



Fyke Nature Association Fall Newsletter

Vol. 68 — No. 3 — 2022
www.fykenature.org

Dues notice:

Fyke dues for September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2023, is due now. Annual dues are \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family. You can pay online at www.fykenature.org, or by check made out to Fyke Nature Association, and mailed to Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

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.

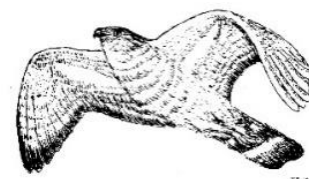
September 6 to November 15, 2022 – State Line Hawk Watch

Meet at the State Line lookout in Alpine between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This site has easy access and parking. 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, volunteer availability and weather conditions permitting. Keep a mask handy and social distance when crowds appear.

September 1 to November 15, 2022 – Mount Peter Hawk Watch, Judith Cinquina

Fyke members are invited to help with the count or just visit and give us your support. What better way to relax than under one of the most spectacular migrations in the country. The watch begins September 1, 2022, 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.

Directions: The lookout is located on the top of 17A, between Greenwood Lake and Warwick, NY, and is marked by a pair of microwave towers. To reach the lookout, take Route 17 through Tuxedo to 17A and turn left. Follow 17A up the mountain and into Greenwood Lake. Keep right when you reach the lake and follow 17A up the second mountain. When you reach the top, you will see a sign for Bellvale Farms Creamery (excellent homemade ice cream) ahead. Turn right at the ice cream shop onto Kain Road and turn right again up the pot-holed dirt road to the lot or park down below.



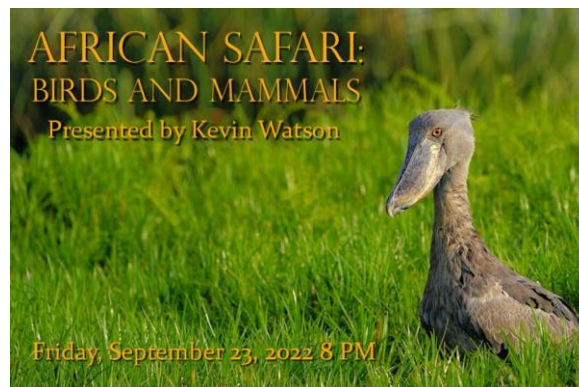
September 23, 2022, Friday – Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building

African Safari: Birds and Mammals, Kevin Watson

This presentation will be live. It will also be videotaped. The resulting video will be posted on YouTube with a link provided to all members for whom we have an email. Those who missed the meeting can view it at home at their convenience.

Birder and photographer Kevin Watson returns with a program about the incredible wildlife in Africa. This will be a highlights show, with Kevin’s best images from visits to three countries, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda. There will be the iconic African animals—lions, leopards, elephants, giraffes, hippos and more. But Africa is also home to an amazing variety of bird life, and Kevin will present images of many of the star attractions, including Hornbills, Bee-eaters, Turacos, Owls, Eagles and the prehistoric-looking Shoebill.

Kevin Watson is a local birder and photographer, and these two interests have taken him all over the world. He has visited over 40 countries and has created many entertaining programs about these exotic destinations. He and nature writer Jim Wright are co-authors of the coffee-table book “Hawk Mountain: The World’s First Raptor Sanctuary” about the world-famous hawk-watching site in Pennsylvania, and his photographs have appeared in many local and national magazines. An introduced species from the British Isles, he has been able to adapt to the harsh environment of Bergen County but is not considered “countable” by the ABA.



October 9, 2022, Sunday – 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. Teams will be limited to three people to insure social distancing. See the Top Ten Reason to Participate in The Big Sit: <https://bwdmagazine.com/learn/bigsit/> To sign up for a 2-hour team contact Carol Flanagan, carolflana@aol.com.

October 16, 2022, Sunday – Field Trip: Ducks at Dusk

Meet at the Celery Farm Warden’s Watch at 5:30 p.m. Leader: Mike Limatola. Field trips will require face masks, social distancing, and no sharing of optics.

