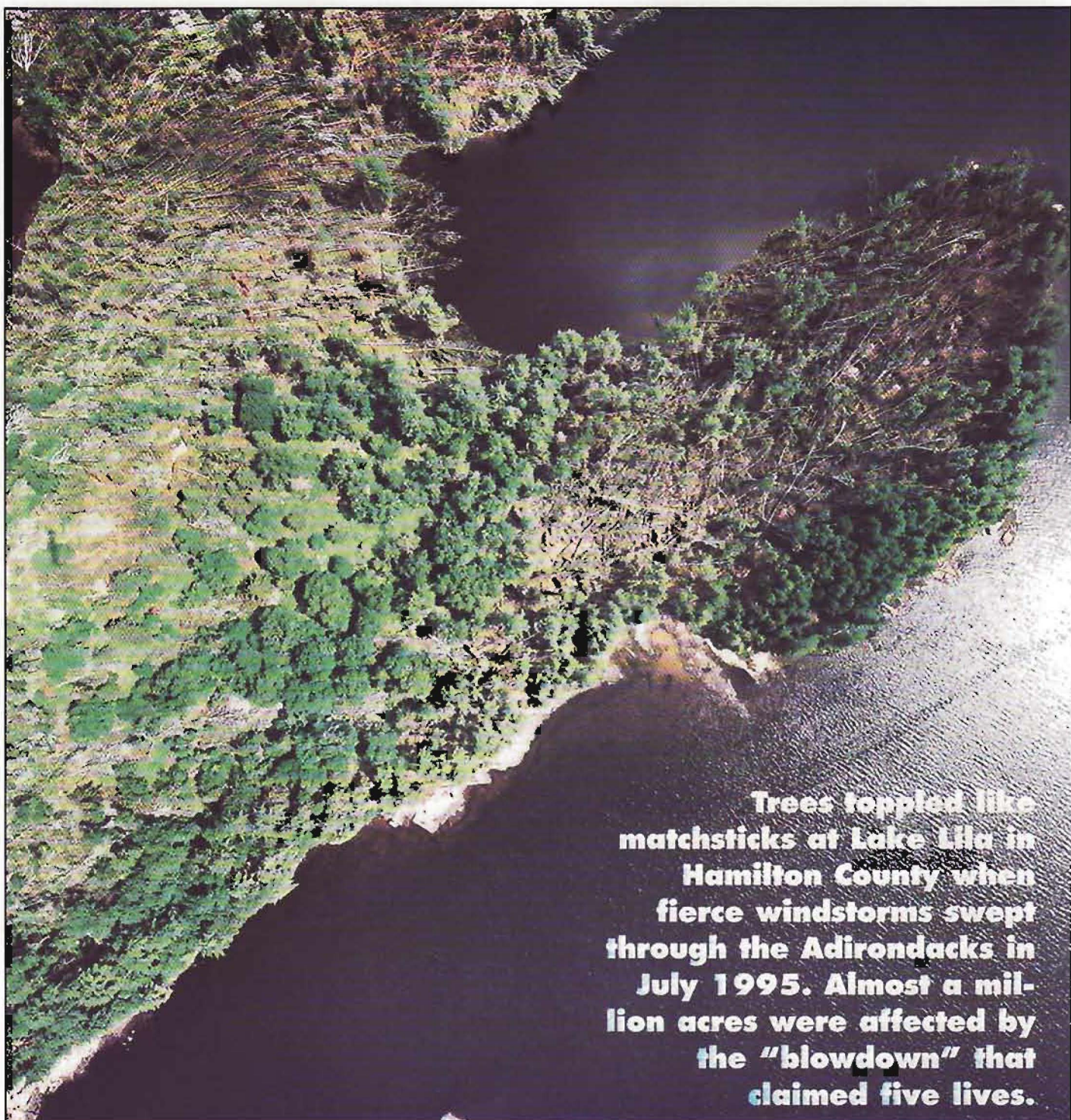


NEW YORK STATE

CONSERVATIONIST

April 1996 \$3.50





Trees toppled like matchsticks at Lake Lila in Hamilton County when fierce windstorms swept through the Adirondacks in July 1995. Almost a million acres were affected by the "blowdown" that claimed five lives.

"Blowdown" Action Plan to Reduce Fire Threat

Small trees and dangling limbs that could contribute to fire hazards near populated areas of the Adirondacks will be felled under an action plan announced by Governor Pataki.

The response plan to the 1995 Blowdown was prepared by DEC in consultation with both public and private experts and interest groups. Governor Pataki noted that, in accordance with the "forever wild" clause of the State Constitution, trees toppled during the natural event will not be salvaged within the Adirondack State Forest Preserve.

For information about these and other aerial photos, contact: Aerial Photo Survey, DEC Aviation, Albany County Airport, Albany, N.Y. 12211.

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Natural Wonders Along the Seaway Trail

by Donald D. Cox and Kara Lynn Dunn

Where in the world can you find forest, fields, sand dunes, beaches, croplands, wetlands, and more than 120 exciting native and man-made attractions showcasing Mother Nature's best offerings all in a 454-mile linear stretch?



