



THE OSPREY

Summer 2023 — Vol. XLIXI, No. 3



Byron Young at the ceremony naming the fish passage at Woodhull Dam. Photo courtesy of Chris Paparol@fishguyphotos

Fish Passage Named to Honor ELIAS President, Byron Young

Sally Newbert

Over the years I would drive past Woodhull Dam and see Byron Young's van parked on the dam. Byron and frequently his grandson would be netting Alewives. Once caught, measured and sexed these fish would be carried across the dam and put in on the other side to go on their way to reproduce, or if unlucky be a meal for an Osprey, Night Heron or other critter, maybe even a river otter (whose population is increasing). Now, those many years of work have been recognized, a fish passage named after Byron sits across the Little River at the Woodhull Dam.

During the course of his ELIAS presidency members have learned a good deal about these fish. In the Fall of 2022 Byron wrote an article about the fish explaining the fish ladder and in the interdependence and importance of the Alewife run.

On Tuesday May 9 instead of just a van, all kinds of flashing lights, police vehicles were there along Route 51 along with a crowd which included County officials. All were there to dedicate the new Byron Young Fish Passage.

Alewives are diadromous fish meaning they can live in fresh or salt water. Unlike the famous salmon run in the west, these fish do not die after they spawn. But they would head back out to sea to return the next spring. American Eel will also use this fish passage as they mature into adults.

The dam is located on Little River across from the Suffolk County Center. Little River is a tributary of Peconic River and runs down from Wildwood Lake, where about 95 acres of spawning habitat will be opened from the fish passage. "The dam had been built in the late 1800s for

a cranberry farm that once existed in the area," Mr. Young said. The area is now home to a 165-acre preserve known as Cranberry Bog Nature Preserve.

The dam is expected to restore "critical spawning and maturation habitat for river herring and American Eel" and provide a major boost to the local marine ecosystem. The project is a partnership with the DEC, Peconic Estuary Partnership, Southampton Town and Suffolk County.

Thanks Byron for your dedication.

Some information taken from The Southampton Press.



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

April 22, 1970

Byron Young

Who remembers where they were on April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day Celebration date? I was in my last semester of college. On that date I took part with my hippie (OK Environmental Sciences Major) friends on the Campus Commons to celebrate the first Earth Day. It is hard to believe that it has been fifty-three years since that first event.

The Joni Mitchell's song "Big Yellow Taxi" produced in 1970, had a lead line that read, "They paved paradise, and put up a parking lot ...". It goes on from there to ask the farmers to stop using DDT and expresses concern for cutting down all the trees and putting them in a tree museum. The song was written in Hawaii after she looked out of her hotel room window and saw the many parking lots in paradise. While not necessarily an Earth Day song it does send a strong message regarding what we are doing to the earth. We continue to create massive parking lots after cutting down acres of trees to build another mega-mall, massive warehouse complexes or businesses.

ELIAS has participated in Earth Day annually, partnering with The Quogue Wildlife Refuge and a growing number of partners each Spring with great success. We celebrate Earth Day around April 22 each year, yet we should remember that protecting our Earth is not just a one-day event. We all need to practice activities

around our homes, in our neighborhoods and towns that help preserve this planet. We need to recycle more products, choose products that breakdown in the environment easily, drive slower to conserve gasoline, turn a portion of our lawns into a wildflower garden, use native plants in our flower beds, eliminate the use of pesticides and fertilizers in our yards. Further we need to encourage or support small businesses that are trying to make a difference. The local pizza shop in my town has two electric vehicles they use for local deliveries. This saves them money on fuel, sends a very strong

recyclable grocery bags when food shopping, compost where possible, collect and use rainwater where possible. Further, reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in our yards. If we each try to do one little environmentally friendly thing, we can begin to make a difference.

Remember "Earth Day" is every day! We need to monitor our carbon foot prints, while working with the larger environmental community to ensure that we protect this planet.



message to others that may be able to follow this lead and is a source of advertising.

There are numerous ideas with huge impacts such as – planting a tree every year, switch off lights when not in use,

A Quogue Wildlife Refuge staffer introduces a Screech Owl to an Earth Day Celebration visitor.

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SUMMER TRIPS

Let's Go To The Beach!

