



# NORTHEAST KINGDOM AUDUBON

A Chapter Of The National Audubon Society Spring/Summer 2005

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The mission of Northeast Kingdom Audubon is to foster the stewardship and enjoyment of birds, other wildlife and natural habitats.

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## Notes from the President

Of all NEK Audubon's activities, awarding camp scholarships each year may well be our most important effort. Almost every child comes back energized, enthusiastic – eager to learn more about wildlife and eager to promote stewardship of critical habitat. This past summer was no exception. Kate Roosa returned from High Pond determined to give something back to her community and came up with the exciting idea of starting a “**Junior Audubon**” at the **Barnet School**, where she is currently a 7th grader.

Kate organized a couple of meetings with Cindy Mosedale, her science teacher; Kerry Keenan, Barnet School's principal; Dick Roosa, her father; Steve Hagenbuch from Audubon Vermont's State Office, and myself. We decided on a kickoff in early February to get the project underway. Steve offered to come back with a coyote demonstration followed by a Wolf Howl. This was exactly the fun, active type of event Kate was hoping for! She and some fellow students created a variety of posters and mailings to entice others to come.

Some fifty people – students, parents and other members of the community – showed up for the potluck supper and Steve's presentation. Following dinner, folks headed out for the “Wolf Howl.” We went out in small groups and listened. Using just our ears we followed the sound of the “wolf's howl” (which occasionally moved!) over the hills and through the woods and snow. The wolf howled until everyone joined the pack. The event was a great success. Since then Barnet's Junior Audubon group strives to meet once or twice a month after school. They have built a variety of bird feeders and will plan more activi-

ties this spring.

In July and August our chapter will again sponsor three local children at Audubon camps. Kyle Bourtelle (11) from Derby, and Claire Simons (12) from St. Johnsbury, will attend the Maine's Youth Camp on Hog Island. Kate Roosa (13), from Barnet will return for a second summer to Vermont's Audubon Youth Camp at High Pond. To pay the \$2,300 for these three tuitions, we absolutely count on contributions to our BIRDATHON. We receive some matching funds from Audubon Vermont's State Office, but almost all of our camp scholarship money comes from this, our one and only fundraiser. There's a contribution form with this newsletter. Please give as generously as you can.



## Spring Tune-up

If you're like me, stepping out of the car into the spring time chorus of a dozen songbirds singing their mating song can be a little overwhelming. Over the winter I have forgotten the subtle differences between warbler, vireo and sparrow song and it is difficult to single out any one bird's song. I'll hear a familiar melody of a song I know I know but must leaf through that Rolodex of song and field guide in my mind til I narrow it down. By the time I do, several other birds have pestered me into listening to what they have to say. Oh I know what they have to say has nothing to do with me, still their relentless chatter must be answered with their correct name. The disappointment I feel in not remembering each bird's name when he calls out is

enough to make me feel I haven't learned anything over the many years. Last Spring I began using a few birding techniques that have been around for quite some time and was surprised at how successful using them made my birding treks.

**TIME OF YEAR:** Begin looking and listening for birds before their migration north is in full swing. For example the song sparrow arrives in late March followed by the Field, Savannah, and Vesper, Chipping, Swamp and White-throated sparrow in the first two weeks of April. Here is where you'll have a chance to hear the subtle difference between Swamp and Chipping, keeping in mind the habitat you're in, before another twenty species arrive. The Yellow-rump and Pine warblers join those sparrows in mid April followed by the Blue-headed Vireo, Black-throated Green and Black and White Warbler arriving in late April. If you get out a few times during this period it will help in deciphering the differences is their song from the other vireos and warblers arriving in May. This time of year there are few leaves on the trees and you can single out each song to an individual bird. A Vermont Daily Field Card (printed by VINS) is a great help as it gives the approximate arrival dates of birds to Vermont.

**HABITAT, HABITAT, HABITAT:** Just by knowing what kind of habitat you're birding should greatly reduce the number of species you'll have to "rolodex" through in any given area. Wetlands, forest interior, hedgerows or open field each have different species as you might expect. Keep in mind that during migration birds you'd think were not supposed to be in one habitat may be there for a short time before moving on. Sometimes the name of a bird simplifies where it should be; the Meadow Lark- in open meadows or fields, the Swamp sparrow-in marshy wet areas, the Pine warbler in pine forest.

