



Fyke Nature Association

Fall Newsletter

Vol. 73 — No. 3 — 2026

www.fykenature.org

Membership Dues Notice

The Fyke membership dues year is now based on the date your dues are received. You will receive an email reminder when your renewal date is near. Annual dues are \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family. You can pay online at <https://fykenature.org/join.php>, or by check to Fyke Nature Association mailed to Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

Programs*

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

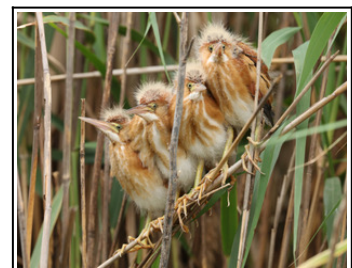
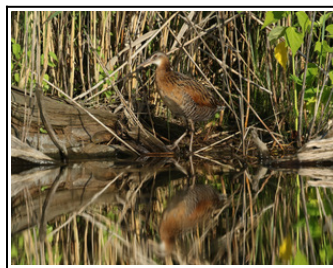
Friday, September 25, 2026- Monthly Meeting, 8 PM live at the Allendale Community Center Memories of the Kearny Marsh, Ron Shields

Once an Atlantic white cedar swamp, centuries of human disturbance has converted the more than 300 acres of the Kearny Marsh in the Hackensack Meadowlands into a mostly freshwater marsh, and productive waterbird habitat.

Ron Shields has been paddling and photographing the many bird species in these wetlands for over a decade. Join him as he presents his collection of images captured from the unique perspective of a kayak traversing the hidden recesses of the marsh. You'll be surprised at the many spectacular treasures to be found in this hard-to-reach area.

Ron was an educator in the Harrison School District for 42 years, retiring in 2014. He served as principal of Harrison High School for the last 20 years. He currently splits his time between Kearny, N.J., and Hometown, Pa., which is in the shadow of Hawk Mountain.

No registration required. The program will be videotaped and posted on the Fyke website under Programs.



Photos by Ron Shields

* Information is accurate at the time of printing. Please check The Fyke Nature Association Home for any updates.

Friday, October 23, 2026 - Monthly Meeting, 8 PM via Zoom

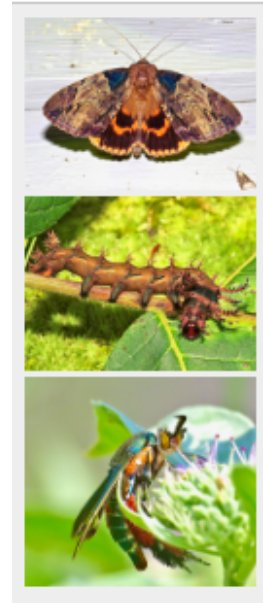
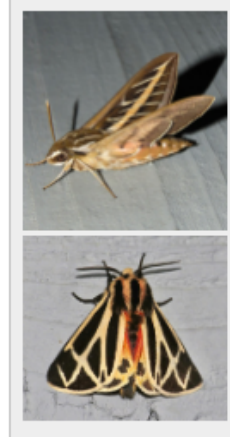
If You Plant It, What Will Come? Native Host Plants For Moths, Wade Wander

Leading butterfly expert, and founder and field trip leader for the New Jersey Butterfly Club, Wade Wander shows some of the magnificent moths that most homeowners can attract to their properties by planting a few native species of vegetation.

Wade is a professional ecologist whose interest in nature started at the age of 9 when he got hooked on birds. From birds, he expanded into plants, herptiles, mammals, and in 1992 butterflies, and moths in 2001. Wade has recorded more than 1,200 species of moths at his home in Sussex County.

Registration is required. A link to register will be available early October. It will be emailed to Fyke members and posted on the website under Programs. Presentations are recorded and posted to the website soon afterward.

But wait! There's homework. Wade asks participants to identify the following five moth images. The correct answers will be revealed at the presentation.



Events & Field Trips

State Line Hawk Watch Alpine, *September 8 - November 15, 2026, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM*

Directions: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/iQ4oBAEiFgr6ngz4A>

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission's Linn Pierson founded this hawk watch — the only major hawk watch in Bergen County — in 1997 and ran it until her death in 2007. In 2010, Stiles Thomas and the Park Commission got it going again, with Nancy Slowik as the coordinator. Stiles Thomas took over as the coordinator in 2011, with the help of Kurt Muenz. In recent years, Karl Soehnlein coordinated the hawk watch. Jim Wright is now the coordinator.



