



Fall Newsletter
Vol. 63 – No. 3 – 2017
www.fykenature.org

Calendar of Events

September to November – State Line Hawk Watch.

Meet at the State Line lookout in Alpine. This site has easy access and park facilities. Here is a chance to look down at migrating hawks. From September through early November, volunteer observers record the migration of raptors from the lookout point at State Line Lookout, from 9 AM to 4 PM, volunteer availability and weather conditions permitting.

September to November – Mount Peter Hawk Watch 60 Years and Counting, By Judith Cinquina

The Mount Peter Hawk Watch, begun by the Fyke Nature Association in 1958, will celebrate its 60th consecutive fall count this fall, and hopefully the migrant raptors will join us. Although you can't call down to the Valley View Inn for a beer, as Stiles claimed to have done during those early days, you can enjoy some homemade ice cream from the local Creamery. The watch runs from September 1 through November 15 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, weather permitting. We're located above the Creamery at the top of 17A between Greenwood Lake and Warwick, NY. Visitors are more than welcome.

Leaders at the State Line Watch at the State Line Lookout on the Palisades in NJ and at the Hook Mountain Watch off 9W North in Nyack, NY also welcome visitors. Both sites offer close encounters of the raptor kind. For more information on any of the hawk watch sites or to monitor their daily tallies, go to www.hawkcount.org.

September 16 and 17, 2017 – Fyke Weekend at Mount Peter

Come one or both days and join the regulars at the lookout. We hope to catch a big Broadwing flight. Registration not required.



September 22, 2017 – Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building Naturalist Diary, Pete Bacinski

A program complete with all those natural history facts and questions you never thought to ask as well as amazing images of Mother Nature's incredible oddities. This PowerPoint presentation will touch on birds, wildflowers, butterflies, ferns, mammals and reptiles and amphibians as well as many unusual natural history events. Naturalist Diary is to be enjoyed by the whole family (children ten and above). You are guaranteed to learn a new natural history fact that you never knew before.

October 1, 2017 – Hawks Over the Hudson, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Fyke will be represented at “Hawks Over the Hudson” at the State Line Lookout, Palisades Interstate Park in Alpine, New Jersey, rain or shine. The program features live birds of prey presented by the Delaware Valley Raptor Center at 1 and 2:30 p.m. Between the programs, visitors can chat with the presenters, and to enjoy activities and exhibits presented by some of the member organizations of the Nature Program Cooperative. The program is free and open to all, with no advance registration required to attend. Website for this event is <http://natureprogram.org/hawksOverHudson.html>.

October 7, 2017 – Celery Farm Guided Walk

This two-hour walk is for nature-lovers of all ages and birders of all levels. We'll look for bugs and weird plants as well as our feathered friends. Meet at 8 a.m. at Green Way cul-de-sac on the north end of the CF off Franklin Turnpike. To register, contact Mike Limatola, 201-739-8062 or mike.limatola@gmail.com.

October 7, 2017 - The Big Sit! at the Celery Farm.

The Big Sit! is an annual, international, noncompetitive birding event. Our team, The Celery Stalkers, sits in a circle 17 feet in diameter for 24 hours counting all the bird species we see or hear. The center of our circle is the Pirie – Mayhood Tower. To sign up for a team contact Carol Flanagan, carolflana@aol.com.



October 22, 2017 (Sunday) - Field Trip: Ducks at Dusk.

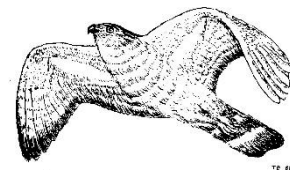
Meet at the Celery Farm Warden’s Watch at 5:30 p.m. To register contact Mike Limatola, 201-739-8062 or mike.limatola@gmail.com.

**October 27, 2017 - Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building
Hawk ID, Giselle Smisko**

Explore "Hawk Identification" with Giselle Smisko. Hawk watching can be both exciting and challenging. Each fall migrating hawks create a spectacular display as they soar through the sky by the thousands. Learn the finer points of identifying the species that reside or migrate through the Northeast. Giselle Smisko is a naturalist, photographer, wildlife rehabilitator, and a Master Bird Bander. She now directs the Avian Wildlife Center in Sussex County with the help of her husband John. Live birds will be part of the presentation with question and answer period afterward.

November 4, 2017 - Field Trip: Sunrise Mountain Hawk Watch.

Meet on site 10 a.m. To register contact Mike Limatola, 201-739-8062 or mike.limatola@gmail.com.