E. Telewski/ Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens

For fresh air, fresh water, and the fun of discovering our natural surroundings, New York State's Seaway Trail Scenic Byway is a naturally fresh and fun region to explore in all four seasons.

Seasonal flower shows delight visitors to the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, Buffalo, while the beauty of roadside blossoms casually dresses the Seaway Trail for motorists.

Bring binoculars, boots, bicycle, boat, camera, canoe and a love for nature to the self-guided Seaway Trail route paralleling the shorelines of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. This 454-mile-long region appeals to spectators and active outdoors people, fair-weather-only fans and those who like a brisk winter's day.

Diversity best describes the terrain, flora, fauna, attractions and accommodations found across the trail's 10 coastal counties. Wildlife viewing abounds in refuges, preserves and nature centers, and in the simulated native habitat areas of three historic zoos.

Sign up for guided hikes, moonlight skiing, birdwatching tours, leaf peeping, and learning programs. Hundreds of land miles invite hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, snowmobilers, snowshoers and skiers; water trails await canoeists, boaters and sailors.

Great ice-age glaciers molded the regional landscape and water basins, fashioning drumlins, dunes, bays, bluffs, beaches, 1,800-plus islands in the Thousand Islands vacationland of the eastern trail, and the majestic Niagara Falls to the west.

As the ice melted, the tundra environment hospitable to mammoths, caribou and musk oxen gave way to the evergreen forests preferred by moose, elk and deer. Subsequent climatic trends have come to favor today's deciduous beech-maple forest, home to hundreds of bird species year-round and a variety of mammals and marine life in nearby waters and wetlands.

The Trail route has been nominated for the federally bestowed distinction of All American Road. Two intrinsic quality areas must be met to qualify. The Seaway Trail fulfills all six categories: natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, historic and archaeological.



P. Schnell

New York State Conservationist, April 1996



Protective walkovers offer a non-damaging view of sand dunes on Lake Ontario's shore.

Spring Flowers and Flyers

Fresh spring breezes on the Seaway Trail bring the scents of wildflowers. April to late fall travelers enjoy the multi-colored roadside beauty of wild geranium, Queen Anne's lace, sweet clover, vetch, bellflower, chicory and New England aster.

The pale blue hepatica, yellow trout lilies and the deep wine of wild ginger await those who stroll through the forest in spring.

Hikers, bicyclists and motorists may spot a doe and twin fawns feeding on the first shoots of new green grass while the sounds of Canada geese and the Baltimore oriole are heard overhead. Waves of migratory songbirds join human visitors drawn north to New York by spring's promise of warming weather. The breadth of the trail region provides a major flyway for migratory birds.

Birdwatchers have identified more than 160 species at the Canadaway Creek Nature Center near Dunkirk on Lake Erie, and 16 species of hawk at Derby Hill Bird Observatory at Mexico Point in Oswego County.

New York State Conservationist, April 1996

Camping and Canoeing

The summer sun draws campers to 38 state parks and a variety of private campgrounds. Trailwide, canoers paddle past water lilies and morning glories growing wild on the banks of streams meandering through wildlife management areas. Water spiders skitter away as a great blue heron is startled from its marshy nest.

A turtle sunning itself on a rock is likely a painted turtle. The snappers like to float just below the water's surface to avoid drying out. The painted turtle benefits because the sun's heat reduces algae and skin parasites.

Please use protective dune walkovers to stroll the most extensive sand dunes in the state found along Lake Ontario's eastern shore. These resources are fragile, as evidenced by the fact that for present-day dunes to exist the lake water level was likely some 30 feet lower about 5,000 years ago to expose enough sand for the wind to create the current dunes' height. Leaving the dunes undisturbed also aids DEC and The Nature Conservancy in efforts to attract migrant eagles.



P. Schnell

The Institute for Environmental Learning in Lyndonville, Orleans County, on the Seaway Trail is noted for its conservation education programs and for the natural habitat it provides the only socialized wolf pack in the eastern U.S. The pack tolerates nearby human presence while being allowed to maintain its free and wild nature.



Anglers line the banks of streams and rivers trailwide year-round, while apple lovers wait for fall's harvest.



10 Top Stops Trailwide

Audubon Nature Center, Jamestown, Chautauqua County

Roger Tory Peterson wildlife art

Buffalo Urban Canoe Trail, Buffalo

six miles past natural, historic and urban Buffalo

Niagara Power Project, Lewiston, Niagara County

with \$1 million fishing pier

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama, Orleans County

20,000 acres of waterfowl habitat

Strasburgh Planetarium, Rochester

Take Star Theatre to the cosmos

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca Falls, Wayne County

Marshes, forest, flyway, trails

Fair Haven Beach State Park, Cayuga County

865 acres, camp, boat, snow ski

Derby Hill Bird Observatory, Mexico Point, Oswego County

Observe spring and fall hawk migrations

Southwick Beach State Park, Woodville, Jefferson County

Lake Ontario Dune Trail

Black Creek Bicycle Loop Tour, St. Lawrence County

Chippewa Bay through Hammond State Forest

For More Information:

Seaway Trail Inc., 109 Barracks Dr., Sackets Harbor, NY 13685

or call:

1-800-SEAWAY-T

Foliage and Fruit

If you like the crimson, gold and tangerine colors of autumn, visit the Seaway Trail from early September to late October. Below the beautiful leaves, the blue to lavender asters bloom with yellow goldenrod and white snakeroot.

