



EST. 1947

The BIRD CALL

Newsletter of the Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.

Eastern Bluebird Population Doubles

By Sandy Morrissey

We had a fantastic bluebird nesting season. Since our BRSS Eastern Bluebird Project began 13 years ago, we inched up from having no nesting pairs in our area to 32 last year. This year we had a quantum leap to 62 nesting pairs!

While we increased our number of nestboxes by 25% to 204, and also increased our number of locations by 25% to 51, our number of nesting pairs increased 50%. Last year we fledged about 130 bluebirds, this year the final number will be over 260.

Sandy Morrissey obtained her Federal and State bird banding license in the Spring, so we embarked on a program of banding all our bluebird nestlings and as many adult bluebirds as we could capture. The final tally was 248 nestlings and 43 adults banded. Next

year will be most interesting if we identify any of these banded birds in our nestboxes. We can then answer many questions we get such as: does the bluebird stay paired for life and do they return to the same nestbox?

We are doing a scientific study comparing the long-term survival of bluebirds that nest on golf courses versus the bluebirds that nest elsewhere. While golf courses use a lot of chemicals, they seem to be one of our best locations for attracting and increasing the bluebird population. Time will tell how well these golf course bluebirds fare, compared to those nesting in environments that use fewer chemicals.

We learn better trail management from our bluebirds and they seem to learn a few things themselves. For example, when we first tried the Gilbertson-style nestboxes to prevent house sparrows



Always great to witness our success—two Eastern Bluebird fledglings.

from nesting, we got almost no house sparrows, but no bluebirds either. Now in their 3rd season of use, we had 9 nesting pairs using the Gilbertson nestboxes. They were “late-adopters” but now take advantage of these nestboxes

Continued on page 2

Budding Conservationists

By Jeff Zuckerman

This summer, as we have done for so many years, our Audubon Chapter sponsored two deserving and enthusiastic youngsters to attend a one-week session of Westchester County's Conservation Summer Camp. The following is their “Thank You” to every member of the Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society. We can think of no better way to spend a small portion of our funds than to encourage this kind of youth involvement with nature.

Dear President Morrissey and Members of the BRSS, Thank you for the scholarship that you gave to me and Julian. We had a lot of fun this year. We went to camp at the Rye Marshlands Conservancy. We all went to the frog pond and seining. When we went to the frog pond, we caught a huge snapping turtle. When we went seining, the water was really cold. We went up to our waist and we caught jellyfish and other fish. We really enjoyed this camp. One of our favorite things to do was seining. We really appreciate the BRSS sending us to camp again. It was AWESOME!

*Your Friends,
Brandon Belles and Julian Ferreiras*

Young Birders Group

By David Kaufman

Before the beginning of summer vacation, the Young Birders Group got in one final field trip to the Marshlands Conservancy on June 11th. We thank the field trip leaders, Neil Powell and Bernie Conway, for guiding our young birders through this 150 acre salt marsh preserve, one of our local favorite top birding areas.

The weather that Saturday morning was questionable but the rain held off just long enough for the birding group to get in a good hike through the preserve. A total of 41 species of birds were seen, with a nice variety of woodland, meadow, salt marsh and shore birds identified. Four species of woodpecker were seen (Red Bellied, Northern Flicker, Hairy and Downy), as well as an American Oystercatcher, Black Crowned Night Heron and both a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and a Great-Crested Flycatcher. Not a bad day at all! Our young birders were wished a very happy summer vacation and plans were made to re-group in the fall with monthly field trips to be generally held on the fourth Saturday morning of each month. A tentative schedule may be found at the end of this article. Our next field trip is scheduled to be held on September 24th for a *Hawk Watch* at the

BRSS AUDUBON

P. O. Box 1108
Scarsdale, NY 10583
www.brssaudubon.org

**Board of Directors
and Committee Members**

*Officers**PRESIDENT*

Sandra Morrissey (h) 949-2531
sandym@cloud9.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Doug Bloom 834-5203

TREASURER

Jeff Zuckerman 395-3083
jeffzuckerman2000@yahoo.com

SECRETARY

Diane Morrison 725-7351

*Committees**MEMBERSHIP*

Clare Gorman 395-3083
claregorman@yahoo.com

FIELD TRIPS

Doug Bloom 834-5203
Neil Powell 437- 8348

YOUNG BIRDERS GROUP

Dave Kaufman, Chair 777-1633

CONSERVATION

Bernie Conway 413-210-0041
Cece Fabbro 472-6596
Bonnie Gould 723-6332
Orlando Hidalgo 698-3907
Dave Kaufman 777-1633
Henry May 667-6144
Scott Mellis 235-5145
Bob Wirsneck 834-1409