*Colors are the smiles of nature.
~Leight Hunt*

December 1, 2017 - 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, 201-447-0107 or elkumu@aceweb.com.

Stepping Up For Lorrimer 2017

After a rain delay from May 13, this year's Stepping Up was held on Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21. Thank you to Gabriele Schmitt for coordinating this event! She and her team counted 73 species raising a total donation of \$1548.00, for New Jersey Audubon Lorrimer Sanctuary children's educational programs. Gabriele stated "We had another successful fundraiser and I want to thank all of you who participated in this most worthwhile effort. Whether you were in the field helping to get us to this year's total species count of 73, or whether you pledged per bird species or made a donation, I thank you. This event simply doesn't happen without your support."

Species Seen:

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Mute Swan	Hairy Woodpecker	Veery
Wood Duck	Northern Flicker	Swainson's Thrush
Mallard	Alder Flycatcher	American Robin
Wild Turkey	Willow Flycatcher	Gray Catbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Empidonax sp.	European Starling
Great Blue Heron	(Possible Least	Cedar Waxwing
Great Egret	Flycatcher)	Northern Waterthrush
Green Heron	Eastern Phoebe	Common Yellowthroat
Black Vulture	Great Crested Flycatcher	American Redstart
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Kingbird	Northern Parula
Cooper's Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Bald Eagle	Red-eyed Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Blue Jay	Canada Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Killdeer	Common Raven	Swamp Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Northern Rough-winged	Scarlet Tanager
Rock Pigeon	Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Mourning Dove	Tree Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Bank Swallow	Common Grackle
Black-billed Cuckoo	Barn Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Chimney Swift	Black-capped Chickadee	Baltimore Oriole
Ruby-throated	Tufted Titmouse	House Finch
Hummingbird	White-breasted Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Belted Kingfisher	House Wren	House Sparrow
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	

Our Birders:



John Bird
Nancy Drabik
Alice Leurck
Mike Limatola
Julie McCall
Doug Morel

Gabriele Schmitt
Suzanne Serafini
Stiles Thomas
Kevin Watson
Fred Weber
Jim Wright

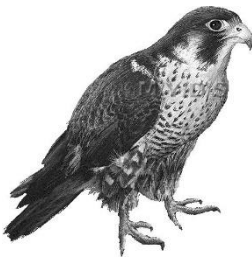
Field and Feeder Notes

By Judith Cinquina

I just witnessed an amazing mid-air interaction. I was watching a Great Blue Heron circling lazily over my yard, when out of nowhere a Peregrine Falcon swooped in and began to attack it. The falcon circled wide, picked up speed, and headed for the heron. Under normal circumstances, the heron's harsh growls, are impressive but when one is screaming bloody murder high over your head, it's something you don't forget. The falcon did not touch the heron but came as close as it could, while the heron screamed and tried to change its flight path. Again the falcon flew out, circled around, gained speed, and strafed the poor, struggling heron. With another bloody scream, the heron changed direction, and finally the falcon was satisfied and let the heron escape.

Stephanie Seymour, Ringwood NJ, June 24, 2017

Just three decades ago, Stephanie's Peregrine tale would have been difficult to believe, there were so few Peregrines anywhere in the NE. In fact, our resident subspecies was wiped out by the 1960's. It took the banning of DDT and the reintroduction of a hybrid Peregrine



subspecies to bring the spectacular flight of the Peregrine back to NJ. Another Peregrine, this one immature, "barreled down Lake (Appert) a foot above the surface," August 6, just before the Hour on the Tower group met at the Celery Farm (CF), according to Charlie West. Walt Staab took some "incredible" shots of the bird, Jim Wright wrote on his CF Blog <http://www.celeryfarm.net>. Walt related that the falcon was "harassed for a while by smaller birds, and it even frightened a duck enough to dive quickly to avoid an attack."

Few species have the pizzazz of a Peregrine, but the Yellow-throated Warbler that Fred Weber spotted at the CF April 11 did cause much excitement. Resembling a Black and White Warbler with a flashy yellow throat, this was only its third appearance at the CF, Rob Fanning believes. Just like the one Rob found on April 14, 2014, this Yellow-throated was also the white-lored, shorter-billed Sycamore subspecies that breeds on Bull's Island and other floodplains north along the Delaware River. It is also known as the Interior subspecies. Alice Leurck contributed a stunning, close-up photo of the warbler to the Fyke Yahoo site. A yellow-lored form can be found in south Jersey, especially in Belleplain State Forest and in the pines along Jake's Landing Road on the Delaware Bayshore.