The fall bird migration begins. The apple harvest is ready to pick-your-own or enjoy the crisp taste of a Macintosh, Rome or Cortland at numerous roadside stands.

Beavers are busy building lodges six feet high and dams sometimes 300 feet long. The unique environmental conditions of wetlands accommodate three percent of plants, 15 percent of mammals, 31 percent of birds and 31 percent of reptiles that are threatened or endangered.

Folks who want great fishing in the fall forsake the lakes for the rivers and streams of the Seaway Trail region.



Seneca Park Zoo.

The adventuresome river otter is always entertaining. Once completed, the St. Lawrence Aquarium and Ecological Center, Massena, will include a natural outdoor otter habitat.

White Winter Welcome

For many animals in the Seaway Trail region in winter, keeping warm presents a bigger challenge than finding food. Some birds migrate south, a few animals hibernate. However, many remain active throughout the winter by applying nature's adaptations for cold.

The birds that remain increase the thickness of their insulation by fluffing their feathers. Chickadees can lower their body temperature at night by as much as 20 percent to reduce the amount of energy needed.

The woodchuck, grown fat in summer and fall on green vegetation, will now sleep the cold months away in an underground burrow. The solitary-in-summer white-footed mice conserve heat by huddling together in communal nests, as do deer mice, voles and shrews.

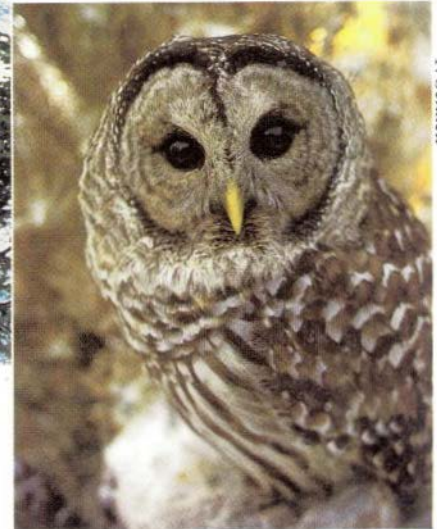
Most mammals grow thicker fur, while humans layer clothing to ski, snowshoe, sculpt snow and snowmobile on trails--some groomed, some not. If the ruffed grouse or wild turkey have not eaten all the berries, the red fruit of the partridge berry brightens the evergreen winter forest.

A winter visit to the outdoor trail and its three historic zoos at Buffalo, Rochester (Seneca Park), and Watertown (Thompson Park) offers a chance to see the heavier-coated animals that prefer to be active in cooler weather.

***Whenever you choose
to travel the Seaway Trail -
spring, summer,
fall or winter -
you'll find naturally
fresh fun!***



Snow and go on miles and miles of Seaway Trail trails or bundle up to catch a glimpse of a barred owl in the wintry forest. This one was photographed in Orleans County.



P. Schnell

Helpful Natural Study and Travel Guides

Seaway Trail Rocks & Landscapes - coastal geology of the eastern trail - Cayuga, Oswego, Jefferson, St. Lawrence Counties, 76 pages.

Seaway Trail Bicycling - 111-page booklet, fold out map, six loop tour brochures along eastern trail - Cayuga to St. Lawrence County.

Nautical Seaway Trail Chartbook & Waterfront Guide - 52 NOAA charts for Lake Erie, Niagara River, Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence and 600-plus waterfront services listings, spiral bound, 120 pages.

Buffalo River Urban Canoe Trail - six-mile water trail guide to natural, urban and industrial areas, produced by DEC, 35 pages.

NYS Scuba Dive Site Directory - 90-plus listings for wrecks, including barges, tugs; good general reference, published by NYS Scuba Divers Association.

NEW in 1996: Seaway Trail Wildguide to Natural History - flora and fauna of forests, open spaces, wetlands, dunes. 7th title in "Best of the Byways" award-winning series.

For more information, contact the non-profit:

**Seaway Trail Inc.,
109 Barracks Dr.,
Sackets Harbor, NY 13685;
or call: 1-800-SEAWAY-T or (315) 646-1000.**

Dr. Donald D. Cox is a Professor Emeritus of Biology, SUNY-Oswego and author of the *Seaway Trail Wildguide to Natural History*.

Kara Lynn Dunn is director of communications and special projects editor for Seaway Trail Inc., based in Sackets Harbor, Jefferson County.

Huge tankers throb slowly through canals to unload cargo; small speedboats buzz toward Lake Erie. Commuters rush in and out of the city, oblivious to bridging the river below. Children shout as they skip rope, shoot hoops or slap a puck on dead-end streets. The sky is hazy, the air thick with the tumult of urban Buffalo.