The hawk watch season runs from the day after Labor Day until mid-November from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. To volunteer to be a raptor counter, email Jim at wrightjamesb@gmail.com.



Mt. Peter Hawk Watch - *September 8 - November 15, 2026, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM*

Get under the Atlantic Flyway this fall and witness the southbound spectacle of raptors and songbirds. Mount Peter has reserved a spot just for you with views of the Warwick Valley clear out to the Kittatinny Mountains and access to the best homemade ice cream in the Northeast. Best times: mid-September for Broad-wings, Osprey and Bald Eagles; or mid-October – November for Red-tails and Red-shoulders and, with luck, a Golden Eagle. The watch is located [above the Creamery at the top of 17A between Greenwood Lake and Warwick, NY.](#)



New counters/leaders are always welcome. If you are available to be responsible for the count on one of these dates and you are interested, consider becoming part of our hawk watch family and contact Ken Witkowski kenwitkowski@yahoo.com.

Celery Farm Volunteers Habitat Restoration, *Most Saturdays and Almost Every Sunday*

Register on the Fyke Nature Association website to be added to the email notification list for the times and locations.

***** SAVE THE DATE- Saturday, December 19, 2026 Ramsey Christmas Bird Count *****

Hour on the Tower- *Every Sunday 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM at the Celery Farm*



Usually on the Pirie-Mayhood Tower platform.

Everyone is invited to join with the group of regulars who keep a list of every species of bird they can identify over the course of one hour. It's a good way to improve your birding skills and catch up on Celery Farm news. The location may shift between the Pirie-Mayhood Tower platform on the east side of Lake Appert and the Warden's Watch platform near the Franklin Turnpike parking area.

[Contact Gaby Schmitt](#) to find out where to meet up.

Self-Directed Exploration Open to Fyke Members- North Harpersfield Property

George Rand and Pamela Ryder invite Fyke members to visit 135 acres of forest, field, stream, and pond in upstate NY. Please see the website to download and print [essential information](#) you must read before your visit, including directions, contact numbers, release and waiver document, lodging, and area attractions, as well as a [map of the property](#).

* Information is accurate at the time of printing. Please check [The Fyke Nature Association Home](#) for any updates.

Editor's note: Jim Wright came across this article in an old Fyke newsletter. The topic: the legendary Stiles Thomas -- the first Celery Farm marsh warden -- and his lifelong affection for crows. "Judy Cinquina did such a marvelous job researching and writing this story that I thought folks today would enjoy the story as much as I did."

A big thank you to Stiles' daughter Betsy for supplying the archival photos that accompany Judy's story this time around.

A Crow For Stiles

By Judith Cinquina

"Everyone knew Stiles. He climbed out of the window of our freshman Spanish class because he didn't want to be there. I thought he was a nut." But Lillian Myer began to change her mind when, in her junior year, he approached her and complimented her on her "pretty dress." And when he rode his bike from Allendale to Wyckoff to court her carrying a pet crow on his handlebars, she thought that was "pretty neat."

Climbing out of windows seems to have worked for Stiles Thomas. Lillian Myer eventually became Lillian Thomas. And because Stiles has a low tolerance for boredom, he began the Mount Peter and Hook Mountain Hawk Watches, helped organize the State Line Hawk Watch, the Bi-State Hawk Watch Coalition and later the Hawk Migration Association of North America, and the Fyke Nature Association. He was the prime mover for preserving the Celery Farm, a tightrope walker, wood carver, Bluebird and Barn Owl Trail monitor, and author of articles on birds in publications like Bird Watcher's Digest. If you ever attended a field trip with Stiles, he always spiced up the day with some sort of competition. As his wife Lillian stated, "Stiles was always fun."