TUESDAY MORNING, JULY 11. MEET @ 8:00 AM

Dune Road Crawl

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Meet at 8:00 am at the County Parking Lot at the Hampton Bays end of Dune Road which overlooks the Shinnecock Inlet, just east of Oakland's Restaurant. ELIAS has bayside day passes to be used as we travel along Dune Road. Stops include Tiana Bayside, Trustee Roads other Points of Interest, as the birds dictate. Restrooms are portapotty, or "real" at Ponquogue Pavillion (ocean side and walkable from bayside parking) and at Tiana (again, walkable on Ocean side from the bayside parking area). Rain date is July 12. This walk is planned to coincide with low tide, 9:24 am on Tuesday and 10:18 am on Wednesday.

FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 25. MEET @ 8:15 AM

The Totally Remarkable Cupsogue Sand Flats

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

This time we are going to the western end of Dune Road, Cupsogue County Park. Meet at 8:15 am, at the western end of the Cupsogue parking lot. Low tide is approximately 9:43 am giving us a good amount of time to make our way to the Bay, and cross with minimal water. Parking fees are collected at this County Park, beginning at 8:30 am, so arrive early. Restrooms are on site. Refreshment stands will be open by at the end of the walk. Once inside the park, one can stay all day if you wish.



Looking for Warblers *A Summary of Spring Walks*

Byron Young

ELIAS likes to greet our migrating bird with a host of bird walks during the month of May. Organized by our Bird Walk Coordinator, Eileen Schwinn, we scheduled seven walks along with one pop-up walk. Working around the new Turkey Hunting season which caused three of our walks to be rescheduled or moved to new locations we managed to find our feathered friends. Beginning on May 6 at EPCAL (Grumman Property), a walk that was moved from the Rocky Point Property, we found 35 species of birds with courting Bluebirds and Orchard Orioles being the highlights. On May 13 we then joined with the Wertheim Wildlife Refuge for World Bird Migration Day. We again found 35 species

of birds with the highlight being a nesting Coopers Hawk. On May 21 we visited Terrell River County Park another walk moved because of the Turkey Hunting season. Our large group of birders was split into two groups. The two groups found a total of 41 species of birds that morning, the highlights being a nice selection of warblers. May 27th found us exploring Manorville Hills County Park. A total of 21 species of birds were found with the highlight being a vagrant Mourning Warbler. On the May 30th walk at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge a total of 25 species of birds were found. The final trip for May, June 1st was to Hunters Garden. A total of 23 species were found. Hunters Garden is usually one of our better spots for finding migrating spring warblers. Delaying our walk until early

June found many of the birds had passed through already or were being quiet while sitting on their nests.

In summary despite the need to move three scheduled walks around we had a series of very nice walks. The weather cooperated and a few birds decided to grace us with their presence. Our walks, open to anyone, found a nice mix of seasoned birders, folks newer to birding and some young birders. Eileen Schwinn deserves a big round of applause for putting together another fine series of bird walks for us to enjoy during the Month of May.

Thank you all for attending our walks and offering your eyes and ears as we searched migrating birds. We hope to see you all again on one of our walks throughout the rest of the year.



UPCOMING EVENING PROGRAMS

MONDAY EVENING, JULY 10, AT 7 PM

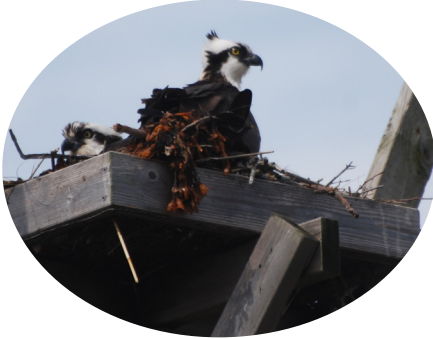
The Success Story of the Osprey

Join Marina DeLuca, an Environmental Associate with Group for the East End to learn the local history of our beloved Osprey. Discover the history of this miracle birds return from the brink of extinction, their unique adaptations, key identification markers, migration patterns and more. Learn about the role Group for the East End has played in their recovery and continued protection on the East End; as well as ways you can continue to help the osprey thrive.