PADDLIN' THRU BUFFALO

by Victoria R. Spagnoli and Patricia Nelson
photos by Frank Knight

Just a noisy day in a big city; but, in the midst of this hubbub, flows a quiet oasis: the Buffalo River Urban Canoe Trail. The first of its kind in New York State, this self-guided recreational trail is open to anyone with a canoe and a few hours to spare.

The six-mile trip offers contrasting sights: suburban houses; birds, reptiles, animals; Buffalo's rusting industrial plant. Upstream, the river drains some of the most beautiful farmland and forest in western New York; its shaded riffles and pools home to trout and bass. The lower course is dredged, channeled and bulkheaded for commercial shipping.

THE TOUR BEGINS

Our tour starts upriver at DEC's access site at Harlem Road in West Seneca, where we pick up an informative trail guide and slip our canoe into a narrow stream. The water seems motionless, its smooth surface mirroring the sky.

The city is not far, but the treed shoreline shrouds its noise; high riverbanks screen buildings from view. Only street drains and overflow pipes insinuate the rustic scene; riprap overlays the outside banks of meanders.

THE NATURAL SECTION

The first section of the trail is the most natural, preserving remnants of floodplain forests, river marshes and grassy fields known to the Iroquois and early European settlers. Our informative guide charts a number of natural and archaeological sites on the way to the ballfields and tennis courts of Houghton Park.

Large cottonwoods overhang both banks, their branches almost braiding overhead to canopy the stream. Kingfishers rattle by, mallards quack from shore, killdeer wail. Turtles and watersnakes bask and swim. A bass or trout might rise to your lure near a submerged log.

THE URBAN SECTION

The second segment of the trail is halfway between the natural stream and the industrial channel. Along this brief, transitional stretch we glimpse a few houses, bridges and commercial structures. Here, the river widens and deepens and takes on some of the engineered lines of an urban waterway.

The whine of auto tires now and then overrides the trill of songbirds. Bank beaver litter the shore with sticks; bank swallows line their clay burrows with straw. A pipe bridge lifts two natural gas lines a hundred feet over our heads.



DEC provides a halfway exit just downstream of the Bailey Avenue bridge at the Buffalo Sewer Authority's South Buffalo Pump Station. However, if you want more adventure, the last section of canoe trail cuts

(right) State and Buffalo officials dedicating the canoe trail.

through the awesome remnants of industrial Buffalo.

THE INDUSTRIAL SECTION

Before you enter the industrial zone, the last patch of floodplain forest provides perches for osprey and green heron and cover for mink and muskrat. Spotted sandpipers scurry along low gravel banks.

For many years, the lower river was industrial Buffalo's main waterway. It was dredged and straightened to berth the ships that queued to load and unload the products of mine, field and forest. Most of the marine traffic has vanished, but alterations to the river remain.

Nature was displaced along the lower river more than a hundred years ago, when it became water tap, drain and canal for Buffalo's heavy industry. As we paddle downstream, bulkheads replace banks, factories supplant forests, and rusty debris the redds of fish.

The densest industrial landscape begins after the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western lift bridge. Our canoe takes us past the historic Mobil Oil tank farm, Allied Chemical acid plant and National Aniline dye works. On the opposite shore, Republic Steel's open hearths and blast furnaces burned night and day for nearly 80 years.

At the next sharp turn below Republic Steel, the peninsula on our right is tainted with hazardous waste from the manufacture of dyes, explosives and poison gas. If we look closely at the riverbank, we see discolored earth—the signature of leaching toxins. We also see herons wading the shoreline. Remediation will soon prevent some 8,000 pounds of toxic pollutants a year from threatening these sharp-billed anglers.

Ahead, looms the first concrete colossus, one of the giant grain elevators that landmark Buffalo. We soon pass another, with its



own form-follows-function shape. As we approach Ohio Street, the hundred-foot silos canyon the river. Most of these icons to Modern design are now abandoned, sturdily awaiting some new use for their durable shells.

TRAIL'S END

One last turn under the Ohio Street bridge, a few more strokes and we slip into DEC's last launch site. Our voyage was only six miles; but in a few hours, we encountered tranquility and turbulence, growth and decay, nature and culture intertwined along Buffalo's unique urban canoe trail.

Victoria R. Spagnoli is a reporter for the *Carland Standard*.

Patricia Nelson is a citizen participation specialist at the DEC Regional office in Buffalo.



(top)
Concrete grain elevators tower over river tugboat.

(bottom)
Cruising down the river on a sunny afternoon.

Lilac Time in Rochester: It Happens Every Spring

by Carolyn Lavine, photos by Sharon Turner



Springtime in upstate New York is one of Mother Nature's meaner jokes. Never mind what the groundhog predicts, when March 20 rolls around, long-time residents know they're in for four to six weeks more of April snow showers (which southerners would call blizzards). Not to mention hearty May frosts that keep local gardeners indoors champing at the bit to get those first seedlings in the ground.

But when that magical post-winter season finally does appear, it is spectacular. Especially in Rochester, Monroe County, home to the largest Lilac Festival in America.