Crows were not common backyard birds when Stiles was growing up. Since the earliest colonial times, crows, blackbirds and Bobolinks were persecuted for decimating crops and considered a nuisance when they gathered at their roosts by the thousands and sometimes millions, and states had laws supporting their destruction. Oklahoma was one of the states where winter roosts were dynamited. Between 1934 and 1945, more than 3.8 million crows were killed at winter roosts there "to reduce waterfowl egg predation and damage to grain crops" but in the 12-year period, there was no noticeable effect on crow population levels or agricultural damage (Hansen 1946). Most states had laws that allowed you to not only kill crows but also earn cash for your efforts, a boon for young boys growing up through the mid-twentieth century. Allendale's Rod and Gun Club offered a bounty if you brought them two crow legs, Stiles recalled. The going rate was anywhere from a nickel to a dime per pair. In grade school, Stiles and his friends became junior members of the Rod and Gun Club. They were given strychnine poison to inject into duck or chicken eggs and instructed to put the eggs into a fake nest up in a tree in hopes that crows would eat the eggs. And "everyone was shooting them," Stiles stated. Is it any wonder that during the 1940s, crows were wilder and warier of humans and that it was unheard of to see a crow on a lawn?

Stiles, who raised chickens and ducks, decided he had to have a pet crow, and in 1941, when he was 17, that was perfectly legal. He had been searching his Allendale woods for several years before finding a nest that he could rob. Wearing hip boots, he shimmied right up the nest tree and took two chicks from a nest of four. Their eyes were not yet open. Birds are known to identify with whatever or whomever they see when they first open their eyes. He doesn't recall what happened to one of the chicks, but the other became imprinted on him and followed him wherever he went. Stiles became its family. He clipped its wings so it couldn't fly, something he was experienced at after clipping the wings of Mallards. He raised it on a mix of dog food, worms, chopped egg and other ingredients that he read about in a book he received on wild pets

when he was a boy. The crow became a healthy teenager, would walk all over Stiles and enjoyed riding on his handlebars all the way to Wyckoff and back. “It was very attached to me,” Stiles remembered.

All corvids, including crows, ravens and jays, have large brains and naturally live and benefit from a rich social life. Their long lives depend on having an extended family group and the benefits of sharing food sources, predator detection, labor and other activities. They make wonderful companions.

Stiles can’t remember if he gave his pet a name, but it did learn to say “hello.” Stiles joined the National Guard with other boys from his class in high school, just after World War II began. “We had uniforms and went once a week to the Paterson Armory for training,” Stiles recalled. That summer he hitch-hiked with some of those boys to the Jersey Shore. When he returned home, his pet was so happy to see him that it turned over on its back, legs in the air, a sign of submission by a yearling. Obviously, the crow had missed Stiles, his only family. That November, Stiles went into the army. Shortly thereafter, he received a letter from his Mom. His pet crow had died.

Even after he returned from the war and married his high school sweetheart, crows were on Stiles’ mind. “They were very important to him,” Lillian stated.

So Stiles decided to rob another nest and again took two chicks. This time he didn’t clip their wings. He named them Beswick and Lockwood, after an engineering firm in Allendale, and they became part of the family. They were “probably” kept in a box, but Stiles doesn’t recall if they were actually in the house. Lillian helped feed them. After every feeding, the crows would evacuate, backing up to the rim of their nest or box and shooting the excrement quite a distance to clear their box, an instinctive behavior that keeps their nest clean. Stiles and Lillian learned how to anticipate and catch their evacuations on squares of paper stacked nearby. Later the birds lived outside in a cage and were allowed to fly around the yard.

Beswick and Lockwood, like all crows, had that strong urge to belong to a group, and the Thomas family became their family. They even developed a close relationship with the Thomas’ children, toddler Betsy and three-year-old Georgie and enjoyed climbing all over them. Beswick, Lockwood, Betsy and Georgie loved one another, Stiles and Lillian agreed. They all enjoyed playing together, but other children were a different story. Crows are known to fiercely defend their territory and trespassers often trigger aggressive behavior. One fall day Georgie had a friend over. The crows took an instant dislike to Georgie’s friend and harassed her, strafing her and trying to peck at her head. The little girl screamed and tried to get away. The crows, like mischievous children, thought that was great fun and chased her all over the yard. They were relentless and the little girls were forced to play inside. Every time the child visited, the crows attacked.

Quick to grasp that their strategy was successful, Beswick and Lockwood became neighborhood delinquents. “Day and night, the crows looked for children to bother,” Stiles stated, but they never bothered adults. Maybe adults didn’t scream and run away and so weren’t as much fun. A very kind next door neighbor confided in Stiles that her children were afraid of the crows and refused to play outside. More neighbors complained, and Stiles finally decided his pets were too viscous to have around. After living with the Thomas family for six months, Beswick and Lockwood had to go. They released the pair in Westwood and never saw them again.