Marina DeLuca

graduated from Union College in 2020 with a B.S. in Biology and a B.A. in Music. She is currently an Environmental Associate with Group for the East End. During her time with

The Group, Marina has been involved in projects ranging from biological monitoring, land use advocacy, ecological restoration and more. She has worked extensively on The Group's Osprey conservation initiatives and has become an avid birder.



MONDAY EVENING, AUGUST 7 AT 7 PM

Hey, Long Island – What's in Your Yard!

David La Magna

Hey Long Island, what's in your yard? If you have native plantings/landscapes we want to know what biodiversity you're attracting! The Biodiversity of Long Island Native Gardens (BLING) is a project hosted on iNaturalist where homeowners can share observations about the biodiversity they are supporting in their own yards. Everyone can participate and it's free! So if it walks, flies, crawls or anything in between, BLING is a place for you to share and inspire others.

Please share sightings of any fauna (insects, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, etc!) found on private homeowner land that is found in and around native plantings or landscapes. When possible, include in the notes what plant species the animal is interacting with. The goal is to gather data on the concept of "if you build it (or conserve it) they will come" and as many of us on Long Island employ more native plantings in our landscapes the question is what biodiversity are we helping to restore?

Second star to the right and then straight till morning... J.M. Barrie

Lark Bunting appears in Hampton Bays

A LARK BUNTING has joined a growing list of vagrant species to visit our area. How he got here is anyone's guess with storm fronts the most likely reason. On May 14th Katie Kleinpeter reported a Lark Bunting in the parking lot and vicinity of Hot Dog Beach along Dune Road in Hampton Bays. And what do you know, it was a male, in breeding plumage. This species is usually found in the west and into Mexico with only widely scattered sightings in the rest of the United States. Many birders rushed to see this unusual bird.

Looking something like a Bobolink this guy is a large sparrow-like bird with a large blueish-gray bill that resembles a grosbeak or a bunting. He has distinctive white wing patches and white corners on his tail. This guy did find his preferred habitat

and was foraging mostly on or near open ground, hopping or walking with his new companions including other sparrows, Cowbirds and Red-wing Blackbirds.

After about 2 days he was off. Hopefully he found his way home.





Chase for a Curlew Sandpiper

Darlene J McNeil

On May 24, 2023 at about 3 pm, the news hit the listserv and all major birding communication channels. A stunning, breeding plumaged Curlew Sandpiper had been sighted at the Jones Beach Coast Guard Station. It was reported by Shai Mitra and Patricia Lindsay, the bird found by Damon Brundage. In Shai's description on ebird he writes: "One of the most intensely colored CUSA (Curlew Sandpiper) I've seen: upperparts wholly bright, whereas most summer birds show panels of duller feathers. Head and upper breast intensely dark mahogany – almost blackish, like a Canvasback."

Remarkably the May 24th sighting represents, according to eBird that this is Nassau County first, but in reality, it was once described as "sometimes uncommon" and occurred "regularly" on the Jones strip, particularly at the then prime habitat at Tobay (Bull 1964). Just one lifetime ago, in 1942, Cruickshank used his trademark superlative "astonishing" to describe its frequency on Long Island, listing seven records between 1932-1940, from Tobay and vicinity alone. Most of the change in status is apparently due to habitat loss and degradation, obvious at all of its prior western LI foci, especially Plumb Beach, Jamaica Bay, and Tobay. For instance, it still occurs annually, sometimes in multiples, in prime habitat along Delaware Bay, at Bombay Hook, Delaware and Heislerville WMA in southern New Jersey."

On May 24th many observers, including including my dad, John McNeil, and I — only to be disappointed. The bird had been flushed 30 minutes prior to our arrival by a Peregrine Falcon and was not resighted that day.

