



Audubon in the Parks

A unique partnership connecting people with nature to enhance bird conservation in New York State Parks
Spring 2012

Audubon in the Parks is an initiative with Audubon New York and the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), its Regional Commissions, and Audubon Chapters and Friends Groups. The goal of the partnership is to advance bird conservation in State Parks, specifically targeting Bird Conservation Areas (BCAs) and Audubon Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

This unique public/private partnership focuses on restoring and enhancing habitat at State Parks that are important for bird conservation, as well as connecting people to these important areas. At BCAs, activities will focus on implementing specific bird conservation needs identified in the BCA Management Guidance Summaries.

Examples of projects include:

Schodack Island State Park, Rensselaer County

This spring, volunteers from the Audubon Society of the Capital Region and Audubon New York initiated Cerulean Warbler monitoring at the site. The data will inform management of invasive species currently affecting areas of the Park that are habitat for Cerulean Warblers and Bald Eagles.



Cerulean Warbler by Jeff Nadler



Grassland meeting at Green Lakes State Park

Joseph Davis State Park, Niagara County

Audubon New York, OPRHP, and the Buffalo Audubon Society are evaluating and improving avian habitat and interpretation at the Park. This project will enhance critical migratory bird habitat along the upper Niagara River Corridor and also improve public enjoyment of this important resource.

Green Lakes State Park, Onondaga County

Onondaga Audubon and Audubon New York are working with staff from the Park to implement the grassland management plan adopted for the Park during their master planning process. Volunteers are coordinating bird and invasive species surveys. Green Lakes is poised to be the largest intact grassland bird habitat in the State Park system.

Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park, Putnam County

The Putnam Highlands Audubon Society conducts field trips and Christmas Bird Counts within the Park, contributing to the creation of a bird checklist. The Chapter organized an "I Love My Parks" work day this spring to plant native plants for the Ann Odell Bird and Butterfly Garden.

Hecksher State Park and Robert Moses State Park, Suffolk County

Great South Bay Audubon worked with students from Sayville High School to survey and remove invasive Japanese Stiltgrass from Hecksher State Park. Working with Audubon New York, the Chapter is also supporting a Piping Plover technician for Robert Moses State Park.



Students perform a density study of Japanese Stiltgrass at Hecksher State Park



Plantings for Bobwhite Quail at Connetquot

Connetquot River State Park Preserve and Gilgo State Park, Suffolk County
Great South Bay Audubon Society co-hosts a birding and breakfast event with the Friends of Connetquot River State Park and is working with OPRHP to remove invasive plants to benefit priority bird habitat, specifically for the Northern Bobwhite. This spring they began work on planting native seeds on 2 acres, which will serve as a food source for the reintroduction of the bobwhite.



Chimney swift tower installation at Gantry Plaza State Park

Clay Pit Pond State Park Preserve, Staten Island

New York City Audubon is coordinating field trips to the Park this spring to introduce underserved communities to their nearest Important Bird Area and Bird Conservation Area. Also, both the Chapter and Audubon New York staff will continue to maintain and monitor Chimney Swift towers installed here and at other State Parks in New York City, including Gantry Plaza, East River, Roberto Clemente and Riverbank State Parks.



Fishing line "tangle tainer" at Moreau Lake State Park

Moreau Lake State Park, Saratoga County

Southern Adirondack Audubon Society constructed and installed five fishing line receptacles at boat launches and fishing areas around the Park to help reduce threats to wildlife. This project was initiated after a volunteer located a Common Loon that had been entangled in fishing line. The chapter contacted the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation and the loon did survive.

Sunken Meadow and Nissequogue River State Parks, Suffolk County

Volunteers from Four Harbors Audubon Society have been working with OPRHP to install American Kestrel and Eastern Bluebird boxes, coordinate invasive species removal workdays with students, and plant native species at these Parks. The Audubon volunteers are installing a Bird and Butterfly Demonstration Garden at Sunken Meadow State Park this summer and working with multiple partners to acquire seeds and grow the plants for the project.

Art Park, Niagara County, Jones Beach and Hempstead State Parks, Nassau County

For the Birds!, Audubon New York' statewide environmental education program, has utilized local parks as part of its curriculum that focuses on place-based education. Students learn about birds in their communities and conduct projects to improve bird habitat locally. The field trip portion of the program has brought students to these State Parks as a culminating activity that not only supports the curriculum, but also demonstrates the value of Parks to birds and other wildlife.

Audubon is currently working in 19 State Parks and is exploring work at 23 additional sites.

With 27 Audubon Chapters, Audubon New York staff and centers, and 213 State Parks and Historic Sites located across the state, this initiative is well positioned to have a strong impact on New York's priority birds and habitats.

For more information on this program, or to pursue a partnership at a State Park contact Laura McCarthy at lmccarthy@audubon.org/518-869-9731