



Bird Notes

From Northeast Kingdom Audubon
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Responsibility Birds

When you have land to take care of, there are more responsibilities these days. For example, the yellow birch amongst the evergreens was once destined for firewood until I learned about the value of the tree for early spring warblers. Now it has to be released. This is the same as apple tree release, a fancy term for pruning, something people have been doing for years. This responsibility is not hard to bear because the tree will thrive and so will the warblers. I'll burn something else.

Learning more about managing land has been not only a good social experience, but very worthwhile just for the resource materials I have been stockpiling. A very good source for these is Audubon Vermont, our state chapter in Huntington, Vermont and its webpage <http://vt.audubon.org/>. At this webpage, go to "Science and Conservation", and then go to "Forest Bird Fact Sheets". Or just type in: http://vt.audubon.org/sciCon_ForestBirdFactSheets.html. Here you will find the Thirty-Nine Responsibility Birds, the ones that we need to pay attention to

Nobody can remember 39 birds at one time, but there is a way. The Birder's Dozen, another fact sheet, makes it easier because these birds are simple to identify by sight or sound. Some are showing a decline while others are stable and would respond to better forest management. Even if your land is just your yard, some of these birds will find you or your feeder or your bushes and trees (if they are available). From the list of 39, you will know the yellow-bellied sapsucker, (Bird Notes March 09), the wood thrush with its beautiful forest melody, the purple finch at the feeder, or the ruffed grouse, the wild chicken of the woods. From the dozen, you most likely know the American woodcock (declining in VT), also declining, the white-throated sparrow (sings: Old-Sam-Peabody-Peabody-Peabody), and holding stable, the scarlet tanager (sounds like a robin with a cold in deep woods). To find out who else is on these lists of concern, follow the links above.

Once you learn about the 39, what do you do next? What about the ones you don't know or have never seen? How can you take responsibility for the birds that cannot take it for themselves? First, sign up for a bird walk, bird course, or just pick up a bird book. It is never too late to start learning about birds. NEK Audubon and other local bird groups will help you with this part. Secondly, the land that you manage, whatever size lot, will provide you and the birds hours of enjoyment. Yes, Audubon Vermont has some ideas about this, too. Look for the Bird-Friendly Management Recommendations fact sheet at the link above. Just in time for the summer season, these guidelines will keep you busy if you are not taking that vacation. Remember to enlist the services of professional foresters before you go too deep into the woods to help the birds.

Happy Responsibility Birding!

Carolyn E. Boardman is a board member of NEK Audubon living in Brownington, Vermont. NEK Audubon is one of 8 chapters of Audubon Vermont and part of the National Audubon Society. NEK Audubon is a non -profit organization that encourages people's enjoyment of birds, wildlife and natural habitats through field trips, programs and publications. For more information about meetings, field trips and special events visit www.nekaudubon.org. Art work by Robin Rothman.