

FYKE NATURE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

www.fykenature.org

Vol. 60 – No. 4 – Winter 2014



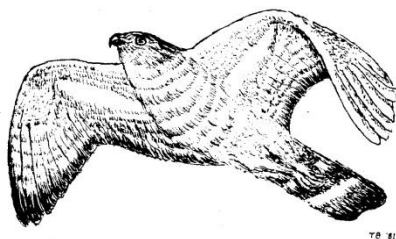
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 28, 2014 - Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building Members Night. Please come and enjoy an evening of short presentations by Fyke Members or better yet, be a presenter and share your own photos, prints, collections, stories, etc. For digital presentations, please contact Kurt Muenz at 201-447-0107 or elkumu@aceweb.com.
*** Members submitting digital photos or videos to Kurt for presentation from his laptop must do so by Nov. 14 at the latest. This deadline does not apply to those who will be presenting from their own laptop.

December 14, 2014 - Christmas Bird Count. An all-day activity with a recap meeting open to all at the Allendale Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m. Please see the article on page two.

January 23, 2015 - Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building Kathy Mitchell, Timber Rattlesnakes: Their Secret Lives and Conservation Needs
This presentation will address some of this new information as well as the natural history of the timber rattlesnake and its conservation needs. Kathy graduated from Lebanon Valley College with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. After years of conducting volunteer reptile and amphibian surveys while working as a wildlife technician for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation she began working as a wildlife biologist specializing in turtles, snakes and eagles and has continued for 20 years.

February 7, 2015 - Field Trip: The Teatown Hudson River Eaglefest at Croton Point Park in Croton-on-Hudson, NY. The hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Live bird shows, eagle viewing and tons of activities for all! Meet onsite. Registration not required



Birds have wings; they're free; they can fly where they want when they want. They have the kind of mobility many people envy.

Roger Tory Peterson

The desire to fly is an idea handed down to us by our ancestors who... looked enviously on the birds soaring freely through space... on the infinite highway of the air.

Wilbur Wright

Ramsey Christmas Bird Count - 2014

By John Brotherton

Planning has started for our 62nd annual Christmas Bird Count to be held Sunday, December 14, 2014. The count is part of the 115th Christmas Bird Count, a continent-wide program organized by the National Audubon Society. Last season our count was one of over 1,800 circles covered by 50,000 field observers who listed over 60 million birds in the US. Our group of 32 counted 83 species.



As usual the leading counts in the US were in Texas and California. In New Jersey the leader among 30 counts was Cape May with 161 species. We can't expect to challenge that number, but we will be on the lookout for Cackling Goose (recently split from Canada Goose), Eurasian Wigeon, Eared Grebe, Wild Turkey, Spotted Towhee and Brown-headed Cowbird. We also hope for Ruffed Grouse and Northern Shrike, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak.

As most of you know we cover a 15 mile diameter circle centered on Lake Erskine, including all or part of Ramsey, Mahwah, Allendale, Wyckoff, Franklin Lakes, Oakland, Wayne, Pompton Lakes, Bloomingdale, Ringwood, West Milford, Greenwood Lake, Tuxedo, Hillburn, Sloatsburg and Suffern.

We will send at least eight teams to different sections of the area to count birds from dawn to dusk. Some teams will search for owls before and after daylight. The co-compilers are John Brotherton and Stiles Thomas. If you would like to join one of the teams call Stiles at 201-327-3470. For any other questions, call John at 201-327-1483 or jbro29@optonline.net.

The recap meeting, to which all are invited, will be held starting at 5:30 p.m. the day of the count at the Allendale Municipal Building Council Chambers, 500 West Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ, second floor.



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Steadily the waters rise –  
And the torrid heat keeps pace-  
Raging storms ensue.

Fires devastate forests -  
Floods lay waste to town and farm -  
Skeptics loud and blind.

Hark! Can you hear it?  
Earth's cry of care abandoned –  
Listen! Before it dies!

*COOx2 (a.k.a. Charley West)*



## Field and Feeder Notes

By Judith Cinquina

*...on September 20, (I) found a juvenile (Yellow-bellied Sapsucker) pestering an adult male, presumably its parent. The male kept trying to leave, but the juvenile kept coming close. I saw several other encounters, where males ended by driving their offspring away....On October 22 and 23, I watched four conflicts, all dramatic. The...juvenile, in the first of these, flew to an oak making "quares," then hitched over to an adult male at some drill holes. The male kept shifting away. In another moment the two fell to the ground, locked in conflict and making "quares." The juvenile flew away. The male ascended an oak with a mass of contour feathers sticking to his bill...He then flew after the juvenile in a long circular pursuit.... The conflict was possibly territorial...*

*From: Woodpeckers of Eastern North America, pp, 166-167, Lawrence Kilham, 1983.*

On October 9, Rochana Muenthongchin discovered a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers interacting at Overpeck Park near the stables. A juvenile male seemed bent on shadowing an adult male, probably its parent, and begging for food. Unlike Kilham's male sapsucker, this one was not overly aggressive and even seemed to feed the youngster an insect. But the male's patience won't last for long. According to the species account in N. Am. Birds Online by Walters, Miller, and Lowther, 2002, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are very solitary in winter, and the male will eventually force the youngster out of his territory. Another male turned up on the 12th, once again pestered by a juvenile. The two were flicking wings at one another and emitting "quares" in a tree in Upper Saddle River. They were causing such a fuss that they attracted the attention of a squirrel who lunged at them repeatedly as the pair, still intent on their argument, flew here & there to escape.