HOSPITALITY

Diane Morrison 725-7351

PROGRAMS

Diane Morrison 725-7351

PUBLICITY

Roz Wood 698-3568
rozandalan@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER

Clare Gorman, Editor
claregorman@yahoo.com

WEBSITE

Sandra Morrissey
sandym@cloud9.net

*Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.
is a chapter of the National Audubon Society
serving the communities of
Bronxville, Eastchester, Edgemont, Hartsdale,
Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Mount Vernon, New
Rochelle, Pelham, Scarsdale, and Tuckahoe*

BLUEBIRDS BLUEBIRDS BLUEBIRDS

Sandy Morrissey teaches Ethan Weinstein how to age bluebird nestlings. He recorded the banding data. Ethan contacted BRSS Audubon with a request to help with the Eastern Bluebird Project. He did a great job



Bluebird monitor, Tolly Beck, at Lasdon invented an effective and "free" snake guard — pyracantha branches.



This is the second time in 13 years that we had a clutch of 6 eggs. Normally the size is 4 or 5 eggs. Happily, all these eggs hatched and the 6 nestlings fledged. In addition, the parents successfully raised 3 nestlings in a second brood!



Thanks to all the volunteer Bluebird Monitors. A celebration was held at the home of Sandy Morrissey.

Bluebirds

Continued from page 1

that attract almost no house sparrows.

We have learned that "less is more" and removed nestboxes in some locations. A high density of nestboxes attracts too many tree swallows that, in turn, gang up on a lone bluebird pair. Bluebirds actually return when there are fewer nestboxes in an area.

We also started to have success with pairing nestboxes. The bluebird literature says pairing is often a good idea, so both tree swallow and bluebird will nest peacefully close together. However, for the first 12 years of our project, we had these species nesting side by side only 3 times. Suddenly this year, this technique is working. We had co-existing pairs of bluebirds and tree swallows in

8 locations.

All this success could not happen without the 28 volunteer monitors who faithfully check their bluebird trails weekly. Additionally, we got a tremendous boost from The Little Garden Club of Rye that gave us a generous donation and helped us obtain permission to place nestboxes on many new locations.

As always, anyone wishing to join our Eastern Bluebird Project by volunteering or making a financial donation can contact Sandy Morrissey, sandym@cloud9.net or 914-949-2531.

Sandy Morrissey is President of BRSS Audubon and chairs the Eastern Bluebird Project.

PROGRAMS 2011/2012

PLEASE JOIN US! PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
All programs are co-sponsored by Central Westchester Audubon

**October 19, Wednesday – How Has That Been Used?
 Edible and Medicinal Plants**

Presenter: Mary Harrington is a Master Gardener and has been an environmental volunteer in Westchester County for 24 years. She helped to author the Teatown Guide to the wildflowers on Wildflower Island. She is the current caretaker of the Beverly E. Smith Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden sponsored by Hudson River Audubon at Lenoir Nature Preserve.

So much of the flora around us has historical uses as food and/or medicine. You are most probably walking on or by these plants. This program will introduce you to some of the plants and weeds that are common in this area. How they are used could surprise and delight you!!

Location: Church Street School, Room 132, 295 Church Street, White Plains. Time: 7:00 pm.

Nov. 17, Thursday - Live Raptors

Presenter: Jim Eyring, Assistant Director of the Pace University Environmental Center in Pleasantville and Master Falconer, returns to thrill us with his presentation of live owls, hawks and falcons in a free-flying demonstration. Even if you have seen him before, you will find that each presentation is different. Jim's enthusiasm and story-telling skills will capture the attention of children and adults alike. Bring the kids and enjoy!

Location: Church Street School Gym, 295 Church Street, White Plains. Time: 7:00 pm.

** Program sponsored by CWAS with help from BRSS.

**January 19, 2012, Thursday - Film: "Play Again" -
 What are the consequences of a childhood away from
 nature?**

This is a moving and humorous documentary following six teenagers who, like the "average American child," spend five to fifteen hours a day behind screens. "Play Again" unplugs these teens and takes them on their first wilderness adventure - no electricity, no cell phone coverage, no virtual reality.

Location: Church Street School, Room 132, 295 Church Street, White Plains, NY. Time: 7:00 pm.

February 16, 2012, Thursday -

Benjamin Van Doren - Program TBA. Location: Church Street School, 295 Church Street, White Plains. Time: 7:00 pm.

March 14, 2012, Wednesday - Harry Potter Critters

Melanie Pearson of the New Canaan Nature Center. Location: The Trove (children's library) at White Plains Library, 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains. Time: 7:00 pm.