A Mourning Warbler also put on a show for a number of Fyke members. Discovered by Doug Morel at Halifax in Mahwah, May 22 and photographed so beautifully by Kevin Watson a couple days later, it sang and hunted low in shrubs around the parking lot. Rob commented, “The CF used to be tremendous for them, but I think the over browsing of their habitat by deer has caused their numbers to decline at the CF.”

Another rare find was the Lawrence’s Warbler that Simon Streatfeild “lived” at Kakiat Park in Suffern, NY, May 20. Not a countable species, the Lawrence’s is a backcross between a hybrid Brewster’s and either a Golden-winged or Blue-winged Warbler and rarely found. A Brewster’s Warbler is a hybrid between Blue and Golden-winged Warblers and is more common. Kakiat used to host both nesting Blue and Golden-wings but the Golden seems to have died out. An article by Gustave Axelson in the *Living Bird* magazine, Summer 2016, revealed that Golden and Blue-winged Warblers are 99.97% alike genetically. The author went on to mention that “John James Audubon wrote a letter to his friend the Rev. John Bachman...(and) mused that Golden-winged Warblers and Blue-winged Warblers might be the same species.” The two have yet to be lumped into one species, but the author concluded, “We need to think of these two species as an evolving complex.”



A Blue-winged Warbler and seven other warblers, including a Tennessee, were found at Great Oak Park in Oakland by Rick Weiman, April 30. By early August, warblers were heading back south. Fred Weber found the earliest reported at the CF, a female Black and White on August 5, and there were quite a few reports of young American Redstarts, including two passing through Stiles Thomas’ Allendale yard.

The best “yard” bird had to be the N. Saw-whet Owl that Patrick Scheuer heard June 27 and 28 at the end of NJ Audubon’s Lorrimer driveway in Franklin Lakes, just after dark. He described the calls as a series of soft toots. On October 2, 2014, at 6:40 a.m., I heard one tooting in my yard, single toots with long pauses in between. I consulted Trudy Battally, a Saw-whet bander, and she said Saw-whets do sometimes give single toots. She would not be surprised by Patrick’s owl being so near a busy road in suburbia. She stated they do roost unnoticed high in suburban trees and even in busy highway triangles. Wiebke Hinsch enjoyed watching a Great-horned Owl nest in her neighbor’s pine tree. On May 10, two young fledged from the nest and flew to her thinly needled Norway Spruce where the “fluffy, light-brown bundles” sat all day. Wiebke’s Woodcliff Lake yard has been visited by Great-horneds before.



We all feel lucky to see one or two Woodcocks in the spring, but seven! Simon Streatfeild was forced into a “little extra gymnastics” while executing his monthly bird survey at Mahwah Green Acres (Mary Patrick Park) to keep from stepping on a Woodcock, March 30. Seven of them were scattered on a long spit of wetlands. Simon related they all didn’t burst into flight. Some stayed put long enough for a “decent look.” On April 22, Tom Nicastrì “met a pleasant Snipe” at Halifax in Mahwah. He took close-up photos showing the eyes located high towards the back of the head. That location enables the bird to spy predators creeping up from behind while it’s probing in the mud with its long, flexible bill.





American Bitterns are beginning to be routine during the CF Hour on the Tower in the spring, although on April 23 it was only heard as they were leaving, according to Charley West. On April 30, the Tower crew scored a Glossy Ibis along with an expected Virginia Rail. The Ibis migration is at its peak in mid-April, according to Boyle's *Birds of NJ*.

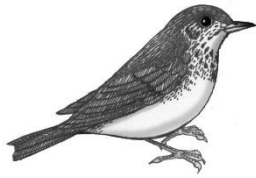
Jim Wright reported that Patty Finn found a Common Gallinule at the CF, July 3. Gallinules bred at the CF between 1982 and 1987, and one wonders what caused them to leave. Boyle states that Gallinule numbers are "subject to dramatic swings in response to conditions in the freshwater and brackish marshes they prefer." Bannor and Kiviat in their 2002 account of this species in *The Birds of N. America Online* suggested that "replacement of cattail by purple loosestrife... may have played a role in gallinule decline." They also state that "Breeding densities peaked in marshes with about half (or somewhat more) open water and half emergent vegetation..." Perhaps the Gallinule will return since the cattails are making a comeback at the CF.