What? You didn't think a delicate, sweet scented flower like the *Syringa vulgaris* (Latin for belonging to the masses) could survive, much less flourish, 200 miles north of the Mason Dixon line? Surprise. It can

and does thanks to John Dunbar, a transplanted Scotsman, who planted the first shrub in Highland Park back in 1892 during his tenure as city horticulturist. Little did anyone in Rochester suspect that from those first 50 plants would someday blossom a lilac collec-





Park, got more elaborate. Early tourists seemed happy just wandering along sniffing and admiring the 500 different varieties of lilacs. But succeeding generations wanted a bit of entertainment on the side. City Fathers were happy to oblige. Parades were added; so was a Lilac Queen and her court. In 1932 floodlights were placed throughout the park making

tion that would eventually cover an area 22 acres wide. A collection that would be visited by lilac lovers from around the world, including Queen Mother Wilhemina of the Netherlands who was presented with a bouquet during a visit to the park during the 1955 Festival of Lilacs.

Most visitors don't come from quite that far away, however. The majority drive in from nearby Canada and neighboring states, including Ohio and Pennsylvania. But wherever they come from, they all share a love for the fragrant deep purple, white and mauve blossoms that turn the "Flour City" into the "Flower City" every May for the two weeks when the blossoms bloom in all their glory.

More than 500,000 lilac enthusiasts showed up in 1995 to celebrate western New York's "unofficial" end of winter. A far cry from the 3,000 mostly city residents who back in 1898 turned out for the first recorded Lilac Sunday. But even though things got off to a slow start, word of the one-day celebration soon spread. By the spring of 1908, more than 25,000 city residents and visitors were putting on their spring finery and bringing picnic baskets to the festival site.

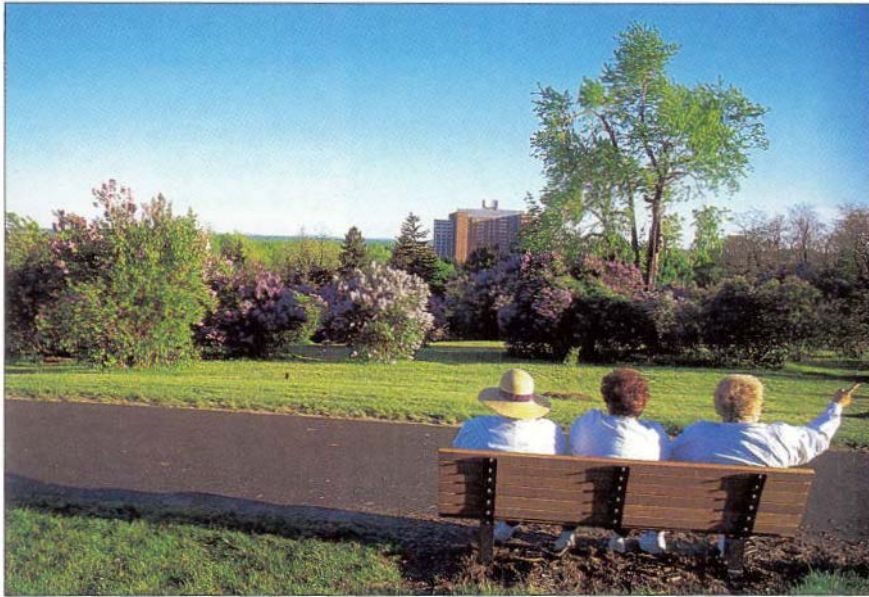
As the new century progressed, the annual rite of spring, a visit to Highland

evening strolls and concerts a reality.

The heyday of the celebration, which had expanded from one Sunday to an entire week in the 1930s, was the post-war years. By the late 1940s lilac mania had reached such a pitch that high school girls called Lilacettes, wearing colorful costumes in every shade of lilac possible, greeted incoming train passengers. Each was given a sweet smelling blossom bouquet. The same young ladies offered guided tours of the park and were available to pose for photographs as well.



Local musicians and song writers got into the act and songs about the lilac were penned and recorded, chief among them being "Lilacs Remind Me of You," which became the official song of Lilac Week.



In 1948, when the 10-day festival finally was declared a permanent event, lilac enthusiasm was at its peak. Plays were written and performed, all with a lilac theme. That same year the City Council finally got around to making lilacs the official flower of the city. Competitions were held among city schools to see which would have the most attendees. (St. Boniface won the honors.) It was as if the whole city went lilac crazy for those 10 days in May.

That's not to say that today's visitors have to settle for less. Contemporary lilac



lovers are no longer greeted at the train station by young Lilacettes. But they soon find out they're more than welcome to share the outdoor activities that make the festival fun for the entire family.

Runners can take part in a challenging 10K race, while shoppers are encouraged to part with their money by a variety of area artisans selling everything from hand-thrown pots and jewelry to sweatshirts, photographs — you name it. The 1995 events included a tournament as well.

When hunger pains strike, there are booths every few feet offering a variety of delectables: traditional items like Italian sausage, cinnamon pretzels and ethnic food delights sure to please junk food lovers as well as gourmets. Recent festivals have included A Taste of Rochester —

where visitors can sample the best city restaurants have to offer without spending a fortune or even leaving a tip.