Crows are now common yard birds, since they became protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a federal act resulting from a formal treaty signed by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Nevertheless, they remain vigilante around humans, and for good reason. Under the law, crows may be controlled without a federal permit when found “committing or about to commit depredations upon ornamental or shade trees, agricultural crops, livestock, or wildlife, or when concentrated in such numbers and manner to constitute a health hazard or other nuisance.” Even in 2009, 10,000 crows were slaughtered by our federal government. In

many states, including New Jersey, they can be legally hunted in season, but it is illegal to keep them as pets.

Marzluff and Angell suggest in *Gifts of the Crow* that crows might benefit if they became legal pets. As Stiles learned, crows bond easily with humans, but they could cause general havoc in a neighborhood if allowed too much free rein. And as pets, they require an attentive owner.

While still in high school, Stiles was given a pet crow by a boy from Ramsey High School. "It was a mess," Stiles noted. Its feathers were broken and frayed.

Stiles also remembers reading about a man in Hawthorne who had a very large enclosure filled with crows, the purpose of which he didn't understand. The cage was filthy, and the birds were ragged from beating their wings against the cage. Marzluff and Angell also suggest crow owners be licensed and ownership regulated through something like the North American Falconers Association. And future crow owners wouldn't have to don waders and climb a tree. They could be required to get their crows from licensed rehab centers like The Raptor Trust who are often overrun with abandoned and injured crows. A pet crow might not help its owner court a girl or boyfriend, but it could offer companionship and expose its owner to a sensitive, mischievous, and very smart species rather like ourselves. Just ask Stiles.

Information on Crows From:

Kilham, Larwence, *The American Crow and the Common Raven*, Texas A&M, 1989.

Marzluss, John and Tony Angell, *Gifts of the Crow*, Free Press, 2012.

Palmer, Theodore S. *A Review of Economic Ornithology in the U.S. 1899*, USDA Agricultural Research Service, University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Verbeek, N. A. and C. Caffrey. (2002). *American Crow*, *The Birds of North America Online*.

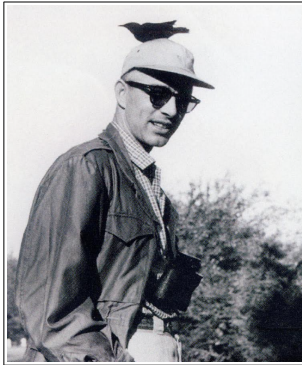


Beswick and Lockwood with two of Stiles' daughters, Betsy and her older sister Georgie. Photo courtesy of Betsy Thomas.



Thomas at Mount Peter, Warwick, N.Y. This was the first hawk

watch Stiles started. Photo by Harry Kemp, courtesy of Betsy Thomas.



Stiles Thomas with a starling acquaintance. He wasn't sure of its name off the top of his head. Photo courtesy of Betsy Thomas.

Field and Feeder Notes

By Judith Cinquina

White Ibis, thanks to the vigilant protection afforded them in their main Florida rookeries by Audubon wardens, still occur in great numbers...Their flocks are a wonderful sight as they wheel high in the air in perfect unison. At a distance they seem alternately to shine out as a cloud of shimmering silver and as suddenly to disappear completely as they bank the other way. Small flocks heading out to feeding grounds or returning to the large roosts in which they spend the night during the non-breeding season travel in single file in long lines close to the marsh, each bird repeating any maneuver executed by the one in front of it.

Pough, Richard H. Audubon Water Bird Guide, 1951

White Ibis by LynnMcKenzie

Lynn McKenzie photographed a flock of 19 White Ibis heading north over the Celery Farm (CF), May 14. When she realized the species wasn't on the official CF bird list, she asked Tom Mitchell to add it. White Ibis are abundant in Florida where Tom has spent many winters, so recognizing the black wingtips, white wings and hints of the decurved bill in Lynn's photos, he added it to the list without hesitation. Checking eBird later, he realized this was a first ever White Ibis for the CF. Known for its nomadic wandering, especially after breeding season, this traditionally



southern Ibis has been pushing northward for decades, turning up occasionally in NJ since 1975. The first breeding pairs were discovered in Cape May County in 2020. Three years later, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection counted 475 White Ibis of mixed ages in five south Jersey colonies. On August 16, 2024, seven juveniles and one adult turned up at Liberty State Park, Hudson County, and the day before Lynn's CF discovery, not far from the CF, a birder observed at least six White Ibis through his scope at Boonton Reservoir. They were roosting near the top of one of the largest deciduous trees on an island in the middle of the reservoir. He noted their hunched postures and long, pink, decurved bills and long pink legs.

