



Summer Newsletter
Vol. 64 — No. 2 — 2018
www.fykenature.org

Important notice:

The Fyke Newsletter is going paperless with the Fall 2018 issue. We estimate saving \$1,000.00+ per year in the cost of printing, envelopes, and postage. This money will be put to better use for Fyke programs and projects. Less use of paper will also be better for our environment.

The newsletter will be posted on our website. You will be notified when a newsletter is available via our email list. To be included on the notification list, please send an email from your preferred email address to our Treasurer, Kurt Muenz, elkumu@aceweb.com. Indicate “Fyke Email List” on the subject line.

If you do not have email access, please notify Carol Flanagan, 973-423-0420 and you will still be sent paper copies.

Calendar of Events

April 7, 2018 — Celery Farm Cleanup

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the end of Greenway for a few hours of active conservation. We hope you will join us to spruce up the preserve. Many hands make light work! Marsh Warden Mike Limatola is the Coordinator, mike.limatola@gmail.com. Rain date is April 8, 2018.



April 21, 2018 — Earth Day Warbler Walk at the Celery Farm

Meet fellow Fyke Members at the end of Green Way at 8:00 a.m. to look for spring arrivals. Birders of all levels are welcome! Leaders: Gaby Schmitt and Mike Limatola. Register for this walk by e-mail to mike.limatola@gmail.com.



**April 27, 2018 — Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building
Return of the Raven, Rick Radis**

The Common Raven, *Corvus corax*, has the widest distribution of any of the Corvidae, the family that includes crows, jays, nutcrackers, magpies and related birds such as rooks, jackdaws, and choughs. It is also the largest and heaviest of the passerines, or perching birds -- and the smartest.

The presentation will cover the historic status of the Common Raven in eastern North America from the late 1880s, its remarkable return in the 1990s, and its present status as a nesting species in many (often surprising) areas of NJ and the eastern states. Since the early 1980s the population and perhaps the behavioral dynamics of the eastern Common Raven has begun to change. Rick Radis will explore the possible reasons as to why the Common Ravens have lost their shyness around humans and discuss how ravens interact with the other two species of corvids.

May 5, 2018 — May Walk at the Celery Farm



This walk is for nature-lovers and birders of all levels. We'll look for butterflies, bugs, weird plants and our feathered friends. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Greenway. Wear long pants and socks; bring water and bug spray! Leader: Jim Wright. Register for this walk by e-mail to celeryfarm@gmail.com.

May 12, 2018 — Stepping Up For Lorrimer

This will be our 19th Celery Farm Big Day, also known as “Stepping Up For Lorrimer”. Fyke teams will be birding the Celery Farm from dawn to dusk, in two hour shifts; you can sign up for as many shifts as you'd like.

We have two goals:

1. As citizen-scientists, we are conducting an inventory of all the bird species seen that day.
2. The event raises funds to help support the children's education programs at New Jersey Audubon's Lorrimer Sanctuary in Franklin Lakes.

To register your team or to sign up for a time slot, contact Gabriele Schmitt, gaby413@aol.com. To make a donation or to pledge a per-species amount, please see the pledge form on page 7.

**May 18, 2018 — Monthly meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building
Loads of Odes : Many pictures and some interesting facts about Damsel and Dragonflies, Kurt Muenz**

For many years, while birding, Kurt often photographed colorful Odonata, Odes for short. Over the last 5 years he's also become interested in identifying species and learning about behavior as a parallel hobby. Kurt will share some of these findings and images with us.

June 2, 2018 — Celery Farm Bird Walk

This walk is for nature-lovers and birders of all levels. We'll look for butterflies, bugs, weird plants and our feathered friends. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Greenway. Wear long pants and socks; bring water and bug spray! Leader: Mike Limatola. Register for this walk by e-mail to mike.limatola@gmail.com.



July 21, 2018 - Our Tom Burr Memorial Butterfly Walk at the Celery Farm

Our annual Celery Farm Butterfly Walk is held in memory of Tom Burr, the late Fyke member, naturalist, photographer, and friend. Meet at the end of Green Way at 10:30 a.m. for a 90-minute stroll. Dress for bright sun. Bring water and sunscreen. Rain cancels this walk. Leader TBA.

September 1, 2018— Mt. Peter Hawk Watch begins

Fyke members are invited to help with the count or just to visit and give us your support. More details in the next newsletter. The watch begins September 1, 2017 and continues daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until November 15. Contact Judy Cinquina at judycinq@optonline.net to volunteer or for more information.



September 2, 2018 – Mt. Peter Clean-Up

Our annual Clean-Up is scheduled for Sunday, September 2 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Contact Judy Cinquina at judycinq@optonline.net to volunteer or for more information.