**TIME OF DAY:** During Birdathons and surveys (breeding bird atlas) it is always helpful to get out doors before the sun comes up. It is so much simpler to "pick-off" the first few birds of the day before all hell breaks loose. Time after time the early morning hours seem to give the best opportunity to see and hear the largest

variety of species. Mating song can decrease after pairs are formed and the duties of nest building and eventually the feeding of offspring occupy their day so you'll have to rely on their frenzied flight back and forth to the nest with food to locate them. Sometimes this makes it easier to find them than when they are hidden at the top of a 60' tree singing their head off.

**LISTENING TO RECORDED BIRD SONGS:** I'm always delighted when I hear a bird out in the field and I recognize it from having listened to the Birding by Ear CDs. During the winter months I play them when I'm sitting around doing nothing in particular and have actually made up a test of all the species on the CD. At the end of each CD the disc runs through all the songs and I write down the appropriate bird for each song played on a piece of paper. Thayer Birding software is also a great resource if you have a computer.

**PRACTICE IN THE FIELD:** Nothing helps more than the amount of time spent in the field. The more you are able to find a bird while it is singing, the easier it will be to remember it next time you hear that bird singing and can't see it.

By following a few of these simple rules soon you'll be able to walk through the woods and do most of your birding by ear alone.

*-Tom Berriman*

## NORTHEAST KINGDOM AUDUBON

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## Upcoming Events April - May 2005

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All activities and Board Meetings are open to the public. Events are listed in our newsletter and in local newspapers, but may be updated or change. We appreciate a \$3/member or \$5/non-member donation and pre-registration for trips and programs. Contact Airie Lindsay [airie@kingcon.com](mailto:airie@kingcon.com) (802) 748-8515 for details and to learn how to join NEK Audubon.

**Saturday, April 23 (all day): NEK Audubon Trip to our northern lakes region to look for Spruce Grouse.** Meet at 7 am in the White Market parking lot, by Rite Aide on Rte 5 north just off I-91 Exit 23 in Lyndonville. Contact: Tom Berriman: [thomas.barriman@verizon.net](mailto:thomas.barriman@verizon.net); 626-9071.

**Monday, May 2: NEK Audubon Informational and Planning Meeting 4:30-6:00 pm** in the Fairbanks Museum Classroom. Open to all.

**Saturday, May 7, 7-10 am Birding the Shadow Lake Trail:** Waterford to East Concord. Meet at Lower Waterford Church, opposite Rabbit Hill Inn for carpooling. Contact: Charlie Browne [cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org](mailto:cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org); 748-2372.

**Wednesday, May 11, 9-10:30 am Northeast Kingdom YOUTH BIRDING DAY:** at the Blue Mountain Union School in Wells River and at the Barnet School.

**Saturday, May 14, 9-11 am: LEARNING THE BIRDS BY EAR: A Birding Outing for the Blind, the Visually Impaired, and Their Guests.** Meet at the Inn at Mountain View Farm, Darling Hill, East Burke, Vermont. Contact: Charlie Browne: [cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org](mailto:cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org); 748-2372.

**Sunday, May 15, 9-11 am LEARNING THE BIRDS BY EYE: A Birding Outing for the Deaf, the Hearing Impaired, and Their Guests.** Meet at the Inn at Mountain View Farm, Darling Hill, East Burke, Vermont. Contact: Charlie Browne: [cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org](mailto:cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org); 748-2372.

**Wednesday, May 18, 9-11 am SEAT OF YOUR PANTS BIRDING: A Victory Tour for the Wheelchair Bound and their Guests.** Meet at Damon's Crossing Parking Area, Victory, VT. Contact: Charlie Browne: [cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org](mailto:cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org); 748-2372.

**Sunday, May 22, 7-9 am and beyond! THE BIRDATHON — NORTHEAST KINGDOM BIRDING AT IT'S BEST.** Details on enclosed flyer.

**Saturday, June 4 (all day): Applicants' Hike up Bald Mountain in Westmore.** Open to all. Meet at 9:00 am in front of the Fairbanks Museum to carpool. Return around 4:00 pm. Contact Airie: [airie@kingcon.com](mailto:airie@kingcon.com); 748-8515.

**Saturday, June 25 (all day): to view Eagle Hacking at Dead Creek.** Meet at 7:30 am at the West Danville parking area at the junction of Rtes. 2 and 15 to carpool. Suggested donation \$3/members, \$5 non-members. For more information and to pre-register contact Jim Ashley: [jashley@kingcon.com](mailto:jashley@kingcon.com); 684-3491.

**Sunday, July 25, 3-6 pm. ANNUAL MEETING and POTLUCK SUPPER.** Thelma White's house in E. Peacham. Presentation: Bats in Vermont with Claude Phipps. Pre-register w/ Thelma (592-3566) or Airie (748-8515)