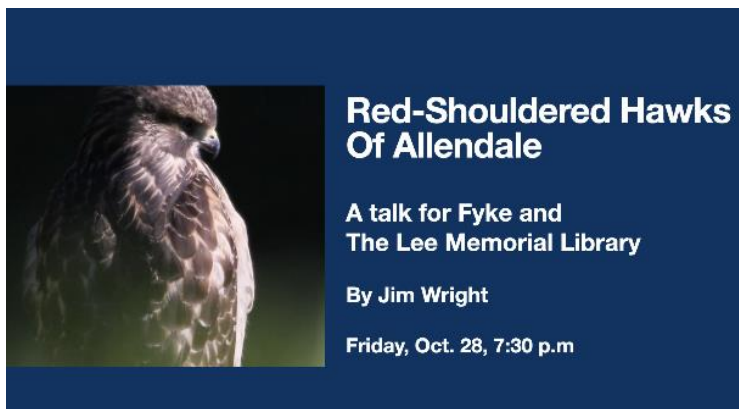
**October 28, 2022, Friday – Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., online via Zoom
Red-Shouldered Hawks of Allendale, Jim Wright**

This meeting will be online on Zoom. A notice will be sent to the Fyke e-mail list, and you will be able to sign up and a link to the meeting will be sent out in advance. If you are not registered on Zoom, you can register for free at <https://zoom.us/>

These endangered, magnificent hawks have made a remarkable recovery in Allendale, and can often be seen in the Celery Farm and elsewhere in town. This past spring, a pair of adults had four young—the most in one brood ever—and all fledged.

Jim monitors the nest for the state Department of Environmental Protection. He was able to document the hawk’s nesting season and beyond with some great color photos.

Jim will talk about red-shoulders in general, in Allendale, and in the future—with a surprise or two. The presentation is a partnership between the Lee Memorial Library, Allendale, and Fyke Nature Association. It is free and open to the public.



**December 2, 2022, Friday – Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m.
Members Night, Kurt Muenz**

Enjoy an evening of short presentations by Fyke Members or better yet, be a presenter and share your own photos, prints, collections, stories, etc. Information on submitting digital presentations and the meeting venue will be in the winter Fyke newsletter.

Remember to look up at the stars and now down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up.

~ Stephen Hawking

Stepping Up For The Celery Farm

By Gabriele Schmitt

My thanks to all of you who participated in Stepping Up and for finding and counting so many birds. The total for the two days was 75 species, very well done indeed!! The weather was pleasant which always helps.

I believe our count underscores the importance of The Celery Farm as a wildlife sanctuary/nature preserve. Loss of habitat is a constant theme in the articles and documentaries about species decline. Our 107 acres provide a place to rest, to nest, to raise the next generation of birds and other wildlife.

Thanks to all our donors we raised \$2987. The funds raised will be used for the continued maintenance and enhancements at The Celery Farm.

List of species counted:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Canada Goose | Pileated Woodpecker | House Sparrow |
| Mute Swan | Northern Flicker | House Finch |
| Wood Duck | Great Crested Flycatcher | American Goldfinch |
| Mallard | Blue-headed Vireo | Chipping Sparrow |
| Wild Turkey | Warbling Vireo | White-throated Sparrow |
| Mourning Dove | Blue Jay | Song Sparrow |
| Chimney Swift | American Crow | Swamp Sparrow |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird | Fish Crow | Eastern Towhee |
| Spotted Sandpiper | Common Raven | Baltimore Oriole |
| Solitary Sandpiper | Black-capped Chickadee | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Tufted Titmouse | Brown-headed Cowbird |
| Great Blue Heron | Northern Rough-winged Swallow | Common Grackle |
| Great Egret | Tree Swallow | Northern Waterthrush |
| Green Heron | Barn Swallow | Blue-winged Warbler |
| Turkey Vulture | Ruby-crowned Kinglet | Black-and-white Warbler |
| Osprey | Red-breasted Nuthatch | Common Yellowthroat |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | White-breasted Nuthatch | American Redstart |
| Cooper's Hawk | Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | Magnolia Warbler |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | House Wren | Yellow Warbler |
| Broad-winged Hawk | Carolina Wren | Palm Warbler |
| Red-tailed Hawk | European Starling | Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| Belted Kingfisher | Gray Catbird | Prairie Warbler |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | Northern Mockingbird | Black-throated Green Warbler |
| Downy Woodpecker | Wood Thrush | Northern Cardinal |
| Hairy Woodpecker | American Robin | Rose-breasted Grosbeak |

