



Fyke Nature Association Summer Newsletter

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www.fykenature.org

Due to Corona virus restrictions, member meetings will be online on Zoom, a link to register will be sent out in advance. If you are not on Zoom, you can register for free at <https://zoom.us/>

Field trips will require face masks, social distancing, and no sharing of optics.

Please check our website and emails for any updates on meetings and field trips.

Calendar of Events

Since mid-2015 Fyke's monthly speaker costs have been funded by a generous grant from the Winifred M. and George P. Pitkin Foundation.

April 23, 2021, Friday – Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m. via Zoom South Cape May Meadows, Damon Noe

The Nature Conservancy's Damon Noe will talk to the Fyke Nature Association about South Cape May Meadows, one of the premier birding spots in NJ. Birds and beach are hallmarks of this 200+ acre success story along the Atlantic Ocean in Cape May. Learn the site's history, from nearly sinking into the ocean decades ago to welcoming wildlife and providing community flooding protection after a full natural restoration in 2007. Visitors can enjoy flat walking trails, sandy beach, special bird viewing areas, a rain garden and more. Damon will mention red knots and horseshoe crabs along nearby Delaware Bayshore, but they won't be the focus of his talk.

May 1 and 2, 2021 – Stepping Up For The Celery Farm, Gabriele Schmitt

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. As citizen-scientists, we are conducting an inventory of all the bird species seen that day.

Funds raised will be used for continued maintenance and enhancements at the Celery Farm. Please bear in mind that Fyke/The Celery Farm does not receive any funding from the Borough of Allendale. We depend on membership fees and donations.

To register a 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 21, 2021, Third Friday – Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m. via Zoom
There Are Birds, Stephanie Seymour**

Stephanie Seymour's melodic, harmony-laden album "There Are Birds" answers the musical question, "What happens when you combine Aimee Mann, Chrissie Hynde, and Karen Carpenter, add a dash of Matthew Sweet, and mix thoroughly with bird-related tales and imagery?" It's an album about birds, nature, the passage of time and Stephanie's relationship with these things and more. It's her story told from a bird's perspective and birds' stories revealed through her worldview.



Mid-July 2021 – Our Tom Burr Memorial Butterfly Walk at the Celery Farm

Date to be determined and will be announced on our email list, Facebook page, and website.

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.

September 1, 2021 – Mt. Peter Hawk Watch begins, Judith Cinquina

Fyke members are invited to help with the count or just visit and give us your support. We are hoping that the powers-that-be will have lifted restrictions by then and the worst of the pandemic will be behind us. What better way to celebrate than to relax under one of the most spectacular migrations in the country? The watch begins September 1, 2021 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.



**Saturday, August 28, 2021 – Mt. Peter Clean-Up.
Rain date, Sunday, August 29, 2021**

Our annual Clean-Up is scheduled for Saturday, August 28, 2021 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Rain date is Sunday, August 30, 2021. We pick up garbage, cut back trails and clear site lines that obscure incoming hawks using hand tools. We can always use volunteers. Contact Judy Cinquina at judycinq@optonline.net to volunteer or for more information.



A Possible Solution

By COOX2 (aka Charlie West)

I may have finally found the answer! To What? you might reasonably ask. To a nagging dilemma I've faced since becoming a "birder", and that is: How and Why do birds have so many ways to defeat our hearing/spotting/identifying them?

The ABA (American Birding Assoc.) has a widely disseminated "Ethics for Birders". I propose a similar Code for Birds.

I suspect the "Why" is a natural response to the disrespect and damage that we've done to the planet and the environment. Thus, to a certain degree, the adversarial retorts noted herein by our would-be/should-be avian friends we've brought upon ourselves.

This epiphany came to me on a recent trip to an area where I'd not been before; a beautiful spot with every conceivable habitat. The weather was salubrious too, and being weary from my long drive, with bins in hand, I rested against a large pin oak, one with a commanding view of the varied cover. I resisted the drowsiness accompanying the early morning sun to concentrate on the bird sounds that were coming from a nearby thicket.

Peering into the brush, I was able to discern a Great Horned Owl perched on an eye-level branch, apparently "lecturing" to a varied group of birds, all facing him in rapt attention (some even seemed to be taking notes as if at some outdoor seminar).

The GHO, obviously in charge, rattled off a proposed agenda. From his manner I had the impression that this was not an impromptu gathering but one of a scheduled series. With heightened interest I continued to eavesdrop.