I witnessed yet another male interacting with a juvenile in my Upper Saddle River backyard on October 2 and 5, 2013. The adult male had drilled wells in one of my black birches, and the juvenile took advantage of the sweet treat but was repeatedly chased by the male. Although Kilham states that family members migrate together, why have all these incidents only involved adult males? I think the reason is that most females migrate south of us for the winter, while males stay as close to their northern breeding grounds as weather and food permit. So we are more likely to witness interactions with young that follow the male. Although there is a small population of these sapsuckers breeding in High Point and Stokes State Forests, most breed north of us into Canada. By the way, Gabrielle Schmitt's Hour on the Tower gang submitted the first sapsucker sighting, September 28.



A migrant Winter Wren is not as easy to find as a sapsucker, although both nest in the wilder areas of our state and are occasionally found on our Ramsey Christmas Bird Count. The dark little Winter Wren, with its tiny perky tail, likes to play hide and seek among roots and detritus in dank woodlands, so both Mark Kantrowitz and Alice Leurck were very surprised to find Winter Wrens in their respective Hillsdale and Ramsey yards on September 15. Simon Streatfeild found four at Mahwah Green Acres (also known as Mary Patrick Park) in Mahwah in mid-October when their migration peaks, but according to Hejl, Holmes, and Kroodsma in their Winter Wren account in N. American Birds Online, 2002, their fall migration stretches from late July into early November. The authors also state

that this wren is the only one found outside the Americas and that there are from 35 to 43 subspecies recognized across their entire range in N. American, Eurasia and N. Africa. The Pacific Wren along our west coast used to be considered a subspecies until it was proven to be a full species in 2008. Our Winter Wren thrives in old growth forests on steep slopes and in dark ravines and disappears when forests are fragmented or heavily logged. It's a good contender for best songster in the forest. Richard H. Pough in his Audubon Bird Guide, 1946, stated the wren's "song has great beauty and remarkable length." He continues, "The high-pitched notes, uttered rapidly, rise and fall to produce a clear, melodious, and bubbling warble broken by 1 or more trills." It's an amazing song for such a tiny bird.

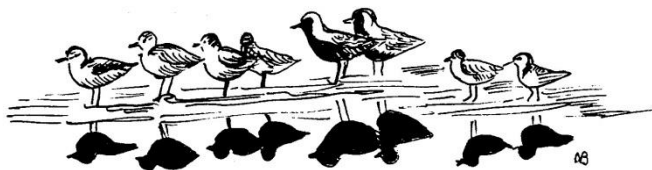
A few great finds were made in our area this fall. First was the Prothonotary Warbler photographed by Gerry Barrack at the CF, August 24. According to Rob's meticulous records, this rare and early fall migrant was found at the CF only once before in the fall, on August 22, 2001. Next came the Connecticut Warbler discovered by Doug Morel at Halifax in Mahwah, September 23. Although many searched for this elusive migrant at the Celery Farm (CF) and elsewhere, no others were reported by Fyke members. A Clay-colored Sparrow made a fleeting appearance along the phragmites edge of Crestwood Lake in Allendale, October 7. Rosemarie Widmer got a brief look at its gray collar and pale loreal spot before it disappeared. One seen in the same area, September 27, 2012 was much more cooperative and seen by many Fyke members over a few days.

On October 10, Doug found a Nelson's Sparrow in the phragmites in this same area. Like the Pacific Wren, the Nelson's was only recently (1995) declared a species. It used to be lumped with the Saltmarsh and called a Sharp-tailed Sparrow. It's not an easy bird to find because it won't respond to pishing, hides rather than perches up when alarmed, and spends a good deal of time plucking seeds on or near the ground under cover. But if you're lucky to have it pop out into the open, even briefly, it's unforgettable with its mustard-colored face and upper chest. This individual sported two bright white stripes or "braces" on its brown back. The CF has perfect habitat for this colorful sparrow, and, according to Rob, one was found there, Oct. 24, 2000.