Thank you to those who donated:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gloria Antaramian | Tom Jaeger | Rochana Muenthongchin |
| Mimi Brauch | Vicky Katzman | Kurt Muenz |
| Monica Cardoza | Brian Kenny | Heidi Petri |
| Judy Cinquina | Dorothy Ladwig | Alan Pomerantz |
| Bill Conroy | Darlene Lembo | Lisa Potash |
| Phil Dahlen | Alice Leurck | Marty Prince |
| Carol & Steven Dickman | Pat Linard | Hans Sammer |
| Nancy Drabik | Jennifer Louie | Gabriele Schmitt |
| Bill Drummond | Alice Luddington/Dick Cantor | Stephanie Swanzey |
| Patty Finn/Jim Wright | Dorothy Lux | Sally Teschon |
| Carol Flanagan | Eleanor McKenzie | Roy Verstraete |
| Regina Flanagan | Becky Meister | Charley West |
| Molly Gardener | Tom Mitchell | Gail Williams |
| | Doug Morel | John Workman |

Field and Feeder Notes

By Judith Cinquina

Celata (see-LAH-tah), the species name for Orange-crowned Warbler, is Latin for “concealed” or “hidden,” and refers to this orange that is hidden under the tips of the crown feathers.

Attempts to identify the Orange-crowned Warbler in the eastern United States in autumn leave me just as frustrated and confused as they do most bird watchers. This tiny bird is drab and attracts little attention although it is probably much more common than we realize. Peterson calls it “the dingiest of all warblers.” To me, it is the most confusing of all the “confusing fall warblers.”

~Harrison, Hal H, Wood Warblers’ World, 1984.

On April 26, Loren Anderson discovered a small, drab bird with a broken eyering and yellow undertail coverts in her Oakland yard. She determined it was an Orange-crowned Warbler, a “life” bird. It returned the next morning while she enjoyed tea on her deck along the Ramapo River. She not only heard the warbler sing but managed to take a couple photos. Harrison states that Orange-crowns are “wanderers” and occasional winter residents in the east. With the exception of 2022, an Orange-crowned has been detected at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst every winter since 2011, primarily in December. However, as Boyle states in his *The Birds of NJ, 2011*, finding one in the spring in Oakland or anywhere in NJ is “very rare.” In addition to her Orange-crowned, Loren scored 24 other species in one hour from her deck on the 27th, including E. Towhee, Orchard Oriole, and Palm, Black and White, and Yellow-rumped Warblers.



© Loren Anderson

A rare migrant Yellow-throated Warbler, a black and white warbler with a dazzling yellow throat, lit up the Celery Farm (CF) in mid-April. Jim Wright alerted members to the find by John Pastore on the 14th, and kept track of the bird’s whereabouts through the 22th, allowing many Fyke members and friends to enjoy the stunning bird. “The Yellow-throated Warbler brought out more binoculars and cameras than I’ve seen in a few years,” Bob Kane wrote. According to Julie McCall, the bird often foraged quite low, “directly over observers and sometimes at eye level.” This was the CF’s third record, according to eBird, and all have been the albilora subspecies or white-lored form. One of the earliest migrant warblers, it was known as the Sycamore Warbler by old timers, because it prefers bottomland forest containing large sycamore trees. Here in northern NJ, its population is concentrated around Bull’s Island where the first nest was found in 1954, a range extension of the Midwestern subspecies D. d. albilora.



© Bob Kane

There is a yellow-lored form of Yellow-throated Warbler, *dominica* that breeds in south Jersey. It’s surprising that one turned up here in the north at Garret Mountain also in mid-April. This form prefers pine forests, and in order to share the pine trees with Pine Warblers, it

has developed a longer bill that it uses to probe deep into pine cones for larvae and insects that Pine Warblers can't reach. It breeds in Belleplain State Forest and in pine forests primarily in Cape May and Cumberland counties. The yellow-lored form first nested at Cape May Point in May of 1922. According to McKay and Hall, *Birds of the World* on line, 2020, the different lore color and bill size of the two Yellow-throated Warbler forms are rather recent developments, but their DNA doesn't reflect a significant difference. They remain one species.

Halifax Road produced a rich variety of spring migrants for many Fyke members. Maryann Fahey kicked off the warbler parade with a Prairie Warbler May 1 and Daniel Carola added two Blue-winged that same day. Maryann bagged a Cape May on the 3rd, and I added a Blackburnian. Curious, I decided to count all the warblers reported on eBird on May 3 just at Halifax. I came up with 21 plus a Brewster's. No one birder got them all. Orange-crowned and Yellow-throated weren't on that list. A Worm-eating showed up for Doug Morel on the 9th, and a rare Prothonotary was discovered on the 16th, singing its ringing "sweet –sweet..." song along the edge of Lake Henry and photographed by many admirers. Its brilliant golden plumage seemed lit from inside. It is literally a beacon in the dark swamps it inhabits and it is our only warbler that nests in tree cavities or in gourds hung in hardwood swamps. Lisa Potash added a Mourning Warbler to the Halifax list, May 17, and Doug followed with a Bay-breasted May 20.