But the flowers themselves remain the main event. After endlessly long and brutal winter weather, the hardy perennials are a welcome sign that better weather is on hand. Even for non-lilac lovers, their mere appearance seems a miracle. How such pretty delicate little blossoms can survive at all is amazing. You just want to reach out and touch them. And that's fine with park authorities who urge you to touch — just don't pick. Taking lots of pictures also is encouraged, as one might imagine in a city that's far better known for Eastman Kodak than lilacs.



The 49th Annual Lilac Festival will take place from May 10 through May 19, 1996. For more information contact: the Rochester Visitor's Bureau at 1-800-677-7282.

Carolyn Lavine is a freelance writer from Rochester, previously published in *The Conservationist*.

DEC Summer Camps: *Teaching Conservation for 50 Years*

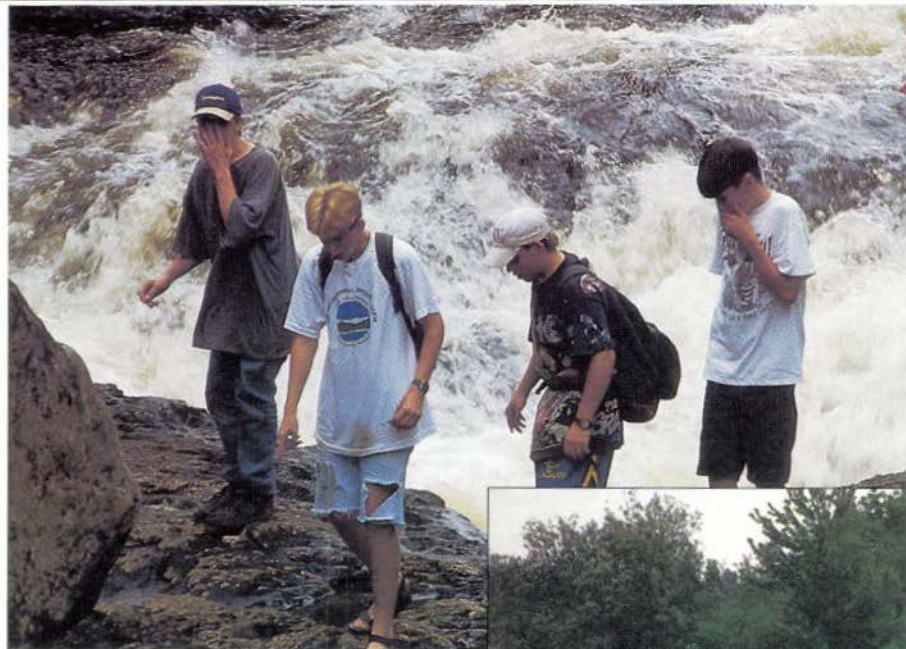
by Dan Capuano

It's a lazy Sunday afternoon in July, temperatures are nearing 80 degrees as the campers arrive. As they have for the past 50 years, they stream through the gates for a week of adventure and excitement exploring woods, lakes, streams and bogs as part of the DEC summer environmental education camp program.

Quiet, anxious, often nervous camper faces change into broad smiles and laughter as they meet the DEC camp staff. Accompanied by these talented environmental educators, campers begin a week-long journey through the natural world. Along the way they will better understand the science of ecology, grow in awareness of the world around them, and, as they meet new friends, collect memories for a lifetime. As one Camp Colby staff member noted: "There are tears when the campers come and there are tears when they leave... but for different reasons."

Central to the camp experience is the concept of conservation: the wise use of natural resources. Whether weighing the food waste generated by the week's campers, studying invertebrates in a pond or stopping amid a stand of pines on a hike up a nearby mountain, discussions and activities focus around conservation. Simulation activities help campers make choices and consider factors (social, economic and political) that affect decisions made by individuals and public agencies.

DEC's camp program began in 1947 with strong support from statewide sportsmen's federations. That first successful year at Camp Danaca in Tompkins County led to



the expansion of the camp program to the present three locations: Camp DeBruce near Livingston Manor in Sullivan County, in operation since 1948; Camp Colby near Saranac Lake in Franklin County, in operation since 1963; and Camp Rushford near Caneadea in Allegany County, in operation since 1952.

The DEC camp program is open for eight weeks each summer to New York State residents between the ages of 12 and 17. Each week-long session accommodates approximately 50 young people in cabins or a bunkhouse.

There is plenty of recreation. Swimming, hiking, fishing, canoeing, archery, volleyball and ultimate frisbee are just some of the recreation activities available to the DEC camper. Campers also can participate in training that allows them to earn a Hunter Safety Certificate while at camp.

The vast majority of campers are sponsored by organizations such as rod and gun clubs, civic organiza-



tions, schools, and religious or environmental organizations. Cost for sponsoring a camper is \$180 for one week. Most camper slots are filled by March of each year.

Applications are available by writing to: DEC Summer Camps, Room 507, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, New York 12233-4500 or by calling (518) 457-3720.

Many alumni of the DEC camp program have gone on to careers in a variety of fields in conservation and natural resources. The camp program would like to hear from any and all alumni who might wish to share recollections and anecdotes from their camp experience.

Dan Capuano is the coordinator for DEC camps.