Charlie West bagged three Lesser Yellowlegs, three Least, two Spotted, and one Solitary Sandpiper, and two Killdeer, May 16. You might think he was at the Jersey shore or at least DeKorte in the Meadowlands, but no, he was at Darlington Park for a mere 15 minutes. Barbara Dilger found a Ruddy Duck at White's Pond in Waldwick, May 17, and Simon was surprised to see a female Common Merganser with 10 chicks along the Ramapo River adjacent to Mahwah Green Acres, May 20. C. Mergansers breed along the Delaware, but it is great news that they've expanded their range into the Ramapo River watershed. This species nests in old Pileated Woodpecker holes.

Jim Morris in Allendale discovered both Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers at his hummingbird feeder in June. He wrote, "If they are chased away, they are back in seconds." Jim researched the problem and found it common and that some folks reported woodpeckers even removed parts of a feeder to get at the sweet mixture. Jim concluded, "The only solution seems to be to put out more feeders and use a feeder with no perch." A pair of Red-bellies finally managed to nest in Gaby Schmitt's Bergenfield yard after several years of failed attempts, but they weren't very successful. Several weeks into the nesting season, Gaby found a single egg on the ground beneath the nest, followed several weeks later by a dead nestling. Then on July 4 her dog discovered a "wet, cold fledgling, trying to walk in the grass." Gaby explained that the nest cavity was 50 feet up. Not able to return it to the cavity, Gaby dried it and brought it to the Raptor Trust in Millington. The chick was dehydrated, and they thought it too young to survive. If she found another chick on the lawn, she was instructed to test it by putting it on the trunk. If it just went down the trunk, it was too young but if it climbed up towards the nest site, she could place a box or basket as high up as possible, put the fledgling inside, and the parents would usually feed it. Gaby returned home to find a third nestling on the ground, so she tried the test, but the shivering chick refused to move in any direction. This one seemed stronger and "quite feisty" so she took it to a local rehabber to save herself another trip to the Trust. A pair of



Pileated Woodpeckers had a better outcome at the CF. Jim Wright photographed an adult with a fledgling on the same tree, June 28.

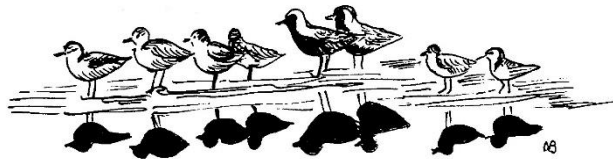


On April 30, Enid Hayflick noted both a Hermit Thrush and a Veery out her kitchen window in Ridgewood. She wrote, they were “scarfing up goodies from the fallen oak catkins.” On June 23, Karen Anderson managed to photograph a leucistic C. Grackle in her Oakland yard. The photo showed the pale gray grackle with a pale eye, not the bright iridescent black plumage and yellow eye of a normal adult. She had spotted it earlier in the spring and hoped it had found a mate. Cardinals nested twice in my Upper Saddle River yard. Their first nest produced two Cowbirds. Their second attempt produced two Cardinal eggs that disappeared, probably taken by a Jay or Grackle.

Raptor Trust volunteer, Gaby Schmitt released a Turkey Vulture at the CF, April 10. I’ll let Gaby tell the story. “I met an extraordinary woman named Patricia, who actually rescued the TV on Thanksgiving Day while on her way to turkey dinner. She saw the injured bird on the other side of Rte. 17, turned her vehicle around, and grabbed a blanket to get the bird inside. She then dropped her daughter at the family dinner and drove the vulture to the Raptor Trust.” Gaby commented that not many folks would have done that, and I agree, especially if they knew that TV’s react to threats by losing their stomach contents, and you know what they eat. With the “typical fine medical care and rehab service” at the Trust, the TV recovered. Gaby drove the TV from the Trust while “hoping he wouldn’t get car sick” and opened its carrier at the CF. Patricia was among those witnessing the release as the TV stretched its wings and took to the sky.



Shorebirds, warblers, raptors, and sparrows are already trickling south. Let us know what you find. And if you feed those that stay, be sure to keep your feeders clean. For information on the latest bird sightings, go to 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.



When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.
~John Muir

Welcome New Members!