Halifax also gifted many Fyke members with a variety of migrant flycatchers. The first reported were a few Least, in early May. Boyle states that this flycatcher breeds primary in the northwestern corner of NJ. Later May migrants included a rare Olive-sided, on the 20th. As is its custom, it perched on one of the tallest dead trees near the Ramapo River with a perfect 360 degree view of insect activity and dashed out a few times after prey. Its dark vest and large dark head were obvious, and for a moment, it revealed the white tufts on either side of its rump. Unfortunately, it didn't stay long and didn't say a word. An Alder showed up around the same time and nailed its identity with what Lisa Potash called its "fee-beer" song, loud and clear. It spent some days in late May hunting low in tangles near the Ramapo River and was enjoyed by many Fyke members, but eventually moved on. The Hour on the Tower crew reported one at the CF, May 15. Julie McCall heard it or another Alder singing multiple times over 10 minutes between the butterfly garden and the scout platform at the CF on the 21st. Alders are late migrants that can pass through even in early June.

A few prize species turned up at DeKorte Park in the Meadowlands, Lyndhurst. A flock of 13 Bonaparte's Gulls rested on the water adjacent to the Saw Mill Trail, April 8. They immediately took flight and put on a lovely show, climbing, falling, regrouping, and charging low across the water for 20 minutes or longer. They moved as one, all adults in winter plumage. Finally they folded in with a group of larger Ring-bills and disappeared behind trees. It is not surprising that Nick Sweatlock found a single adult Bonaparte's in breeding plumage on DeKorte mudflats, May 14, but that same day he also bagged a prize Arctic Tern found by others. Boyle states that the Arctic Tern is a very rare spring and fall migrant. He explains that "their migration route takes them so far offshore that they are rarely seen even on pelagic trips to the Hudson Canyon." On the 29th, Maryann Fahey scored a Red-necked Phalarope female feeding with other shorebirds in the tidal pool at Dekorte. Phalarope females are the handsomer half of a phalarope pair, and it's the plainer male whose job it is to sit on the nest and raise the young. Maryann managed a few nice photos that showed the phalarope's maroon

neck, black face, white throat and black stiletto bill. Not as rare but “scarce,” according to Boyle, was a Yellow-crowned Night Heron found by Brian Kenney at DeKorte, June 4. The heron had just captured a crab when Brian snapped its photo.

Not all “good” encounters are with rare birds. On May 21, Elisabeth McGrath was enjoying breakfast on her balcony in Mahwah when she heard a buzzing next to her ear. Thinking it was a bee, she was about to shoo it away when she turned her head and found a Ruby-throated Hummingbird hovering a few inches from her face. Immediately after the face off, the hummer retreated and disappeared over her balcony rail. Elisabeth suspected it was attracted by the cherry jam on her toast. Gaby Schmidt was watering plants in her Bergenfield yard on July 11 when she noticed a young Downy Woodpecker flitting just above the water’s reach. “He seemed to wait for the water to get close,” Gaby wrote, “then would peck away at a nearby branch.” She thought the water might have flushed out some bugs for him. As Gaby moved to the next spot, the Downy “cautiously followed, always keeping just above the waterline.” For the next five to ten minutes, the two moved together until Gaby ran out of shrubs or “perhaps he’d finished his breakfast,” Gaby suggested. A 1945 NJ agricultural bulletin informs us that the Downy is “the smallest and least fearful of human contact of any of our native woodpeckers.”

Mike Limatola discovered a Killdeer nest in his Hohokus yard, June 20. Mike photographed the four Killdeer eggs nestled among wood chips and grass and marked with dark gray streaks and spots. The eggs were arranged in a circle, touching, “as if they were confined in a woven nest” Mike explained. Killdeer eggs are pointed on the narrow end so that they can be “closely packed with the pointy ends inward,” according to Ehrich, Dobkin and Wheye, *The Birder’s Handbook* 1988. This not only helps the adults cover the eggs during incubation but also prevents the eggs from rolling away from the nest. Pointy eggs tend to roll in circles. Speaking of nests, everyone is aware that Wood Ducks nest at the CF. Julie McCall spotted a female Wood Duck waiting below a CF nest box on May 21. So she waited with her. Five minutes later, ducklings began to emerge. The first batch came out so quickly, they were difficult to count, and the last one didn’t jump until four minutes later. Julie settled for 25 ducklings and stated there was a close call with a snapping turtle, but everyone made it and were led away by the female. All 25 chicks did not belong to that lone female. They were part of a “dump” nest and were deposited by other females. Fortunately, ducks are precocial and can find their own food as soon as they leave the nest. The female just had to lead them to a safe place and let them fend for themselves.