As May 25th dawned, birders were onsite before 7 am scouring the sandbar for the bird. Finally on the falling tide around 9:30 am lucky birders were able to see the bird until late in the afternoon. Sadly, I was at work and unable to leave, but planned a trip for the next day — however, this proved to be more of a challenge. On May 26th, birders again were at the



Curlew Sandpiper Photo: Marco Valentini from Cornell All About Birds

site by 6 am, but once the booth to the Coast Guard Station was manned, only saltwater fisherman with a fishing permit were allowed to enter, and it was specifically stated "No birders allowed." The news that the access was restricted to fisherman only, spread like wildfire, as

As I was reading this my thought was, I need to find a fisherman to gain access to the area.

did the outrage by birders in the area! Birders set on a social media and email writing campaign to include the NYS Parks department, Assembly persons, and State Senators. As I was reading all of this, my thought was, I need to find a fisherman to gain access to the area. So, I inquired with some of my fisherman friends, and found out that in fact NYDEC gives out immediate online Saltwater fisherman permits, for free! As I was already enroute to Jones Beach, I stopped to message birders and provide the link to obtain a permit. I then stopped by my brother-in-law to pick up a fishing pole and was back on track to Jones Beach. Incredibly, once I got to the manned toll booth with my brand-new NYS DEC saltwater fisherman

permit and pole, I was allowed access to the area! The information was shared widely on the listserv and a few other birders became NYS DEC permitted saltwater fishermen that day as well. Amazingly about 15 minutes after my arrival the bird was re-sighted, and I was treated to amazing views of the bird!

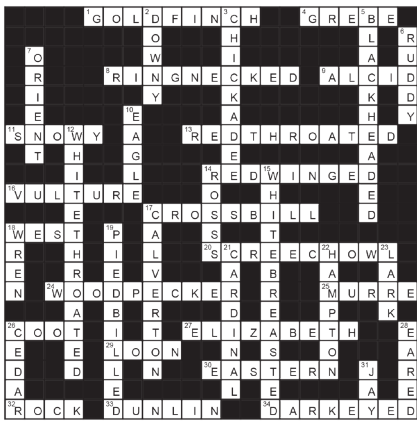
Additionally, I was thrilled to be able to assist other birders as a Curlew Sandpiper Uber and ferry them to the location so they could see the bird too. About 1:30 pm, the matter was finally resolved, and birders were allowed access to the area, by showing binoculars and/or scope. Apparently, the issue was the Memorial Day airshow planned for the next day. Coincidentally as we were observing the sandpiper, birders (and fisherman) watched amazing maneuvers from fighter jets practicing for the upcoming show above our heads.

You may ask yourself, why would anyone go to such lengths to see a bird, and I would say...because it makes me happy, AND it is scientifically proven to do that, and it would make YOU happy too if you choose to chase a rare bird as well.... see my article on page 11 for more on that!

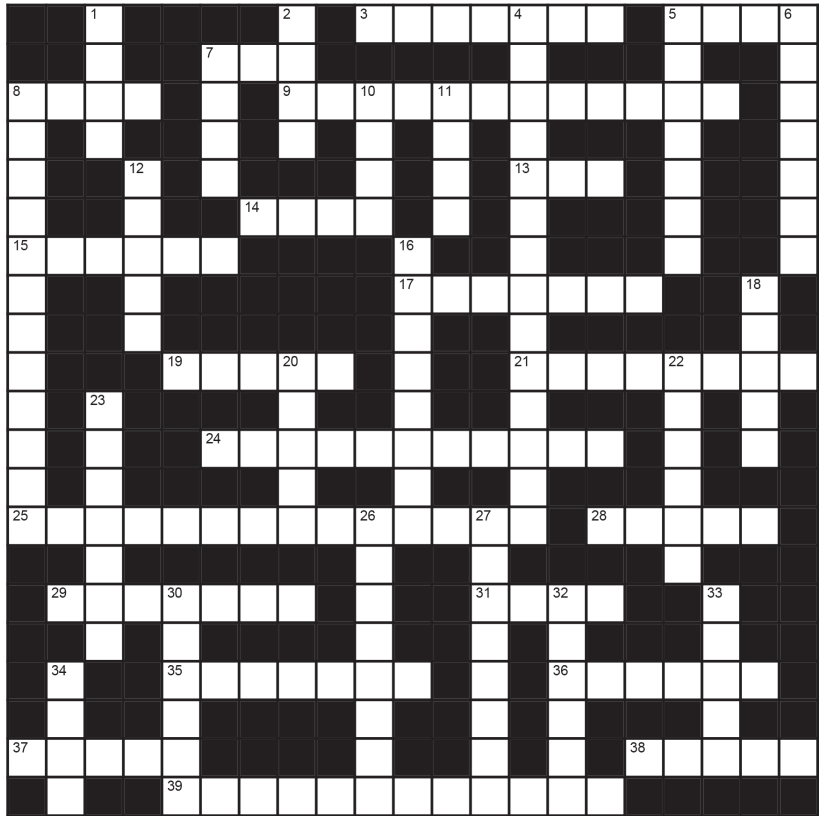
For the latest information - check the website for meetings, walks & other events