Len Rusin's Perspective

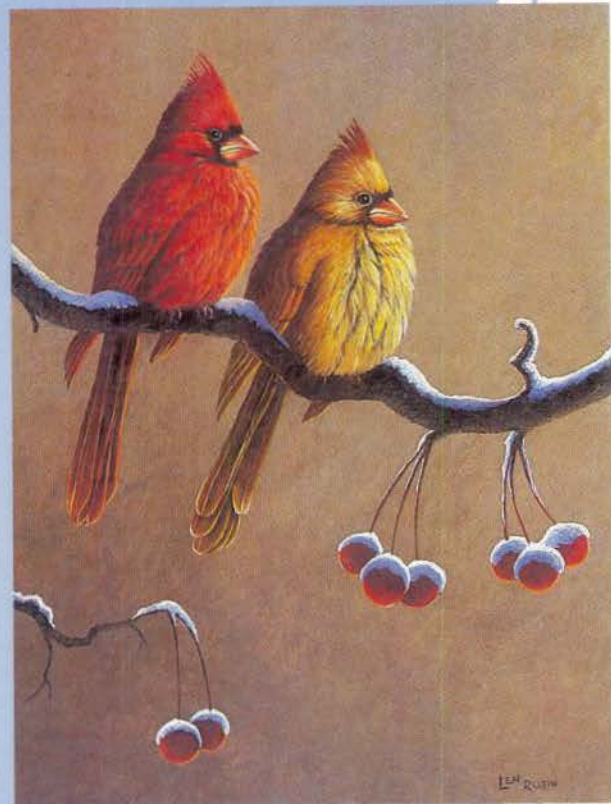


(top) "On Guard"
(bottom) "Young Fox and White Moths"



Len Rusin is this year's winner of New York's prestigious Migratory Bird Print and Stamp contest. His professional credits, such as 1993 Wildlife Artist of the Year, 1993-1994 Atlantic Flyway Ducks Unlimited Artist and a recent one-man show at the Remington Museum, place him with the best wildlife artists in America.

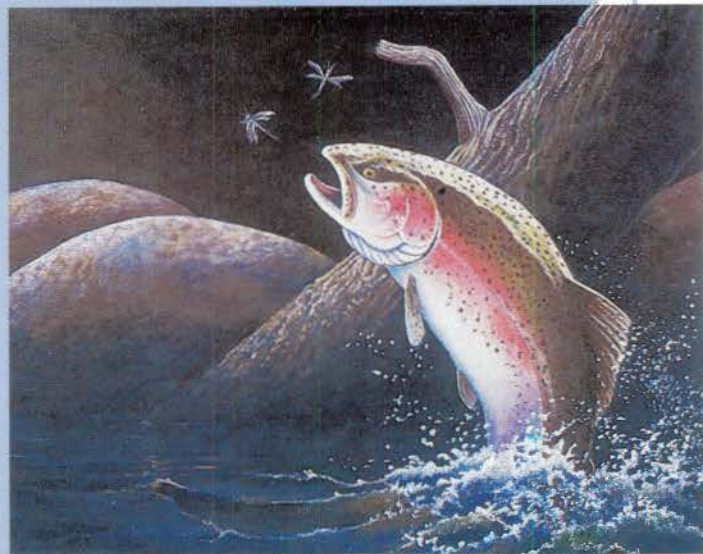
Working out of his North Tonawanda studio, Rusin uses strong compositions and evocative light and color to create an emotional response from the viewer. All of his



(top) "Frozen Pair"
(bottom) "Feeding Time"

work reflects a life-long concern for the environment and threatened wildlife.

Our cover artist still has a day job - he teaches art at LaSalle Senior High School. He is also the single father of a 19 year old daughter. His studio address is 1087 Thomas Fox Drive East, North Tonawanda, New York 14120.





From top, clockwise: "Broken Glass,"
"Rough-legged Hawks Can't Read,"
"Squaws on Lake Ontario,"
"Mid-Day Yawn"



For more information on New York's Migratory Bird Print and Stamp Program, call 1-800-325-2370.

Sportsmen and other collectors who purchase prints and stamps under a New York State program are contributing to the protection and management of wetlands critical to migratory birds and other wildlife.

Since DEC began the project in 1985, the New York State Migratory Bird Print and Stamp Program has raised more than \$2 million for wetlands projects. New York State law requires that proceeds from the sale of the stamps, posters, art-quality prints and related materials be dedicated to the enhancement or creation of habitat for migratory birds. Counting matching funds from other sources, such as the private Ducks Unlimited Inc., the wetlands preservation program has undertaken projects over the past

decade valued at more than \$3.2 million.

Unlike most states, New York does not require purchase of the bird stamp to participate in recreational activities such as hunting or to gain access to state-administered lands. The New York program also is unusual in that it recognizes all migratory birds, not just waterfowl nor just game birds. The 1996 print winner on our front cover, "Adirondack Awakening" by Len Rusin of North Tonawanda, Niagara County, features a loon.