"OK" he challenged, "have you all reviewed the Diversion Materials?" Many primaries were raised in apparent confirmation. A Flicker questioned, "I get the part about only revealing incomplete body silhouettes, rapid and frequent position changes, and feeding in the thickest leaf cover, but how are we supposed to keep ourselves backlit at all times?" The "professor" acknowledged the difficulty, but commented, "Keep practicing!"

A Junco asked, "Can we talk about false molting and sessional feathering again?" The Owl: "You'll recall that the former is the intentional removal of those feathers that provide diagnostic evidence; in your case you might choose to shed your outer rectrices. Also, you can use mud, pollen, or other natural ingredients to cover distinct body areas and serve as camouflage.

The latter is self-explanatory: Hang onto juvenile plumage, shed breeding plumage ASAP! The idea's to look "different", not what's expected.

A Wood Thrush, with obvious glee, offered, "I think the vocal seminars are the best! There's nothing that causes more indecisions with birders than songs or delivery patterns that they don't recognize. I've been practicing giving a long, slow introductory note." A Veery laughingly quipped, "I've reversed my song from a downward spiral to an upward one, a la Bicknell's." "Yep", replied the GHO, "Confusion's the name of the game, and ain't it FUN!"

I was shocked to hear such blatant adversarial and mocking opinions and to realize we're seen by the birds as "The Enemy" and that we're in an undeclared war. We HAVE to change their mind-sets. To achieve that constructive goal, as an initial campaign I propose the following Coo-Mandments as a Code for Birds to exemplify. To Wit:

1. No intentional backlighted positioning
2. No intentional directly overhead positioning
3. No intentional song manipulations or ventriloquizing
4. No skulking
5. No unnecessary flitting-about
6. No intentional feather altering
7. No intentional hiding-in or use of inappropriate habitats
8. No tantalizing nano-second appearances
9. No secret escape routes with intent to avoid detection
10. Treat All Birders with respect, even those w/o feeders

Let's hope that the GHO and his brethren will accept these ideas as an earnest attempt by birders to reconcile any past differences and to forge a new compatibility.

Author's Notes: The Optics Industry has been solicited to assist with funding. Allegations that the above events were a drowsy-induced dream sequence are unfounded.

Field and Feeder Notes

By Judith Cinquina

Goldeneye are highly successful ducks that have their origins in North America, but which have since spread right across Eurasia and can now be found right around the world, save for a gap in Greenland and Iceland. This gap is doubtless totally due to the absence of suitable nesting trees in those hostile lands.

From Ducks of North America and the Northern Hemisphere by John Gooders & Trevor Boyer, 1986

Maryann Fahey managed to photograph a male Goldeneye on the pond off Halifax Road, Mahwah, February 4 and another male on Oradell Reservoir, March 7. Her photos confirmed their striking white and black plumage. The male sports an iridescent dark green/black head that bulges at the nape and a distinctive white, full-moon mark at the base of his black bill. Loren Anderson was absent for a time from her Oakland home and returned March 21 to find two female Goldeneye and three Bufflehead on the Ramapo River behind her home. "I figured with the lakes open again, my winter river ducks would be gone," she wrote. She didn't think they would linger much longer. The Goldeneyes are heading north where they breed from Alaska to Newfoundland and south to our border with Canada. They nest in tree cavities near clean, clear lakes and ponds, and prefer broken hollow trees that provide a top entrance. But they will use nest boxes. According to Forbush (1912), they used to breed in the Maine woods, but logging probably discouraged them. Gooders and Boyer report that in some cases a hollow tree with a deep "chimney" may attract them but "prove their undoing." They wrote: "In Quebec, Canada an otherwise perfect Goldeneye hole proved to be some seven meters deep. When the tree was blown down, this chimney contained no less than 28 dead females that had become trapped while searching for a nest site."



Doug Morel noted the C. Goldeneye at Oradell Reservoir, February 5 along with a male Redhead that he wrote was originally found by Denise Farrell. Not common visitors to NJ, Redheads nest exclusively in North America in prairie potholes and build nests of rushes and

cattails. Gooders and Boyer state there are three distinct types of Redhead females: the “normal” female that builds her own nest and incubates her own eggs; the parasitic female who lays eggs in nests of other ducks before settling down to build her own nest and care for her young; and finally the “pure parasite” who makes no attempt to build a nest but, like our Cowbird, lays all her eggs in other nests. Mike Limatola and Sue Dougherty enjoyed the Oradell Redhead on the 6th, along with 35 Bald Eagles “of varying ages” on the ice, a few hundred Common Merganser in the open water, plus a C. Goldeneye, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers.