Our mission is to be an inspiration to those who feel a sense of kinship with Long Island by encouraging an appreciation for the natural world and a commitment to the environment.

Some Cool Recent Birds
Answers to Spring 2023 puzzle by Tom Moran



Spring & Summer Tom Moran



Across

- 3 _____ Vireo, more distinct facial feature than Warbling.
- 5 _____ - cheeked Thrush, a migrant seen at Heckscher SP this spring.
- 7 ___ colored Heron, seen at Captree this April, why is there no hyphen in this bird's name?!
- 8 Vernal _____, discussed at the Long Island Natural History Conference this April.
- 9 Plover or Sandpiper. Refers to webbing between toes, but can't be used as a field marking.
- 13 An ____ Prowl, an attempt to see one or more of this species.
- 14 ____ Road, from Shinnecock Inlet to Cupsogue CP
- 15 _____ Warbler, potential bank robber?
- 17 _____ Oriole. Burnt orange.
- 19 _____ -throated Blue/Green/Gray Warbler.
- 21 A bird that emphatically appreciates by song those who provide education!
- 24 _____ Nuthatch, *yank yank!*
- 25 _____ Chat
- 28 _____ Sparrow, bouncing ping pong ball song.
- 29 _____ Hawk, or someone who makes barrels if singular.
- 31 _____ Pigeon
- 35 _____ Warbler, seriously misnamed for habitat.
- 36 23 Down, 36 Across Kite, see it in Florida.
- 37 _____ Thrasher
- 38 King Charles III or _____ Tern
- 39 _____ Warbler

Down

- 1 ____ Sparrow, make sure it isn't a Savannah.
- 2 ____ Crow, weak caw, or something an Osprey catches.
- 4 Vireo is good but _____ Warbler seen at Bayard Cutting for the past few years is even better (what is a Pinetum?!)
- 5 -Yellowlegs, longer bill, slightly upturned.!
- 6 Officially Suffolk County Farm and Education Center location.
- 7 ____ Swallow. Not Barn, Northern Rough-winged, Bank or Cliff...
- 8 A warbler that will write a contract for you, seen at Frank Melville Memorial Park this spring.
- 10 ____ Swan.
- 11 ____ Warbler. Listen carefully, not a Chipping Sparrow
- 12 _____ Turnstone.
- 16 _____ Tern. Gray to white.
- 18 _____ Grebe.
- 20 _____ Waxwing. Not the artsy one.
- 22 _____ Owl, on Fischers Island not Long.
- 23 See 36 Across.
- 26 _____ Tree Sparrow.
- 27 _____ Starling.
- 30 _____ Plover. Don't run one over on the beach!!!
- 32 _____ Egret. From Africa.
- 33 Says its name.
- 34 ____ Owl/Swallow

Answers to this puzzle are on page 11.

Merlin, but can you trust it?

Sally Newbert

The other day I spent some time at Bird Academy listening to a recorded Webinar Series on YouTube. This one offered a Bird ID trivia game to learn some new bird identification tricks! Can't everyone use a few more tricks? The Cornell Lab's Merlin Bird ID app is powered by machine learning. In this webinar Merlin took on an experienced birder and a live audience with a computer person to explain Merlin's choices. Using bird photos and sounds, the program proceeded to see who could correctly identify the most species. During the game you will learn how Merlin "decides" on an ID, and panelists will share their tips for sleuthing out tricky birds by sight and sound. With 10 questions in all, 5 sound, 5 pictures – the program puts Merlin to the test. When the app is wrong (spoiler alert) and the birding expert is right, the computer expert explains why Merlin is wrong.