Someday soon, a White Ibis will show up feeding at the edge of Lake Appert. Their range expansion tends to "mirror" the breeding and winter range expansion of Glossy Ibis, according to Northward

Expansion of White Ibis in Eastern N. America, N. American Birds, Vol. 76, #1, 2025. The CF's first Glossy was reported by Rob Fanning in 2001. Since then, they have visited Lake Appert a few times; in fact Heidi Petri found a Glossy Ibis at the CF's Lake Appert just this past April 27. It was also seen by Doug Morel, Julie McCall and others. Both ibises hunt small crabs, fish, snakes and insects, but their favorite food is crayfish. Audubon was impressed by the White Ibis' method of hunting crayfish. In the 1967 Dover Edition of The Birds of America, Vol. 6, Audubon explained that the crayfish often burrows in mud three to four feet deep in dry weather. He writes, "This is generally the case during the prolonged heats of summer, at which time the White Ibis is most pushed for food." To catch a crayfish, Audubon stated, the ibis walks "with remarkable care" toward the mound of mud marking the entrance to a burrow. It breaks the mound into pieces and drops it into the burrow, then retires a single step, and "patiently waits the result." The crayfish immediately gets to work cleaning out its burrow, but when it reaches the entrance, the Ibis seizes it with its bill. Obviously, the White Ibis is equipped to survive. Since the Glossy Ibis has visited the CF a few times recently, Lynn hopes she'll find a White Ibis on Lake Appert mudflats soon. She concludes, "You never know what you'll find at the Celery Farm. For me, each day is like a treasure hunt!"

Stephanie Seymour bagged her second yard Mississippi Kite May 14. Stephanie, who conducts spring and fall hawk watches from her Ringwood backyard, managed to snap a picture of the kite showing its "slender wings" and the flared tips of its closed tail. A rare spring/summer migrant through our state, this was Stephanie's second Mississippi Kite. She spotted her first one over her yard also in May, three years ago on the 18 th. Some Fyke members may remember the pair that nested near the Sterling Forest Visitor's Center in May 2012. John Workman observed that pair carrying twigs and leafy branches to their nest and perched on snags, "expelling the exoskeletons" of what he believed were dragonflies. Unfortunately, that nest failed. Like the White Ibis, the kite's population has been expending northward. A King Rail spent most of May at DeKorte in Lynhurst, hanging out with a very similar Clapper Rail. It's one of NJ's "rarest breeding birds," according to Bill Boyle Birds of NJ 2011, "and only the Great Swamp, Wallkill River and Cedar Swamp Creek, Cape May County areas consistently support nesting populations." King Rails feed primarily in the early morning and late afternoon, and that's when birders found it, usually in the company of a Clapper Rail. Doug Morel was rewarded with a sighting at 7:45 a.m., May 9. Much larger than the gray-faced Virginia Rail that also breeds in freshwater marshes, the King is a bit larger and more colorful than a Clapper, with a redder neck and breast and bolder flank barring. Although the Clapper Rail prefers salt marshes, they both meet at times in brackish habitat and sometimes pair up.

John Coyle spotted two American Oystercatchers at DeKorte, May 21. He was at the blue benches near the main parking lot when the pair circled over the shorebird pool. The black and white shorebirds "with long, bright orange/red bills," John wrote, headed towards Harrier Meadow. Birders can find a few of these large, noisy shorebirds along the Jersey shore even in winter, but that was not always the case. Boyle reports that they disappeared from NJ by 1896 and didn't begin a rebound until the mid-1900. He states that there was no single cause for their disappearance, but humans discovering the barrier beaches and egg collectors probably aided the decline. Certainly not as colorful or as conspicuous was the Gray-cheeked Thrush Alan Pomeranz photographed at Garret, May 7. Boyle labels the Gray-cheeked a "scarce" spring migrant and "shy and inconspicuous" spring or fall. Not reddish like a Veery or Hermit or buffy like a Swainson's Thrush, the Gray-cheeked is dark gray, with gray flanks and dark spots on its white chest.