Welcome New Member

Lucy Smith, Ringwood



2019 Celery Farm Calendar

Photos taken at the Celery Farm by Fyke members are being accepted now for the 2019 Celery Farm calendar. There is a limit of 10 photos per person. The photos should be landscape format. Non-cropped photos work best with the software used for the calendar.

Please send your photos as an e-mail attachment to carolflana@aol.com by July 15, 2018. Thank you in advance for your support of Fyke Nature Association!

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### Field and Feeder Notes By Judith Cinquina

*On the Minnesota-Ontario border...a female Merlin was seen to “glide lazily” above a lake, then drift toward a burned tract. Tree Swallows suddenly appeared and darted at her as she “spiraled lazily up and up.” When so high that swallows looked like tiny insects, the falcon suddenly dived earthward with the swallows in pursuit. With increasing speed she pulled away from the swallows and, when almost to the ground, suddenly turned and shot upward. The swallows did likewise, but now they were pursued. From increased downward momentum, the hawk pitched up faster than the light swallows...and she “deftly snagged a swallow as it seemed to hang motionless” in the air.*

*From the Craigheads 1940 in Ralph Palmer’s Handbook of N. Am. Birds Vol. 5*

A Merlin flew into the Celery Farm (CF), February 23 and perched long enough for Jim Wright to run home and grab his camera and snap its picture. Not a NJ resident, this little falcon usually turns up during migration but hasn’t been reported at the CF since 2016. About the same size as an American Kestrel but feistier, a Merlin preys almost exclusively on birds, even some larger than itself like Rock Doves. While a Kestrel floats with airy grace, a Merlin cleaves the air with muscle and determination as



this second quote from Palmer illustrates: “In Ontario, a Merlin dived into a flock of blackbirds and came out the other side with one in each fist (McIlwraith 1886).” Often the victim’s head is eaten and its body cached for a future meal. Almost daily I’ve noted a Cooper’s Hawk somewhere over the Fyke area. They do well in suburbia where there’s an abundance of Starlings to keep them fat and happy all winter. On February 10, Betty McDonnell photographed one perched on the back of a chair in her Mahwah yard “waiting for action.” Like a Merlin, Coops thrive on action and don’t mind taunting Crows who are about equal in size, even when the odds are 20 to 1. In mid-March a noisy, gyrating mob of Crows were in hot pursuit of a Cooper’s Hawk over Upper Saddle River. The melee attracted even more Crows who came in from all directions. The Coop, instead of fleeing, cut right through their midst, as if it enjoyed taunting them, and eventually disappeared, leaving behind noisy, nervous splinters of the mob to search the bare trees in vain.

A large flight of Tundra Swans moved north through NJ February 25 and 26, and both John Workman and Doug Morel witnessed the event on separate days at Oradell Reservoir. Both counted over 70 individuals on the water. Tundra Swans traditionally move northward in mid to late March, with family groups joining the mass movement. Since they became a protected species in 1918, their numbers have increased to the point that, like the Snow Goose, they have been forced to feed in grain fields because their traditional aquatic vegetation can't support them all. Unlike the alien Mute Swan, these tundra breeding swans are native and breed at the top of the world. So many, so close to home, were a treat for the lucky few who encountered them inland. Normally large concentrations are only found in the southern counties.



Another treat was the singing Winter Wren John found at Halifax, February 15. The Winter Wren's song "has great beauty and remarkable length," Pough wrote in his 1946 Audubon Bird Guide to Eastern Land Birds. He continued, "The high-pitched notes, uttered rapidly, rise and fall to produce a clear, melodious, and bubbling warble broken by 1 or more trills." If you've never heard it, put it on your bucket list. Simon Streatfeild discovered a Yellow-rumped Warbler at Mahwah Green Acres, March 5. They're much more common in winter along the Jersey shore. At the same place two days before, he had "the best view" he "ever had" of a Woodcock before it realized it had been detected and launched itself on twittering wings. Others were displaying at Halifax in Mahwah and the CF.



At least two Bald Eagles were spotted over the CF this winter: one March 4, noted by the Hour-on-the-Tower crew and an immature reported by Brian Kenney, on the 15th. More were found wintering on Lake Tappan, and an adult pair was at a nest at Woodcliff Lake, February 14. Rosemarie Widmer, who has been monitoring the Woodcliff Lake nest for a few years, believes they are nesting there again. However, the NJ Bald Eagle Project had no information on whether the Woodcliff Lake nest produced any young in 2017. The survey sponsored by the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program and Conserve Wildlife Foundation found 153 active eagle nests in 2017 that produced 190 young. Most of the nests were located in Cumberland and Salem counties, but there were a few in northern NJ. Both Oradell Reservoir and Overpeck Creek had eagle pairs on territory that did not breed. Woodcliff Lake had a pair on a nest last year, according to Rosemarie, however the survey report labeled the outcome "unknown." On the plus side were the three young produced from two nests at the Wanaque Reservoir. Common Mergansers are common winter visitors on our lakes and reservoirs and apply named. Rosemarie reported the largest concentration of 1,500 on Lake Tappan, February 17. Oradell Reservoir produced two Ravens on the 14th, Rosemarie reported, and Brian Kenney observed a Pied-billed Grebe there on the



28th. Ravens are expanding their range in Bergen Count. Two over Bergenfield were a first for Gaby Schmitt, March 21.