Like the Redhead, the Canvasback dives for a living, breeds exclusively in N. American and builds a nest of aquatic vegetation in prairie potholes. It also resembles a Redhead with its rufous head, but it’s larger and has a distinctive swan-like sloping forehead and bill. Gooders and Boyer state the Canvasback is “regularly parasitized by its close relative, the Redhead.”



Although a large segment of the Canvasback population winters on the Chesapeake Bay, we do have over 100 that have been wintering at DeKorte regularly and enjoyed by many Fyke members over the years. Tom Nicastrì noted Canvasbacks there on March 16, along with an “up-close” N. Harrier and an adult Bald Eagle dining on prey up on the landfill.

According to eBird, single Horned Grebes have turned up at Lake Tappan each winter since 2012. Doug Morel noted one there March 13, “diving and feeding at very close range”. They dive for fish and crustaceans in the winter. Like our Pied-billed Grebe, this northwestern breeder can’t crush fish bones in its gizzard, so it eats its own feathers that then line its stomach and afford protection and allow the grebe to slowly digest sharp bones. The first meal a grebe chick receives is feathers from its parent.

Michael Sterling managed to take a photo of his first ever Pileated Woodpecker, January 25 along the Saddle River Pathway. Michael is a new birder and felt “very lucky.” The next day, Mike Limatola reported a male “possibly making a nest hole” in a maple tree in Allendale. “Sap from the maple was pouring down the tree,” he wrote. On February 21, Julie McCall found a Pileated “yelling and faffing about” near Barking Dog Corner at the Celery Farm (CF). Julie thought that the Pileated may have become tired of the turkeys that were also yelling and “faffing about” in that area, so it left and flew over the marsh. A Pileated was seen checking out a tree cavity at the CF, March 21, according to Gaby Schmitt. She wrote that the site was just north of the deer enclosure where a pair nested last year and two young fledged. On the 23rd, before noon, Elisabeth McGrath spotted a very silent Pileated fly into a tree cavity at Mary Patrick Park in Mahwah. It didn’t reappear, and it was much too early for roosting, and she suspected it was a nest site. She also found a handsome male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker drumming at the CF, March 22. It will soon be on its way north, where it will create sap wells that allow early arriving Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to survive on sweet sap until flower nectar is available.



Few Pine Siskins were reported over the winter. Louise Roccobene had one at her feeders in Franklin Lakes, March 21. That’s considerably down from the 18 that visited her feeders November 1. If you recall, the CF Hour on the Tower crew spotted a small flock of Siskins feeding along the edge of Lake Appert, November 22. Here in Upper Saddle River, I had a dozen, March 1 and seven on the 14th that included a yellow form with pale stripes, bright yellow wingbars and tail spots, yellow under the tail, and a yellow wash on its back and chest. It was a very aggressive individual. It took over my small platform feeder, threatening all who attempted to feed there. It was a one-day wonder.

Fox Sparrows turned up mid-March. Three found a snow-free spot on a sunny hillside at DeKorte on the 9th, all on the hunt, kicking up leaves. Doug Morel reported two at Mary Patrick Park in Mahwah on the 12th, and Brian Kenney found another at Halifax two days later. No reports of any under feeders, yet. A Tree Sparrow visited Betty McDonnell's Mahwah feeder, February 9 and spent "nearly five hours feasting on my various feeders," Betty wrote. Two others were enjoyed by a few Fyke members under a feeder at DeKorte, March 11. The only report of a Red-breasted Nuthatch came from Maryann Fahey, March 10 in Washington Township.

Not many Fyke members encountered Woodcock yet this spring. Doug Morel found one at Halifax in Mahwah late in the afternoon, February 27, and Laurie Neu noted one at a Montvale park, March 13. Charlie West and the Tower crew celebrated the first Killdeer at the CF, March 14 along with the first Tree Swallow. At least half a dozen Tree Swallows were already arguing over nest boxes at DeKorte on the 11th. A Pine Warbler arrived at Betty McDonnell's mealworm feeder in Mahwah, March 26. It was a first for her feeding station. Unusual for a warbler, it creeps over branches like a nuthatch or Brown Creeper, extracting larvae and insects, which allow it to arrive early and find sustenance before trees leaf out. Hal Harrison in his *Wood Warblers World* 1984, states that the Pine Warbler normally eats insects but will come to feeders for cornmeal, peanut butter, nutmeats, and suet. And now we know they like mealworms too.