For me, the sound ID is most intriguing and I have on several occasions sat outside and had Merlin listen. It will at least help you ID the feeder birds with all their squeaks and trills. I find it amusing to see the birds pop up as they sing and pretty soon there is a whole list of birds. Now, I agreed with most of Merlin's finds. But Merlin said there was a Bluebird and a Cedar Waxwing. I am pretty sure that I would have picked up on those if

they were around. Could they passed by without my noticing? Possible, I guess. Merlin did confirm a Chipping Sparrow which I had spotted under the feeder but wanted to be assured of its ID. It also heard Chimney Swifts, and what do you know – I looked up over the chimney and there they were!

Merlin also saves your recordings. Think how nice it would be this winter hear the songs, chips, rattles or calls of the summer birds as you watch the snow come down.

You can find this YouTube at Bird Academy, it was recorded on June 6, 2023. Entitled Bird ID Trivia: Merlin vs Birders. Once

you find it there are numerous other in this Webinar Series. Some—a good tip for a rainy day. A few of the webinar topics include information on BirdCast, a new program that will give you new insight into the timing of migration.

In conclusion you will have to be careful and not just accept Merlin's answers, but verify. Another hint from the people who brought you Merlin – be sure the app knows where you are or you could get some very strange answers.



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GIGI SPATES

Gigi is long serving

ELIAS Board Member.

She will be honored at the

Quogue Wildlife Refuge's

Wild Night for Wildlife.

Gigi will be receiving the

Conservator Award.

The 15th Annual

Summer Gala is on

Saturday July 15 at

7:00 pm. Gala details and

tickets are available online

or at the

Nature Center.

Congratulations

Gigi!



Birding Backpacks Available NOW!!

The Covid era brought many people to the realization that the great world of being outside brings peace and tranquility. Over the past few years, more and more people discovered local parks, refuges and locations that might not have been previously on their radar. Local birds suddenly became the focus of attention. But the commitment to buy binoculars, books and to figure out the best places to find birds can be an overwhelming process!

As the result of a very generous bequeath from a deceased ELIAS member, Arlene Schroeder, Eastern Long Island Audubon Society is donating birding backpacks to a number of area public libraries. They have been put together as a useful tool to help folks get out into the woods, fields and parks. Each pack contains all the tools to “test the waters” of birding – two pairs of good quality binoculars, *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*, pocket foldouts of NYS Butterflies and Pollinators, as well as NYS Birds, and a short “instruction” folder, listing local organizations offering nature walks, and where to find birds. Since bird watching is always more enjoyable with a friend or family member, we have two sets of binoculars for you to use.

The packs will be available to library patrons to borrow and use, so check with your local library. Spread the word – and now, get outside and enjoy nature!



The Birds and Bees Protection Act has passed the legislature.

Marsh Wren feeding on insects. Neonics can cause harm to birds, people, pollinators, and other wildlife.

Photo: Kathryn Keith/
Audubon Photography
Awards



Protect Birds by Limiting Neonic Pesticides

After years of urging our state to limit Neonic pesticides, a toxic threat to birds and people, Audubon New York is thrilled to announce that the Birds and Bees Protection Act has finally passed!

An absolutely astounding 4,988 advocates wrote to your lawmakers, urging them to pass this important law. It now goes to Governor Hochul for her signature.

The Birds and Bees Protection Act eliminates 80%-90% of the neonics entering New York's environment yearly. Chemically related to nicotine, neonics are commonly applied as seed treatments to crops such as corn, soy, and barley.

Although aimed at pests, neonics impact birds and other pollinators. Birds like the Marsh Wren, above, are indirectly impacted when neonics leach into nearby ponds and wetlands, where they kill the larvae of insects these birds depend on for food.

As we face a changing climate, we must tackle threats from new angles to save declining species. Thank you for helping bring about this big win for birds.

From Audubon | New York



Bird of the Month: Piping Plover

Hatchling season is here, and Piping Plover chicks are on the move all across New York beaches. These "precocial" birds hatch fully-feathered and ready to run around under the watchful eyes of their parents—but they need your help to keep them safe!

There are many actions you can take to make sure beaches are safe for birds and people alike, including:...