**April 18, 2012, Wednesday - Forestry is for the Birds:
 Why forest birds need us to cut down trees**

Presenter: Mike Burger, Conservation and Science Director and Interim Director of the Atlantic Flyway, Audubon New York, Ithaca. Michael will provide an overview of the habitat requirements of forest birds during breeding, post-fledging, and migration periods. He will show results of recent research demonstrating the importance of dense, early-successional forest habitats to forest-breeding birds and discuss how natural disturbances, which create that habitat, have decreased. Finally, Mike will discuss Audubon's recommendations about how birds can benefit from habitats created through forest management in our northern forests, and he will give examples of practical forestry applications and techniques that can be used to create high-quality bird habitat.

Location: Eastchester Public Library, 11 Oakridge Place, Eastchester. Time: 7:00 pm.

May 16, 2012, Wednesday—Antarctica

Presenters: Andy and Jane Cahn.

Andy and Jane are lifelong educators and have taught in secondary schools and colleges in Westchester for many years. Retired now, they spend vast amounts of time traveling to some of the most exciting places on earth. Their slides and discussion of Antarctica will make for a most enjoyable and interesting evening.

Location: Eastchester Public Library, 11 Oakridge Place, Eastchester. Time: 7:00 pm.

Welcome To All Of Our New Members

Bronx

Johnny Flores

Briarcliff

Edward Birdie

Bronxville

Virginia Barnett

Muriel Pagan

Janet Sloan

Ursula Villareal

Eastchester

H.B. Bulger

Lynda Dalgish

Hartsdale

Ruth Lewis

Mary Spatoliatore

Larchmont

Maureen McGowan

Carl Nathan

Ingela Shapiro

Mamaroneck

Nigel Holloway

The Lords

Elizabeth O'Rourke

Mount Vernon

Robert Ellis

Theresa Main

New Rochelle

D. Galligan-O'Sullivan

Mel & Bonnie Hirshowitz

Tatyana Komin

Maryann Petix

Peter Radunzel

Jayanta Roy-Chowdhury

Gil Santos

Pelham

Alice Dean

John Lewis

Scarsdale

Carly Carlin

Ruth Grzesia Fredric Krell

Rita Krosney

Jean Lutz

Julia Simonds

Yonkers

Donato Dell'Orso

FIELD TRIPS for BRSS/CWAS 2011/2012

Please Contact Doug Bloom at (914) 834-5203 if you are going on trips. Meet at the Scarsdale Village Hall unless otherwise specified.

September 18, Sunday - Meadowlands
Meet at village hall at 7:00 am. Easy walking along trails around mudflats: Migrant shorebirds, herons, raptors and land birds.

October 9, Sunday - Greenwich Audubon Center/Hawk Watch

Meet at Greenwich 8:30 am. We will be looking for migrating hawks and eagles. Also migrating land birds. Co-sponsored with Saw Mill Audubon.

October 30, Sunday - Great Swamp in New Jersey

Meet at Village Hall at 7 am. Easy walking along trails through forest and marsh. Migrating raptors, herons, shorebirds, small land birds. Co-sponsored with Saw Mill River Audubon.

November 13, Sunday - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Meet at 9 am. at refuge or at Wild Bird Center at 8:00 am. We will be looking

for early migrant waterfowl.

December 11, Sunday -

Read Sanctuary

Meet at Read at 8 am. Looking for wintering waterfowl.

December 26, Monday - Bronx Westchester Christmas Bird Count

All day. Contact Doug Bloom to volunteer for this important bird survey.

January 15, 2012, Sunday - Jones Beach

Meet at 7 am at Scarsdale Village Hall. Wintering ducks and other birds. Possibly snowy owls.

February 4, 2012, Saturday - Eagle Fest

Saturday February 11, 2012 - Eagle Walk at Croton Point Park

Meet at 8 am at Wild Bird Center on Central Ave. in Scarsdale or Croton Point Park at 8:40 am in big parking lot near large pavilion.

Weekend trip week of February 18, 2012 Cape Ann Massachusetts

Co-sponsored with Saw Mill River Audubon.

March 18, 2012, Sunday - Read Sanctuary and Marshlands Conservatory

Meet at Read 8 am. Looking for late wintering waterfowl and early spring migrants.

April 15, 2012, Sunday - Larchmont Reservoir and Hommocks nature area.

Meet at 8 am. at Reservoir. Looking for spring migrants.

May 6, 2012, Sunday - Central Park

Meet at 77th Street at Statue across from Museum of Natural History. Looking for spring migrants including warblers and other song birds.

May 20, 2012, Sunday - Doodletown Road

Meet at Doodletown at 8 am. Looking for spring migrants including Cerulean Warblers.



Young Birders

Continued from page 1

Butler Sanctuary in Mt. Kisco, NY. We hope to see migrating hawks including Osprey and Broad-winged Hawks. We also may see early migrating American Kestrels, as well as Sharpshinned and Cooper Hawks.