A Screech Owl turned up in Tom Nicastri’s Midland Park yard, August 1. Tom recorded its descending trills and posted it on the Fyke Nature discussion site. The song Tom posted resembled the whinny of a horse. Gehlbach in *The Eastern Screech Owl*, 1994, states that “descending trills are most frequent in the fledgling-dispersal period.” Tom may have had a Screech family in his yard. Whether it’s a song or a sighting, birds can hold us captive. On June 5, Brian Jerkins was about to leave the CF when “a kingfisher talked me into staying just a bit longer” he confessed. Keeping the Kingfisher company for a few minutes instead of checking it off on a list and moving on has many benefits. For a brief while you can get involved in the Kingfisher’s life and out of your own as it hovers over the water, wings beating, body bouncing, yet head rock still, so it can focus on signs of fish below the water surface. Once it captures a

fish, it perches along the shore and beats the fish against a branch to make it easier to swallow whole. And, of course the fish goes down head first so fins don't snag on the throat.

Roy Verstraete has established a hummingbird resort in his Ringwood yard. He wrote that he has five feeders out on his property and they need filling daily. He also posted a video of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arguing over feeder access, showing about half a dozen hummers at one feeder. In *Hummingbirds of N. America, 2001*, Sheri Williamson explains that hummers do not drink their fill at every opportunity. She explains, "The additional weight of a crop full of nectar increases energy consumption, and frequent short feeding bouts during daylight hours can meet the bird's energy needs while maintaining peak flight efficiency." She also states that hummers are the least social of all birds and very aggressive which sometimes leads to "violent confrontation." Roy's video demonstrates this aggression around his feeders.

Migration is now in reverse. Warblers are one of the first species to head south. June 7, Neil MacLennan found a N. Waterthrush already on the move at the CF. The waterthrush is a very early migrant, according to Boyle, but by "early" he means mid-July. Perhaps its nest failed. Brian Kenney added a Black and White and three C. Yellowthroats and five Yellows, July 21 at the CF. Julie McCall spotted an Am. Redstart at Barking Dog Corner (CF), August 1. My magic dripper in Upper Saddle River attracted a Worm-eating Warbler, August 12 and a Canada the next day. Shorebirds are also on the move, and the CF mudflats produced a nice selection. Doug Morel counted 16 Pectoral Sandpipers opposite the Pirie-Mayhood platform, August 5. Many Fyke members noted Least Sandpipers, but the Hour on the Tower crew bagged the most with over 100 August 14. They also had one Semipalmated Plover, and one Spotted. Common Nighthawks should be on their way as I write. The CF Pirie-Mayhood platform is a good place to see their erratic flight as they hunt insects over Lake Appert at sunset. Whatever you find out there, please share it with the rest of us. Join our discussion group at fykenature@groups.io where many of the reports for this column originated. Or send your observations to me at judycinq@optonline.net.

Welcome New Members

Regina Coyle, Family Membership, Little Ferry
Roger Dubin, Family Membership, Woodcliff Lake
Vicky Katzman, Glen Rock
Crista Murphy, Ramsey
Sean Noble, Glen Rock
Jim Strauch, Family Membership, Allendale
Anastasia Wierciszewski, Family Membership, Northvale



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Hawk Watch: Judith Cinquina
Newsletter: Carol Flanagan
Programs: Monica Cardoza
Publicity: Mike Lefebvre
Webmasters: Kevin Watson
Tom Mitchell

The Fyke Nature Association, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets eight times a year. These are the meeting dates for 2022 and 2023. All are Fridays.

September 23, 2022
October 28, 2022
November - no meeting
December 2, 2022
January 27, 2023
February 24, 2023

March 24, 2023
April 28, 2023
May 19, 2023
June – no meeting
July – no meeting

August – no meeting
September 22, 2023
October 27, 2023
November – no meeting
December 1, 2023

Meetings and membership are open to all. Annual dues: \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family. 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, artwork, news, features, articles on wildlife observation, conservation issues, book reviews, field notes, and humorous first-person bird/nature related stories are welcome. All submissions will be gratefully appreciated!

The deadline for the Winter 2022 issue is October 19, 2022. Send material to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, or via e-mail to carolflana@aol.com.