- Staying at least 100 feet away from birds and fencing
- Keeping pets on leash and away from birds, and only on beaches where they are allowed
- Disposing of litter properly
- Reading and following posted signs

Already an expert? Help spread the word with our #SharetheShore toolkit. Interested in volunteering? Follow Audubon New York on Facebook for nesting season updates and opportunities to help at the beach, or send an email at nycoast@audubon.org!



Canadian Birding News

This Article appeared in Birds Canada and is presented here with a few modifications to aid our readers with the general location of the Ferruginous Hawk.

MAY 26, 2023 ERIEAU, ONTARIO CANADA To the great surprise of many Ontario birders, a Ferruginous Hawk, a native species of the grasslands and open country in western North America, was recently recovered near the town of Eribeau, Ontario. Eribeau is located on the shores of Lake Erie across from Cleveland, Ohio. This rare occurrence marks only the 9th recorded sighting of this species in Ontario. The hawk's journey, from being rescued after a tumultuous encounter with passing vehicles to its successful rehabilitation, has now taken an exciting turn with the implementation of advanced tracking technologies. In collaboration with the Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation and the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banders, scientists at Birds Canada initiated a project to monitor the hawk's movements and shed light on the behavior and survival of vagrant and rehabilitated birds.

Samantha Ethier of Sarnia, Ontario, stumbled upon the hawk on May 3 near Eribeau, as the bird was flying low over the road and subsequently landed in a nearby waterway where it then swam to shore. Prompt action led to the hawk being rescued and handed over to the Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation. There, it underwent thorough inspections for injury and disease, avian flu screening, and received necessary medical attention. Soon enough, the hawk regained its strength and was deemed fit for release.

Recognizing the opportunity to contribute valuable data to the study of vagrant and rehabilitated birds, Birds Canada, in collaboration with the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banders, arranged for the Ferruginous Hawk to be banded and equipped with a small cellular-GPS tag. This tracking device was generously donated by one of our Motus Wildlife Tracking System technology partners Cellular Tracking Technologies who quickly mobilized to prep a unit that was ready for deployment

in short order. This unique technology enables scientists to monitor the hawk's movements and understand its behavior and survival patterns.

Eribeau's Release

After receiving the necessary permits and permissions, the Ferruginous Hawk, affectionately named Eribeau, was banded and released near Wyoming, Ontario. Since then, Eribeau has embarked on an exploration of southwestern Ontario. She ventured approximately 100 km east of her release site just north of London, then spent a day 100 km west near Forest, before returning south to Eribeau where birders rediscovered her independently. After a brief stay, she moved west toward Point Pelee where she resides today. Her behavior appears to be normal as she explores and hunts during the peak warmth and daylight hours.

Eribeau's Journey

As the project progresses, updates on Eribeau's journey can soon be followed on a dedicated website and through updates on our social media platforms. However, real-time information regarding her whereabouts will not be shared to ensure her safety and minimize any potential stress.

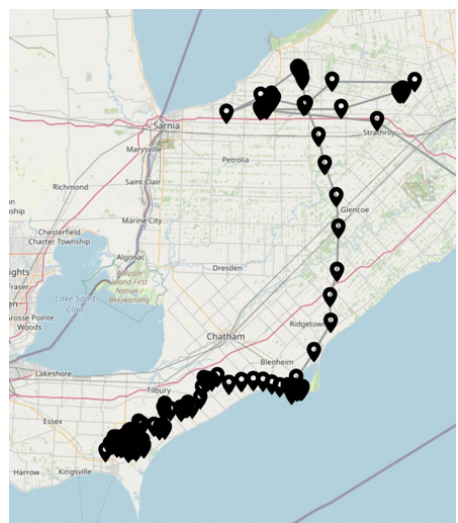
The tracking of Eribeau, the vagrant Ferruginous Hawk, presents a unique opportunity to study the behavior and survival of birds outside their usual migratory pathways or ranges. By gaining insights into the movements and experiences of vagrant and rehabilitated birds, we can advance our understanding of migration, behavior, survival, and ultimately contribute to bird conservation efforts. Eribeau's journey exemplifies the resilience and adaptability of these remarkable creatures, while highlighting the importance of scientific research in their conservation