The BRSS Youth Birding Group is looking for more interested budding Birders – between the ages of 7 and 14 years. We would like a parent to accompany their children on these outings. Please send your email address to David Kaufman at dkaufman43@gmail.com to be placed on the e-mail group notification list for Youth Birding events. *David Kaufman is the BRSS Youth Birding Group Leader*



Youth birders checking on nesting Great Horned Owl babies. Hopefully, the youth birders will add more raptors to their “young” life lists during our first field trip to Butler Sanctuary for a Hawk Watch.

Youth Birding Club Field Trips

All field trips begin at 9:00 a.m.

For help carpooling to locations, contact Dave Kaufman (dkaufman43@gmail.com)

September 24 – Hawk Watch – Butler Sanctuary, Mt. Kisco (meet in parking lot at Butler Sanctuary).

October 22 – Crestwood Lake, Bronx River Parkway – water and parkland birds (meet in Crestwood Train Station parking lot).

December 3 – Sheldrake Environmental Center/ Larchmont Reservoir – water and woodland birds (meet in Sheldrake parking lot).

February 11 – Eagle watch – Croton-on-Hudson (meet at far end of Croton train station parking lot).

March 24 – Read Sanctuary, Rye – feeder birds, ducks & shore birds.

April 28 – Harts Brook Park & Preserve, Hartsdale – nesting baby owls and woodland birds.

May 19 – Kensico Cemetery – nesting bluebirds (meet at cemetery office, 273 Lakeview Ave., Valhalla).

12th Annual Fall Bird Seed Sale

The BRSS Bird Seed Sale is your opportunity to buy premium quality bird seed and help us raise funds for our BRSS Audubon educational and environmental programs. **This is the BRSS Audubon's major fundraiser.** Seed is fresh, top quality and has been sifted to remove all sticks, twigs and empty shells. Our mixes contain only the seeds that local birds prefer, without any "filler" seeds often found in cheaper mixes sold at grocery and hardware stores. Better seed attracts more birds.

A study by the US Fish and Wildlife Service showed that the favorite foods for birds in our area are sunflower seed, peanuts and millet. They are all available on our seed sale.

Black Oil Sunflower Seed	Smaller than stripe sunflower, black oil sunflower gives birds more energy in smaller seed with a thinner shell.
Hulled Sunflower	The meat of the sunflower seed without the outer shell. Totally edible. No mess of empty shells under your feeder. No clean-up. Perfect for decks and patios.
Safflower Seed	Loved by cardinals but not by squirrels, safflower is a problem solver seed helpful in discouraging furry visitors. All birds except blackbirds (Starlings and Grackles) eat it.
Thistle (Nyjer)	A favorite of goldfinch and redpolls.
PatioWise Mix	Our best seller! A special blend of hulled sunflower and nuts. All shells removed. No mess under feeder. Birds love it. People like the fact that no clean-up is needed. Everything gets eaten.
BirdWise Blend Mix	Unique blend that contains only the seeds birds like best: 65% black oil sunflower, 15% millet and 20% peanuts.
WoodpeckerWise	A perfect balance of peanuts, dried fruit, hulled sunflower and tree nuts. A favorite for woodpeckers and others.
FeederWise	A premium, no-millet blend formulated to attract a wide variety of birds. Less attractive to sparrows and other ground feeding birds.
Split Peanuts (w/o shell)	An amazing variety of birds love peanuts. It is a high energy food, a favorite of woodpeckers, jays, nuthatch, titmouse, chickadee and many others.
Suet	Particularly attracts woodpeckers and many others. Squirrels do not eat Pure Suet. 12 cakes per case.

Here is how to order.

1. Fill out the Order Form (enclosed with this newsletter)
2. Send your Order Form and payment to Doug Bloom
Attention: Seed Sale
22 Myrtle Blvd
Larchmont, NY 10538
OR fax your order with credit card info to (914) 713-0652.
3. Make sure we receive your order by October 5, 2011
4. Pick up your seed at
Wild Bird Center
400 Central Park Ave.
Scarsdale, NY 10583
5. For further information or questions—call Doug Bloom 713-0630 (days),
834-5203 (evenings)



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C0ZR080Z

BRSS now has Four Ways to Keep Informed and Go Green

Want to know about rare bird sightings, bluebird nesting happenings, notifications of impromptu field trips to see nesting owls, bluebird banding or other time sensitive events? We are now using "social media" to get our environmental mission out.

Help us save postage and printing expenses. Sign up to get our newsletter online. Email brssaudubon@gmail.com with the subject, "I want to go green." You will get the newsletter in living color in your email. You'll also get notifications of field trips and programs.



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An unexpected bonus of banding our bluebirds has been the tremendous educational opportunity. Many children and adults have helped with the process and learned a great deal about bluebirds "up close and personal."