject that I have collected over the years. I picked up *The Weather Makers* from my local library hoping to find a few research findings that I might have missed. I was disappointed; most of the material in this book is old stuff. There aren't even what I would call any startling new insights. But it held my attention to the end.

My interest was kept by the organization and the writing. The book is divided into a logical sequence of five sections, dealing with the essential science and the history of the topic, the evidence for global warming as a problem, the use of computer models in predicting future climates, policy responses to global warming, and what can and needs to be done in the future. By limiting individual chapters to an average of about ten pages, Flannery achieves a focused treatment of specific aspects. The writing style is accessible and clear. His explanation of Milankovich cycles is the best I have read. These features of the book I think will mean that this book will be read by many readers with little interest in global warming, or whose understanding has been shaped mainly by the movie *The Day After Tomorrow*.

These are the people who need to finish this book if Flannery hopes to generate the political pressure and lifestyle changes that will be needed “to reduce our CO₂ emissions by 70 percent by 2050.” For readers who are already convinced, this book will be preaching to the choir. And there are still many people, emboldened by books like Michael Crichton's *State of Fear*, who see the idea of global warming as an environmental and scientific conspiracy. To this group this book will be considered alarmist. Though Flannery's objective is clearly to convey the seriousness of the problem, he does so in anything but an alarmist way. When he writes about the possible impact on civilization, for example, he does little of the speculating that others have about the impact of climate change on past civilizations. And he could have said much more about how the social fabric of a society might unravel when a civilization deteriorates, especially considering that global warming is only one of the many pressures – many of them, like global warming, relatively new – facing natural and human communities today.

—John Brown

Huntington Lecture Series Summer 2006

Thursdays, 7:00 PM

Adirondack Park Agency Visitor Interpretive Center

5922 Route 28N, Newcomb NY

June 29 - The Story of Adirondac (Tahawus) and the Lake Placid Connection

Lee Manchester, Lake Placid News and Dan Luciano, Open Space Institute

July 6 - In Search of Polar Bears

Cookie Barker, Schroon Lake Central School

July 13 - Bears of the Adirondacks

Ben Tabor, NYS DEC Raybrook

July 20 - Deer as Winter Guests (or Pests) in the Adirondacks

Susan Walker, SUNY-ESF

July 27 - The Dark Side of the Common Loon

Ward Stone, DEC State Pathologist

August 3 - Late Glacial History of the Lake Champlain Lowland

Dr. David Franzi, SUNY Plattsburgh

August 10 - Taken for Granted: The Importance of Adirondack Forests in a Global Context and Current Threats

Dr. Charles Canham, Institute of Ecosystem Studies

August 17 - Potential Effect of Recreational Flow Releases on the Natural Resources of the Indian and Hudson Rivers

Barry Baldigo, U.S. Geological Survey



Like to Watch Loons? Join in the ACLP's Annual Loon Census on Saturday, July 15th

Help the Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program look for loons! Join in the ACLP's Annual Loon Census on Saturday, July 15th, 2006, from 8-9a.m. For more information or to choose a lake to conduct your observations, please contact the ACLP's Program Manager at aclp2-prgm-mgr@juno.com or at 518-891-8836. To learn more about the ACLP's Annual Loon Census, visit www.adkscience.org/loons.

—ACLP

Celebrate the Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program's Fifth Birthday at Great Camp Sagamore in Raquette Lake on Saturday evening, July 15th

After a day of paddling and counting Adirondack loons for the ACLP's Annual Loon Census, you are invited to join ACLP staff and volunteers at Great Camp Sagamore to win exciting prizes in a silent auction and raffle (*tickets will be available in early June on the ACLP website, in the Summer 2006 ACLP newsletter, and at the Celebration*). Learn more about ACLP's five years of loon conservation research and education projects through an innovative multimedia presentation. A benefit dinner and live music by the Newton Street Irregulars, Dan Berggren, Jamie Savage, and Celia Evans will follow the raffle, silent auction, and slideshow.

Information about attending the ACLP's Fifth Birthday Celebration will be available on the ACLP website, www.adkscience.org/loons in late May, 2006. *All proceeds from the raffle, silent auction, and benefit dinner will support the Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program's loon research and education projects.*

The Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program is dedicated to improving the health of the environment, particularly the protection of air and water quality, through research and education efforts focusing on the common loon and regional conservation issues affecting wildlife and their habitats in the Adirondack Park. Initiated in 2001, the ACLP is a partnership of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, New York State Department of Conservation, Biodiversity Research Institute, and the Audubon Society of New York State.

—ACLP



View From Skylight

photo by John Thaxton

Editor's Note

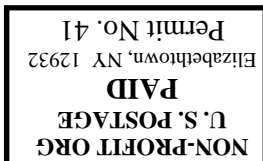
To say that Joan Collins did a fine job of editing the HPAS Newsletter would be to damn with egregiously faint praise. She did a spectacular job. She single-handedly rescued the newsletter from the dustbin of editorial oblivion and turned it into what it was supposed to be—the award-winning lifeblood of the organization. She redid its look with the flair of a graphic designer, created new features like a seasoned editorial pro and went to press on schedule for five years. All this while leading scores of bird walks, serving as a member of the Audubon Council of New York (which awarded her the first ever Norman Stotz Award for Chapter Leadership), speaking and leading workshops at New York State Ornithological Association meetings all across the state, working constantly on the New York Atlas of Breeding Birds, writing and co-writing articles for the *Conservationist* and *The Kingbird*, writing a guest column for the Plattsburgh Press Republican, playing a major role in organizing the Great Adirondack Birding Celebration at Paul Smiths and the Adirondack Birding Festival in Hamilton County, serving as the indefatigable president of HPAS, climbing mountains in the dark so she could reach the summit by 4:30 a.m. to verify the presence of Bicknell's thrush for Mountain Birdwatch, working on the North American Breeding Bird Survey, doing volunteer work at a Hospice, posting thousand-word observations on Northern New York Birds and, oh yeah, home-schooling two boys.

In my mind's eye Joan went from a seemingly shy, quiet woman who showed up at an HPAS annual dinner and asked me, sheepishly, if she could try her hand at editing the newsletter to a vocal and dynamic birder and environmentalist who quickly and deservedly developed a statewide reputation. Over the past five years the hardcore birders in Central Park sort of took turns questioning me about “this Joan Collins person” from the Adirondacks. Did she really climb mountains in the middle of the night, watch Mourning warblers in her front yard and spend a long cold winter night in the woods listening to a porcupine chewing Hemlock bark? What does she look like?

I remember having to attend an emergency HPAS board meeting dedicated to numerous impending financial disasters. Joan had emailed everybody saying she couldn't make it because she planned to attend that big antiwar rally in Washington, D.C. just before the invasion of Iraq. She said she simply felt too committed to peace not to attend the rally. The board members no sooner sat down to order lunch and begin the meeting at Baxter Mountain Tavern than I saw Joan rush into the restaurant. Scanning the large room for a familiar face, she seemed as though she had just awoken from a dream. She had just spent eight sleepless hours on a crowded bus from Washington, dashed straight to her car and driven two hours to make the meeting. She struck me as looking completely out of breath, utterly exhausted and absolutely beautiful.

See this and future newsletters for my sincerest form of flattery.

—*John Thaxton*



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