The only interesting behavior report came from Betty McDonnell. On August 12, she watched her resident Catbird performing a dance that resembled "mating behavior" in her Mahwah backyard. She investigated further and discovered a "huge" Black Rat Snake that the Catbird was trying to distract away from its nest and young. According to Smith, Hatch, Cimprich and Moore, 2011, from The Birds of America Online, Catbirds respond strongly to snakes, spreading their tails and flashing their wings and, if successful, pecking at a snake's tail as it retreats. Betty also noted that large flocks of Robins and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in her area, both signs of migration.



That same day, seven migrant Solitary Sandpipers gathered on mudflats near Lake Henry, Halifax. Emitting a very rapid series of "peet" calls as they moved around a dried up marshy area, some flashed their wings and chased others who approached too closely. Mudflats at the CF also attracted a scattering of sandpipers. Mike Limatola noted two Greater Yellowlegs near the Warden's Watch, September 14. Four days later, Rob found two Pectoral Sandpipers, 13 Lesser Yellowlegs, a Solitary and a Spotted Sandpiper in the same area. Charlie West reported three Pectorals opposite the Pirie Platform during the October 5th Hour on the Tower, and Simon Streatfeild found two Lesser Yellowlegs at Mahwah Green Acres on the 12th.





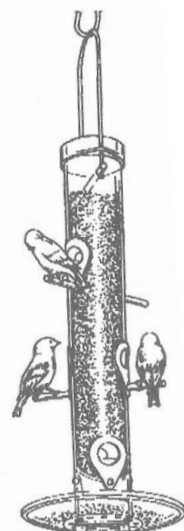
A scattering of Purple Finches was noted in late September and early October in Wyckoff, Allendale and Paramus, but no major flight was recorded. However, migrant Pine Siskins put on a nice show at State Line Lookout on the Palisades, October 20, according to Charlie West. Siskins passed the watch all day in “multiple flocks” of 50+. Charlie estimated that at least 400 moved through that day. Cone crops have failed in some areas north of us, so the Siskins are moving south where they may find better crops or feeders full of nyger or thistle seed.

Doug Morel discovered five Eastern Meadowlarks in a Paramus field, October 10. This declining grassland species is always a gift in our area. Rosemarie reported the first Fox Sparrow at Mahwah Recreation Area next to Darlington, October 20, and Gabrielle Schmitt bagged the only Brown Creeper reported, near her Bergenfield home, two days later. That Ruby-crowned Kinglet noted by Betty, August 12, was probably a young bird, according to Boyle, *The Birds of NJ*, 2011. The adults peak in mid-October, so it’s no surprise that Simon birded a Mahwah field on the 21st and wrote, I’ve “never seen so many RC Kinglets.”



If you haven’t kept up with the Ridgewood Chimney Swift story, I recommend Jim Wright’s “Chimney Swift Roost” article in the September 25 Bergen Record (<http://celeryfarm.net/2014/09/new-column-ridgewood-chimney-swifts.html>). He recounts the history of the popular George Washington Middle School roost with help from Kurt Muenz’s detailed notes and recounts its demise and rediscovery at a smaller chimney at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church school building, “just a half-mile from the previous roost.” Kurt, who Jim dubbed the “Chimney Swift maven,” has already recorded arrival and departure data at the new roost.

It’s time to clean and fill your feeders and share your visitor list with the rest of us. 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 [judyinq@optonline.net](mailto:judyinq@optonline.net) or call me at (201) 327-1782.



## The Big Sit! 2014 — Our 20<sup>th</sup> Year

By Carol Flanagan

Thanks to all the members of our team, the Celery Stalkers, who participated our 20<sup>th</sup> Big Sit! Yes. It has been 20 years!

The Big Sit! is an event started by the New Haven Bird Club and now sponsored by Birdwatchers Digest. The rules are simple: you designate a circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle for 24 hours, and count all the bird species you see or hear. Our circle is centered at the Pirie Platform at the Celery Farm.

Our total this year was 51 species. No new species were seen so our cumulative total is still 121.

### Participants:

Stiles Thomas – Co-Captain  
Carol Flanagan – Co-Captain  
John Bird  
John Brotherton  
Malcolm Chesworth  
Barbara Dilger

Molly Gardener  
Darlene Lembo  
Dennis Farrell  
Mike Limatola  
Julie McCall  
Doug Morel

Kurt Muenz  
Gaby Schmitt  
Michael Tat  
Kevin Watson  
Charley West  
Brian Kenny

### Species list:

Double-crested Cormorant  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Turkey Vulture  
Black Vulture  
Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
American Black Duck  
Mallard  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Green-winged Teal  
Osprey  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk  
Killdeer  
Wilson's Snipe  
Ring-billed Gull  
Rock Pigeon  
Mourning Dove  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Eastern Phoebe  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch

Carolina Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
European Starling  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