Gray-cheeked Thrush by Alan Pomeranz

It also has a long primary projection, (long, pointed wings) that you can see in a good photo. But before you take a photo, you have to find it. The 11 other birders with Alan that day failed to notice the bird. Alan wrote he shot through the trees and didn't see what he had photographed until he got home. You can see how well camouflaged that bird is in Alan's photograph, and if you're so inclined, you can even detect its long primary projection. It needs long, narrow wings to aid its long migration as far south as northern Peru.

Two Vesper Sparrows visited a grassy field in Westwood, April 12. Doug Morel spotted their bold eyerings and reddish shoulder patches and noticed their white outer tail feathers when they flew up to trees. Daniel Carola was one of a few Fyke members who observed a Seaside Sparrow at DeKorte, May 9. Doug wrote that the bird was very vocal but hard to spot, and John Coyle reported it singing at the edge of the Nature Preserve. In his *The Birds of America*, Vol 3, Dover edition, Audubon relates that he shot a number of these sparrows and had them made into a pie, but the pie was "inedible on account of its fishy savour (sic)."

Olive-sided Flycatcher by Alice Leurck



Alder Flycatchers called attention to themselves as they passed through in May. Doug Morel found one singing its "free-beer" song at Halifax, on the 17th. On the 21st, John Coyle heard and saw another Alder up on the trail above the main lot at DeKorte, and on the 31st, Julie McCall's Hour on the Tower group reported one "singing on and off for the better part of an hour" near the CF's warden's watch. Its song is the key to its identity, but until 1973, it was lumped with its lookalike, the Willow and called a Trail's Flycatcher. Both are still considered Trail's if they don't sing. The Olive-sided Flycatcher is a "rare" spring migrant, is larger than a Trail's and seems to also like beer, according to its song: "quick, three beers." Unlike the Trail's, it's easier to identify just by searching the tallest snags or treetops offering an unobstructed view of passing insects. Alice

Leurck and Lisa Potash spotted one at Garret Mountain Reservation, May 12. Alice's photo shows not only its large, dark head, short tail and gray vest but also the white tufts on either side of its rump, a field mark that often remains hidden. It breeds further north and in the west.

Loren Anderson kicked off the spring warbler migration with an Orange-crowned Warbler at Halifax in Mahwah, April 29. She first heard its dry trill, and had to work a bit to find it. It was beautiful "for such a drab little bird," she commented. She described it as "olive-y, with yellow eye arcs and a faint eyeline." It wasn't until May 10 that a major warbler push materialized and Lisa Potash counted 14 warbler species at Halifax, including Canada, Wilson's, Blue-winged and Mourning. Lisa reported that the Mourning was singing but "difficult to locate," which is typical Mourning Warbler behavior and often all a birder gets. But Lisa was rewarded for her patience when it finally "popped up on an open branch." It nests north of us in Canada and around the Great Lakes. Another skulking warbler, a Yellow-breasted Chat turned up along the power line at Sterling Forest off Ironwood Drive in Sterling Forest, May 8. Concealed among dense bushes and trees, the Chat made all sorts of clacks, whines, whistles and warbles but failed to reveal itself. It was spotted later in May by others but always alone. Neil MacLennan also found a Chat in a "shrubby/marshy" area at the CF, May 21, but it didn't hang around.

Doug Morel reported a Prothonotary Warbler at Halifax Road in Mahwah, May 14. Another turned up in Sterling Forest in a swampy area along Ironwood Drive in late May. Brian Kenney found it moving around near the road, May 31. More common in south Jersey, the Prothonotary lights up dismal swamps with its golden yellow plumage. While waiting for the Prothonotary to appear on Ironwood Drive, June 2, I

spotted a female Cerulean Warbler at eye level and noted her bluish upperparts and face, white supercilium and wingbars, dark eyeline, pale gray stripes on her sides and hints of pale yellow on her white underparts. Usually this warbler forages and nests 30 – 50 feet up in the tallest trees, so this low sighting was a treat. She was stripping the bark off of a vine, probably for a nest, a behavior confirmed by Buehler, Hamel and Boves authors of Cerulean Warbler in Birds of World on line. The authors also revealed a female Cerulean's habit of "bungee jumping," dropping vertically with closed wings from the side of her upper story nest and opening her wings only when well below. I wish I had seen that.

We would all like to know what you're seeing in your yard or in the field. Please share your observations with all of us at fykenature@groups.io where many of the reports for this column originated, or send your observations to me at judyacinq@optonline.net. I especially welcome notes on bird behavior.