The promise of crossbills in NJ this winter was not fulfilled. In fact, only a trickle made it as far south as Vermont and New Hampshire. I guess the cone crop in the northern tier of states and Canada met their needs. And speaking of negative things, conjunctivitis still lingers among our birds. Barbara Dilger posted a photo of one of her House Finches with the telltale swollen eye, in Waldwick. The affliction is highly contagious. Even if your feeders are too far away from a widow for you to detect swollen eyes among your finches, you can identify those infected by their drunken behavior, fluttering helplessly around a feeder or floundering when attempting to perch. Unfortunately, one of the prices birds pay for visiting our feeders is they're forced into close contact with other birds on a daily basis. Not only do they experience stress but are more susceptible to disease. Normally, flocks of birds find sources of food, deplete them and move on, reducing repeated contact with others at the same food sources. You can avoid exposing your birds to disease by not feeding birds in the summer and keeping your feeders clean the rest of the year. Barbara took down her feeders, cleaned them and hasn't seen another diseased finch since.

I consider Fox Sparrows a harbinger of spring, but Rosemarie had one visit her Allendale yard, February 11. The March snowstorms compelled another to forage under my feeders in Upper Saddle River, and Simon scored two at Mahwah Green Acres, on the 20th. He also reported two real spring arrivals there that day, a Tree Swallow and Phoebe. The Hour-on-the-Tower crew already scored earlier Tree Swallows, a pair checking out housing on the 18th, Gaby Schmitt wrote. As Lake Appert ice broke up and oxygen starved fish were exposed, vultures and gulls took advantage of the fresh food source. In fact, one hungry Ring-billed Gull couldn't wait for the fish to thaw. The Tower crew watched it struggle to eat the still frozen fish on the 11th, Charlie West reported. Bluebirds were already checking out bird houses in Betty McDonnell's Mahwah yard on the 6th. Spring is here, although I anticipate more branches and trees forced down by the weight of the heavy, wet snow that is currently falling outside my window.



Warblers, thrushes, vireos, and flycatchers are on their way. Get out there and enjoy the show and let us know what you find. For information on the latest bird sightings, go to [www.fykenature.org](http://www.fykenature.org) and sign up with our discussion group where many of the reports for this column originated. Or send your observations to me at [judycinq@optonline.net](mailto:judycinq@optonline.net).



## Support Fyke!

If you shop on Amazon please go through the Fyke website. Go to [www.fykenature.org](http://www.fykenature.org), click on the shop link on the right side of the screen, and then click on the Amazon logo. This is for all items sold on Amazon, not just books.

The affiliate program contributes 1% to 10% to Fyke depending on the items purchased. This does not increase the cost of your purchase. Fyke is on the Smile program, but the Smile program only contributes 0.5% to Fyke.

(Fyke does not endorse any particular online shopping site.)



## Stepping Up For Lorrimer Pledge Form – 2018



There are three ways to send your pledge:

- Bring your pledge form to the April meeting.
- By mail to Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446
- By e-mail to Kurt Muenz, [elkumu@aceweb.com](mailto:elkumu@aceweb.com)

Yes, I want to support Fyke's team and Lorrimer by making a pledge per bird species seen. I understand that 60 to 80 species may be recorded, however, the total could be higher if conditions are ideal. All money donated will go to Lorrimer Sanctuary.

My pledge is:

\$1/species    \$.75/species    \$.50/species    \$.25/species   \$\_\_\_\_/species

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

You will be notified of your pledge total soon after the event. Checks should be made out to Fyke Nature Association.

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**The Fyke Nature Association**, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets at the Allendale Municipal Building, 500 W. Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ 07401 on the fourth Friday of every month January to May, and in September and October. The winter meeting is the first Friday in December. (No meetings in June, July, August, and November.)

Meetings and membership are open to all. Annual dues: Individual -- \$20.00; Family -- \$25.00. For further information, write to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, visit our website [www.fykenature.org](http://www.fykenature.org), or contact Mike Limatola, President, [mike.limatola@gmail.com](mailto:mike.limatola@gmail.com). The Newsletter is published four times a year and manuscripts and artwork are welcome. Interim Editor: Carol Flanagan, [carolflana@aol.com](mailto:carolflana@aol.com). Production: Molly Gardener, Herb Gardener, and Carol Flanagan.

**The deadline for the Fall 2018 issue is August 20, 2018.**  
Send material to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, or via e-mail to [carolflana@aol.com](mailto:carolflana@aol.com).