Ferruginous Hawk. Photo: Ron Ridout



Ferruginous Hawk with Ferruginous Hawk, with a transmitter. Photo: Stuart Mackenzie



The map generated by the transmitter



The Science of Well-Being Takes Flight: Birdwatching and Its Benefits

Darlene J McNeil

Birdwatching, the observation and study of birds in their natural habitats, has long captured the imagination of individuals around the world. Beyond its inherent beauty and intrigue, birdwatching has recently garnered attention as a potent tool for enhancing well-being. Renowned psychologist Laurie Santos of Yale University has delved into the science of well-being and has brought together multiple research studies that give scientifically proven strategies to positively impact our mental and emotional states. In this article, we explore the therapeutic qualities of birdwatching and how they relate to some of the interventions Laurie Santos has explored with her courses at Yale, multiple podcasts and TED talks.

Connecting with Nature

One of the fundamental aspects of birdwatching lies in its ability to foster a deep connection with nature. As humans, we have an innate affinity for the natural world, and birdwatching allows us to tap into this primal connection. By spending time outdoors, observing and appreciating the diverse avian species, we rekindle our relationship with the environment and its tranquil beauty. This reconnection with nature has been linked to reduced stress levels, increased happiness, and improved overall well-being.

Mindfulness and Presence

Birdwatching serves as a powerful catalyst for mindfulness—the practice of being fully present in the moment. When engrossed in birdwatching, individuals must attune their senses to the subtle sights and sounds of the avian world. This heightened awareness cultivates mindfulness, allowing birdwatchers to escape the distractions of daily life and immerse themselves in the present experience. Research suggests that practicing mindfulness can alleviate anxiety, improve cognitive abilities, and enhance overall psychological resilience.

Sense of Wonder and Curiosity

Birdwatching stimulates our sense of wonder and curiosity, igniting a childlike enthusiasm within us. The sheer diversity and remarkable behaviors exhibited by birds can captivate our attention and fuel a desire to learn more about these fascinating creatures. Engaging in this pursuit of knowledge not only expands our understanding of the avian world but also instills a sense of purpose and intellectual stimulation. This sense of wonder and curiosity has been linked to increased feelings of joy and satisfaction.

Promoting Social Connections

While birdwatching can be a solitary activity, it also presents opportunities for fostering social connections. Birdwatching communities, both online and offline, provide platforms for enthusiasts to share their experiences, exchange knowledge, and form meaningful relationships. The shared interest in birds often serves as a foundation for camaraderie and a sense of belonging. Engaging in social interactions through birdwatching can combat feelings of loneliness, enhance social support networks, and contribute to overall well-being.

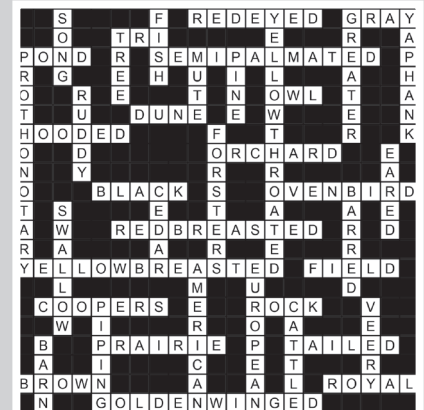
Physical Activity and Health Benefits

Birdwatching frequently involves venturing into natural habitats, which encourages physical activity and promotes a healthier lifestyle. Whether strolling through forests, hiking trails, or traversing wetlands, birdwatchers engage in moderate exercise while enjoying the captivating presence of avian life. Regular physical activity has been extensively linked to improved mental health, increased energy levels, and a reduced risk of chronic diseases.

This beloved hobby offers a multifaceted approach to enhancing our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. By connecting with nature, cultivating mindfulness, nurturing curiosity, fostering social connections, and promoting physical activity, birdwatching proves to be a valuable tool for experiencing the beauty of the avian world while nurturing our own personal growth and happiness. So, grab a pair of binoculars and embark on a journey that combines the awe-inspiring world of birds with the science of well-being — your flourishing awaits!

This is the first time we have published the answers and the puzzles in the same issue. We will be doing this from now on.

This is the puzzle that appears on page 6. Entitled Spring & Summer by Tom Moran.



THE OSPREY

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2023

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