Website Notes Fall 2026

By Tom Mitchell

New functionality continues to be added to the Fyke website.

When Jim Wright agreed to replace Karl Soehnlein as the State Line Hawk Watch coordinator this year, he asked me if something could be built to facilitate the scheduling for the hawk watch observers who keep the daily tally counting the number of each species seen. The result is this [Hawk Watch Scheduler](#) that functions as a self-service calendar where everyone can see the available time slots and who is scheduled. Only the hawk watch tally keepers can update the calendar, but being able to see the calendar is helpful as well for the rest of us. Being at a hawk watch includes waiting for the birds to pass by and waiting time when you are with a group is social time, too. The calendar will let you see who to expect will be there keeping count when you go.

The volunteer work session attendance record keeping process has been simplified. Now it is easy to put in the attendance directly during a volunteer work session using a cell phone. Our Volunteer Coordinator Frank Alcaide is happily using it, no longer bothered with the follow-up chore of entering timesheet data. You can see who showed up at a volunteer work session in real time on the [Volunteer Activity Calendar](#).

Frank Alcaide can also now send text messages as well as emails to communicate with the volunteer list that has grown to more than 300 people. The Volunteer Coordinator email interface now includes all the features that let Frank Alcaide express himself in his inimitable style: emojis, links, bullet lists, and attachments.

A check of the questions and answers provided by the [Fyke Nature Assistant](#) shows that people regularly want to know when the Celery Farm is open and how long the walk is around Lake Appert. That's no surprise, but other questions reveal possible content additions. For example, information was added to the website about the 2027 Fyke Calendar photo submission deadline after that question was asked and went unanswered.

Most webpages now have a footer that can hold whatever topical message may be appropriate. Currently as this is being written you will see an appeal to contribute to the [Wish List Matching Fund](#).

Our website has many pages that let you interact with the content. This feature means we need to protect against bad actors. There were already many security measures in place to defend against them and now there is one more. Perhaps you have visited a website that runs a "verifying" check to see that you are a human before continuing to show you the page. That is called a bot check. We have one that is invisible for the most part. It is triggered if you input data, like when you check your membership status on the [Dues and Donations](#) page. In most cases the bot check has already determined that you are human before you get there, so there is no delay.

Our bot check security uses Google reCaptcha and we also use Google Analytics for counting website visitors and reporting on page views. These features use cookies. We have visitors from California and many international visitors, including from Europe, requiring consent to use cookies. To be in compliance a cookies preferences banner has been added to the website.

Welcome New Members:



Nash Alcaide	Gosia Kosiorowska
Tiago Alcaide	Joseph Larsen
Renee Bauer	William Larsen
Jean Clements	Zita Mobayed
Matt Fleissig	John Moran
Tonya Fyke	Theresa Owahady
Arthur Gilbrech	Joanne Sullivan
Molly Gilmore	Claire Whitcomb
Benjamin Gojman	Gail Williams
Elizabeth Gomez	Steve Wostbrock
Daniel Kapturski	Jennifer Zimmerman
Darren Kapturski	
Matthew Klinger	

Fyke Board of Trustees:

President: Mike Limatola
First Vice President: Mike Lefebvre
Second Vice President: Sue Dougherty
Treasurer: Ivan Kossak
Recording Secretary: Gloria Antaramian
Corresponding Secretary: Mimi Brauch
Trustees: Darlene Lembo
Doug Morel
Jim Wright

Chairpersons:

Celery Farm: Mike Limatola
Gabriele Schmitt
Jim Wright
Conservation: Mike Lefebvre
Programs: Monica Cardoza
Newsletter: Crista Trippodi Murphy
Publicity: Mike Lefebvre
Website Content: Tom Mitchell
Hawk Watch: Ken Witkowski

The Fyke Nature Association, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets eight times a year. These are the meeting dates for 2026. All meetings are on Fridays.

January 23, 2026
February 27, 2026
March 27, 2026
April 24, 2026
May 15, 2026
June – no meeting

July – no meeting
August – no meeting
September 25, 2026
October 23, 2026
November – no meeting
December 4, 2026

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 Fyke Nature Association 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 are gratefully appreciated!



The deadline for the Winter 2026 issue is October 15, 2026. Send material via e-mail to crista430@gmail.com or Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446