The Anderson Family, Oakland
Gloria & Antonio Antaramian, Upper Saddle River
The Banks Family, Allendale
Andrew Boucher, Mahwah
Lauren and Peter Gould, Oakland
Anne Keating, Mahwah
The Keating family, Ramsey
Larry and Ronnie Levine, Oakland
Elizabeth Levine and Roland Samiskie, Wayne
Elizabeth Ann McGrath, Mahwah
The Marcalus Family, Oakland
The Putnam Family, Franklin Lakes
The Sanchez Family, Wayne
David Severs, Ramsey
Henry Utzinger, Pompton Plains
Gail and Jack Williams, Ho-Ho-Kus



Poetry Corner

The waiting line was where I cringed -
For Saint Pete to judged my sins -
I tried to think of a good excuse -
Finally deemed there was no use -
Thus I pleaded: "Can I keep my bins?"
~Charley West



Time to Renew Your Fyke Dues

The new membership year for Fyke starts September 1, 2017 and ends August 31, 2018. Your annual dues should be paid now. At the May meeting the members approved the Board of Trustees' proposal to raise the annual dues to \$20 for an individual membership, and \$25 for a family membership. The last time Fyke had a dues increase was 18 years ago in 1999.



You can now also pay dues and make donations to Fyke conveniently online using any major credit card or PayPal. To do so, please visit our web site at www.fykenature.org and use the link on the Home page to access the Payments and Donations page.

You may continue to join, renew or donate by mail. Checks should be made out to Fyke Nature Association, and mailed to Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

**WHO ARE THESE CREATURES AND
WHY ARE THEY LOOKING AT ME?**

by Nat Catcher



Well, here they come again. I can see them with their heads tilted up and those two shiny tubes attached to their eyes. I guess they need them because their eyes are in the front of their heads for goodness sake... Watch this, I'll fake them out by hiding behind these leaves... Now I'll make a series of melodious weezy warbles... Wow! look at that! Their heads spun around like a trout in a whirlpool. Ha! what fun.

Whenever I come in close to civilization I see these very large odd shaped animals. They're called Humans I think. Most of the time I see them in small groups of twos and fours. They don't bother me that much but sometimes they show up in very large groups. That's when I get annoyed. They stand around talking loudly making personal remarks about the shape of my body, my beak and wings. One time when I had just pounced on a tasty bug they ooh'd and ah'd until I thought I would throw up (Which I did when I got back to the kids in the nest).

I notice that most of the adults have gray heads although there seems to be more and more of the immature species with colorful crowns looking up. They certainly have a strange appearance. They have two long legs that they use to walk on. But get this... They bend in the middle... FORWARD !

The sub-adults generally have more colorful plumage than the mature ones and I've noticed it changes with the seasons. In the winter they're pretty dull. They sprout covers on their heads and hands which make them look funnier than they already are. In the warm weather their pelts take on much bolder colors. City humans seem to have a wide variety of colorful plumage. The males are quite drab compared to the females. Shore humans have little or no plumage, especially on the sand close to the water. They have backpacks that are used to carry all sorts of things. One thing they all have in common is a fat book that says Birds of North America on the cover.

I must say that they are pretty generous when it comes to helping us find food. They often put out seeds in the backyards of their habitats, but that's just a trick to get us close by. They stand behind those glass blinds staring and pointing at us. Sometimes I yell at them... "Can't you see I'm trying to eat?" They think that's cute. They also put suet out for us. It's OK but it gets my beak greasy, I'd rather have a nice juicy worm anytime. One thing I don't like about backyards. There's very little privacy. Have you ever tried to take a bath in those round saucers they put out? There is always somebody watching.

Well... I've had enough of these ground bound humans for now. I'll just give them one more melodious weezy warble and flap out of here. Whoa! That one almost lost his hat... Hee Hee... I'm gone.

(As told to Herb Gardener)

To 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 accepted. Send material by e-mail to carolflana@aol.com or by snail mail to Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

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**Starting Your Holiday Shopping? Here's an Easy Way to Support Fyke**

Support Fyke when you shop at Amazon.com. It works for all purchases, and it doesn't cost you anything extra. Fyke does not endorse any particular merchant. We have a direct link to AMAZON from our website. Log onto www.fykenature.org and click on "SHOP". On the next page, click on the Amazon logo. Every month AMAZON sends us a sales commission check. Thank you for your participation!

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Publicity: Gabriele Schmitt
Webmaster: Kevin Watson

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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, or call Mike Limatola, President, at 201-739-8062. The Newsletter is published four times a year and manuscripts and artwork are welcome. Editor: Carol Flanagan, carolflana@aol.com. Production: Molly Gardener, Herb Gardener, and Carol Flanagan.



**The deadline for the Winter Issue is October 23, 2017.**  
Send material to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, or via e-mail to carolflana@aol.com.