### Here are the results for New Jersey.

Circles: 5 registered, 4 reporting

The Celery Stalkers — Carol Flanagan — Allendale, nj — 51  
Swamp Sitters — Nancy Felicito — Great Swamp NWR, nj — 72  
Exit Hero — Tom Reed — Cape May Point, nj — 150  
Lk Pine Gray Geese — Maggie Thomas — Medford, nj — 36





## **Stiles and Lillian Thomas Scholarship Winner – 2014 -- Part Two**

Here is Karli Montick’s award winning scholarship essay:

Originally, I knew that I wanted to go into a field that combined my passion for art as well as science. When I was presented with various options throughout my high school career and college application process, architecture and environmental design had always stood out as a perfect combination of the two subjects I gravitated towards when thinking about my career and, ultimately, my future endeavors. California Polytechnic State University offered the unique combination of environmental science and architecture that fit exactly what I was looking for while being in one of the most eco-friendly regions in the nation. The school’s specific College of Architecture and Environmental Design will only add to the experience in both the field of structural design and environmental sciences that I have found to create both a unique and important pair. Focusing on incorporating environmental values and aesthetics into structural designs for exterior and interior projects is particularly critical amongst the environmental issues the world faces today and it will be special to be able to contribute to the progress of developing more eco-friendly structures. Although it will be challenging at times to find the balance between the economical, structural, ethical, and ecological aspects of architecture, studying how to that basic balance between the environment and design elements from the start of my education will prove to be invaluable. The objectives in the architecture and environmental design program will not only incorporate critical thinking to achieve a distinctive relationship between architectural design and the environment but also push me to think creatively as well, influencing the future generations that will benefit from greener, more sustainable elements of our homes, businesses, malls, outdoor spaces, and communities in general.

As the structures that fill regions of our world are a significant part of the environment’s conditions, I will be able to take my education and innovate with modern green technology. Green, renewable, and economical energy; efficient plumbing, insulation, and lighting; and aesthetic and functional outdoor living spaces will be primary focuses within all of my designs, as I will be trained to do so within CalPoly’s program. It will be important to continue researching and designing based off of the newest technology and environmental demands. Being able to adapt to the newest standards, conditions, and the ever changing climate will be one of the most valuable things I will learn not only to incorporate into my practice but throughout the world’s careers, businesses, and cultures that will benefit from accommodating the environment.

Understanding the direct relationship between architecture and my environment is unavoidable as both a student and future architect. The environment basically dictates the blueprints for any development in terms of its specific topography, climate, natural resources, region, soil quality, amongst numerous other aspects. Where the environment and structural design are interdependent throughout the design process, it is important for students, like myself, to assess, create, and construct the most effective structure in that environment. The fusion of environmental science and architecture is not only more appealing to my personal interests than just plain architecture, but also serves as an essential combination that modern infrastructure needs in order to effectively adapt with environmental issues and standards that put pressure on our society today.

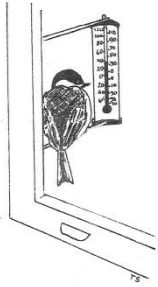
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Holiday Shopping? Here’s an Easy Way to Support Fyke



While doing your online holiday shopping, don’t forget we now have a direct link to AMAZON from our website. Fyke does not endorse any particular merchant but just log onto www.fykenature.org and you will find the link on the first page. Every month AMAZON sends us a sales commission check.

Celery Farm 2015 Calendars!



Celery Farm Calendars are available for a donation of \$15.00 to Fyke. The proceeds from Celery Farm calendar donations, after covering costs, will continue to fund the Stiles and Lillian Thomas Scholarship. The Stiles and Lillian Thomas Scholarship was initiated to honor Stiles and Lillian Thomas for their life-long commitment to preservation and conservation. This annual scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior student of Northern Highlands Regional High School who is pursuing a college degree in the environmental sciences.

Time to Renew Your Fyke Dues

The new membership year for Fyke started September 1, 2014 and ends August 31, 2015. This means that annual dues should be paid now. The dues schedule is: Individual -- \$15.00, and Family -- \$20.00. Checks should be made out to Fyke Nature Association, and mailed to John Brotherton, 249 E. Crescent Avenue, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Thank you!

Fyke Board of Trustees:

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Webmaster:	Kevin Watson

The Fyke Nature Association, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets the fourth Friday of every month except June, July, August, and December at the **Allendale Municipal Building**, 500 W. Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ 07401. Meetings and membership are open to all. Annual dues: Individual -- \$15.00; Family -- \$20.00. For further information, write to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, visit our website www.fykenature.org, or call Mike Limatola, President, at 201-739-8062. The Newsletter is published four times a year and manuscripts and artwork are welcome. Interim Editor: Carol Flanagan, carolflana@aol.com. Production: Molly Gardener, Herb Gardener, and John Brotherton.



The deadline for the Spring 2015 issue is January 21, 2015. Send material to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, or via e-mail to carolflana@aol.com.