Lisa Potash wrote on March 17, that her Screech Owls are interacting. Lisa has cameras set up in two boxes in her Oakland yard. She wrote, "Yesterday the pair roosted in my front yard box, and today they were in separate boxes." She was surprised that night when the male went right for the female's box in her front yard and was vocalizing. She continued, "Last two nights, the male even has visited the front box at midnight calling and trilling. On March 25th, Lisa reported the female seemed ready to lay eggs. She wrote, "The female is behaving differently today: lots of fanning-out in the box, preening, and rearranging box material." Lisa's microphone even recorded some of their hooting late in the day. You can view her Screech Owls on YouTube at "Owl in the Box Live Stream." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYYPWkD3oeA>



"Red-shouldered hawks were mating at the Fell House on Thursday, with a third one calling over the Celery Farm," Mike Limatola wrote, March 26. It is amazing that this raptor, once known to prefer remote wet woodlands, has adapted to our suburban habitat. So have bird-eating raptors that are attracted to free meals at our feeding stations. On January 26, overcast and in the low 30's with snow imminent by afternoon, Charlie West attempted to join Fyke members participating in a Birdy-30 but was deterred by an adult Sharp-shinned Hawk who perched like a finial atop his feeder pole in Allendale and sent all the birds into hiding. Charlie wrote that the hawk "appeared to be vocalizing, perhaps trying to lure some of his 'intend-ees' out of their sanctuary in the nearby bushes." The Sharpie failed to procure a meal; nevertheless, Charlie took its mug shot and posted it on the Fyke site. I, too, had an accipiter perch atop my feeder pole a few times over the winter. Mine was a Cooper's Hawk, and I did find feather evidence of at least one of his Junco appetizers.

And speaking of Cooper's Hawks, Betty McDonnell also had a Coop hunting her Mahwah property and occasionally perching on her feeder pole. On January 25, Betty complained, "In the past two days I have watched a Cooper's Hawk snag two White Throated Sparrows from my feeders. Enough!" I don't believe she wished to banish the hawk forever, but on March 22, Betty made a gruesome discovery. Her Coop had been missing from the "breakfast bar" for a couple of weeks. "I did not miss him," she wrote. And then she discovered he was dead. She does have a terrible deer problem, and the deer had been eating her holly trees. She wanted to preserve her trees, so she encircled one with turkey wire. The deer now prune her tree to the wire. "My feeder

birds use the holly as refuge when the Cooper's hunts," she explained. She guessed that the Coop tried to pursue a songbird into the holly and died in the process. Now she has to figure out how to extract the hawk.

Spring is pushing against the door and soon warblers, flycatchers, orioles, and many other species will fly in. Robins, Red-winged Blackbirds and Song Sparrows are already defending territories and White-throated Sparrows and Juncos are tuning up to charm females further north on their breeding grounds. Enjoy each new arrival and share your observations with us all. Join our discussion group at fykenature@groups.io where many of the reports for this column originated. Or send your observations to me at judyqing@optonline.net.

Welcome New Members



Karen Chatten, Hawthorne
Dorcas MacClintock, Hamden, CT
Maria Suarez, Park Ridge
Carol Tatosian and Family, Allendale

From the Editor to all Fyke Members:

Please send items you think would be of interest to our group. News, features, articles on wildlife observation, conservation issues, book reviews, field notes, humorous first-person bird/nature related stories. All submissions will be gratefully appreciated!

Stepping Up For The Celery Farm Pledge Form – 2021

Send your pledge by e-mail to Kurt Muenz, elkumu@aceweb.com. If you do not have email, you can mail your pledge to The Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446. Donations can be made online at www.fykenature.org/join.php and then click on the "Donate" button.

Yes, I want to support Stepping Up 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.

My pledge is:

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

Name:

Address:

Phone:



Noted on Facebook!

One minute you are young and cool, maybe even a little dangerous, and the next minute you are reading amazon reviews for birdseed.



2022 Celery Farm Calendar

Photos taken at the Celery Farm by Fyke members are being accepted now for the 2022 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 a .jpeg email attachment.** Send your photos to carolflana@aol.com by July 12, 2021. Thank you in advance for your support of Fyke Nature Association!

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The Fyke Nature Association, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets on the fourth Friday of every month January to April, September, and October. The May meeting is on the third Friday. 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, or contact Mike Limatola, President, mike.limatola@gmail.com. The Newsletter is published four times a year and manuscripts and artwork are welcome. Editor: Carol Flanagan, carolflana@aol.com.

The deadline for the Fall 2021 issue is August 18, 2021. Send material to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, or via e-mail to carolflana@aol.com.

