



NORTHEAST KINGDOM AUDUBON

A Chapter Of The National Audubon Society

Winter/ Spring 2005

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

Notes from the President

On New Year's Day eighteen birders, organized by Charlie Browne, combed a 15-mile diameter area, centered on the town of Barnet, for National Audubon's 105th Annual Christmas Bird Count. Our goal: to count every bird as we traveled miles of roads and trails. When Robin arrived at my house at 7 am she'd already taken a skid on the glare ice of Joe's Brook Road, so we donned YakTrax (stretchy rubber gismos with coiled wire under-foot) and threw a bag of kitty litter into the car for traction, just in case.

Every few minutes we stopped to look and listen, perhaps walk up a trail. Under a low fir in the woods we spotted a small grayish bird with a yellow striped on top of its head – a golden-crowned kinglet! A ruffed grouse crossed the road, its ruff puffed up. Around barns we saw flocks of starlings, pigeons, and house sparrows. Where people kept feeders filled, scores of goldfinches and chickadees were joined by purple and house finches, red and white-breasted nuthatches, and hairy and downy woodpeckers and an occasional tree sparrow. A flock of turkeys hunted for stray kernels in a cornfield. An occasional raven and crow soared overhead. At noon we took a "working lunch" back at the house, keeping an eye on the feeders. Amidst the goldfinches stood one lone pine siskin. We continued our route until the light began to fade, and then headed up to Anne Coulter's place in St. Johnsbury to wrap up our sightings over hot tea and scones. Together we saw a total of 45 species – comparable to other years. Noteworthy: a common loon, a red-bellied woodpecker, 3 chipping sparrows and a tremendous flock of more than 2,000 crows in the corn fields along Route 5 in Passumpsic. Missing this year were goshawks, sharp shinned hawks, and black-

birds. Although it's impossible to count every bird within a given area, the value of the Christmas Bird Count lies in noting trends over time. Anyone wishing to take part in this event should just drop Charlie a line: (cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org; 748-2372). For lists of Christmas Bird Count areas and sightings go to <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>.



Feed the Birds

Feeders and feeding stations provide welcome sustenance for birds in the winter and a wonderful venue for observation. People often ask which feeders are best and what types of seed attract the most birds. Feeders can be easily improvised or store bought and don't have to be elaborate or expensive to work well. Good feeders are easy to fill, discourage predation, and keep seed dry and free of dander. To avoid bacteria potentially harmful to birds, periodically wash and rinse feeders in a 1-part bleach/9-part water solution and to rake up decomposing hulls beneath the feeders. Black-oil sunflower is one of the best high-energy seeds to feed, but safflower, corn, niger, millet and milo appeal to a variety of birds as well. You can offer dried fruit and leftover bread, but don't offer anything that's moldy or spoiled. For the same reason, feed suet only when the weather is cold enough to keep it from going rancid.

Howard's Home & Garden on Memorial Drive (Rte 5) north of St. Johnsbury carries a variety of feeders and all sizes of bags and types of birdseed. Ernie Howard and others at the store can give expert advice on how and what to feed. For three years Ernie has given NEK Audubon his birdseed

sale profits on our October Seed Sale Day. We hope that people will buy birdseed, bird feeders, garden and pet supplies, and much more from Howard's. It's a great place to shop.



Happy Birthday Thelma!

Northeast Kingdom Audubon Board Member Emeritus Thelma White celebrates her 90th Birthday on February 2 (Ground Hog's Day) 2005. Her address: 2144 East Peacham Rd., Barnet, VT 05821 We wish you health and happiness, dear Thelma. You are an inspiration to us all!

NORTHEAST KINGDOM AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS / 2004-2005

Officers

Airie Lindsay, President
Howard Pires, Vice President
Robin Rothman, Secretary
Charlie Browne, Treasurer

Board Members

Tom Berriman
Sue DeClue
Virginia Elliott
Michael Sabourin
Thelma White

ANNUAL CHAPTER EVENTS

Christmas Bird Count: January 1
Camp Scholarship Awards: early March
BIRDATHON: late May
Annual Meeting: last Sunday in July
Campers' Presentation Potluck: first Sunday in November
Newsletter: January, April, September



Audubon Vermont

Jim Shallow, Director
(802) 434-3068; jshallow@audubon.org

National Audubon Society www.audubon.org

Barbara Hird

We are sad to report the death of Barbara Hird, a former director, president and friend of NEK Audubon. Long-term members of this chapter will recall the many delightful mud-season slide-shows and potluck supper meetings held at her house in Waterford. She was one of the first delegates to represent us at meetings of the Audubon Council, predecessor of Audubon Vermont. VNRC and the Audubon field office called upon her to testify at public hearings so frequently that Barbara began referring to herself as our local "grass root." In this capacity she often ventured to distant venues in anything but enticing weather and waited hours to deliver a statement in favor of saving wilderness areas for future generations.

Sunday, May 22

7-9 am and beyond!

THE BIRDATHON

**NORTHEAST KINGDOM
BIRDING
AT IT'S BEST**

. . . Details to be announced!

Upcoming Events February - May 2005

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 (802) 748-8515 for details and to learn how to join NEK Audubon.

Saturday, February 5 (half day): NEK Audubon Trip to look for grey jays in Victory Basin. Meet at 7 am in the White Market parking lot, by Rite Aid on Rte 5 just north of I-91 Exit 23 in Lyndonville. Contact: Tom Berriman thomas.barriman@verizon.net; 626-9071.

Monday, February 7: NEK Audubon Informational and Planning Meeting 4:30 - 6:00 pm in the Fairbanks Museum Classroom. Open to all.

February 18 - 21: THE 8th ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT: Anyone can participate for any or all of the count days. For information go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc or call the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at 800-843-2473. No fees, no registration required.

Saturday, March 5 (all day): NEK Audubon Trip to the New Hampshire and Maine Coasts for sea birds. Meet at 6:00 am at the Exit 44 Rest Area (on Rte 18) off I-93. Contact: Tom Berriman thomas.barriman@verizon.net; 626-9071.

Monday, March 7: NEK Audubon Informational and Planning Meeting 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. in the Fairbanks Museum Classroom. Open to all.

Saturday, March 19 (all day): NEK Audubon Trip to search for early migrants in the Champlain Valley south of Burlington. Meet at 7 am at the West Danville parking area (jct of Rte 2 and Rte 15). Contact: Tom Berriman thomas.barriman@verizon.net; 626-9071.

Monday, April 4: NEK Audubon Informational and Planning Meeting 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. in the Fairbanks Museum Classroom. Open to all.

Saturday, April 23 (all day): NEK Audubon Trip to our northern lakes region to look for Spruce Grouse. Meet at 7 a.m. in the White Market parking lot, by Agway on Rte 5 north just off I-91 Exit 23 in Lyndonville. Contact: Tom Berriman 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; 748-2372.

NEW THIS YEAR!

Bird Trips Especially Geared to the Wheelchair Bound, the Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired and Youth

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

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; 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; 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, Vermont. Contact: Charlie Browne cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org; 748-2372.