Under a cooperative agreement with Ducks Unlimited and other non-profit groups in Canada, the New York state law also requires half the money be used to create and enhance wetlands that are important to the Atlantic Flyway. Biologists have estimated that more than 70 percent of all the

The great egret and other wildlife find homes in the Montezuma wetlands in central New York which is managed jointly by DEC and the federal Fish and Wildlife Service.

(Bottom) A system of dikes and ditches was created by DEC to enhance a private wetland near Montezuma in central New York. (Photo by P. Hess)



Wetlands Benefit From Sale of Bird Prints & Stamps

by Gary Will and Dave Odell
Photos by Dave Odell



New York State Conservationist, April 1996

ducks and geese that pass through New York State begin life north of the border. The wetlands projects benefit three types of habitats: breeding, staging and wintering.

The money raised through New York State sales is leveraged to match funds from other sources, including federal programs and private conservation groups. The Waterfowl Improvement Association contributed \$10,000 for a project in Washington County.

The greatest private contributor to the wetland restoration program has been Ducks Unlimited.



(Above) Weir across the Bashakill Creek in Sullivan County replaces a natural gravel bar that was subject to washouts during periodic flooding.

(Bottom) Utica Marsh provides wildlife habitat and public use in an urban setting.



Under its national program called MARSH (Matching Aid to Restore State's Habitat), Ducks Unlimited has donated \$747,125 for wetlands work in New York and is committed to spending another \$136,500. The MARSH projects have included the acquisition of key wetlands,



the restoration of drained areas, the enhancement of existing wetlands and the construction of dikes and other water control features to create new wetlands.

To date, the public-private partnership has supported nine migratory projects in Canada, from Ontario to Newfoundland. In New York State, more than 20 projects have received support through the Bird Print and Stamp Program. The projects include the Bashakill in Sullivan County, Hamlin Marsh in Onondaga County, Grass Island in Suffolk County and the Perch River in Jefferson County. The Northern Montezuma wetlands, with multiple projects in central New York, is one of many areas where the work includes public access for hunters, anglers, bird-watchers and others with an interest in wildlife.

A long list of bird species rely on these habitats in New York State for food, water and shelter during

(Below) Private conservation and sportsmen groups contribute to projects to restore and preserve wetlands on private lands as part of the Montezuma complex in central York.

the migration, nesting and wintering seasons. Some of the waterfowl that have benefited from wetland improvement projects include black ducks, teal, wood ducks and mallards.

While the bird prints and stamps are very popular with collectors, other items that carry the annual image include commemorative metallic pins and posters. To order 1996 products under the New York State Migratory Bird Print and Stamp, use the form in the back of this magazine or call toll-free 1-800-325-2370. For additional information about the program or to order back issues of the materials, write to: Bird Prints and Stamps, NYS DEC, 50 Wolf Road, Room 562, Albany, New York 12233-4750.

Gary Will, retired DEC wildlife biologist, is the senior regional director for Ducks Unlimited Inc. in Hamilton, Madison County. **Dave Odell** is a regional wildlife manager for DEC in Avon, Livingston County.

WILD in New York



DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE NEWSLETTER

The Rainbow Birds of Spring



The arrival of springtime signals that the annual migrating waves of warblers will soon fill the thickets and woodlands of New York. In certain areas of the state, it is possible to see 20 or more species of these tiny, brightly colored birds in a single morning!

SPRING 1996

STATE OF NEW YORK
GEORGE E. PATAKI, *Governor*



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
MICHAEL D. ZAGATA, *Commissioner*

Changes for the Better



John Major
Director, Division
of Fish & Wildlife

As we head into the next century, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has made a commitment to improve our customer service to make it easier for people to enjoy New York's incredibly varied natural resources. One step we are taking is to simplify our sport-fish regulations as described in the accompanying article. Over the next several years, the Division will look at additional opportunities to simplify fish and wildlife regulations and to improve their presentation in our guides. Another step for improving customer service involves the *Watchable Wildlife* project with a goal of better informing the public about all the opportunities available to view wildlife across the state.

Wild in New York is also undergoing some changes with the Division's efforts to better inform the public. This newsletter is now published as part of the *Conservationist*, generally appearing as an eight page insert three to four times each year. *Wild* will continue to provide the public with up-to-date information about the state's natural resources and the Division's programs.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife thanks the public for their support. We look forward to your continued enjoyment and wise use of our natural resources.

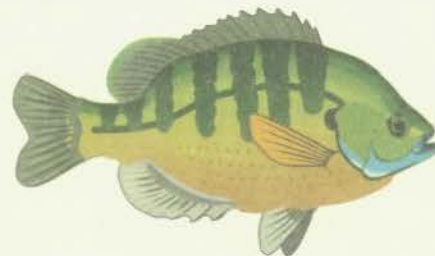
Have You Caught A Big Fish Lately?

Each year numerous anglers take to the water in hopes of catching a trophy-sized fish. For those individuals lucky enough to land a large fish, one way of marking the event is to enter that fish in the Department of Environmental Conservation's *New York State Angler Achievement Awards Program*.

Begun in the early 1900's and then expanded in 1990, this

program is a means of officially recognizing anglers for their fishing accomplishments. Awards are given for catching any of 46 different eligible freshwater fish species. So, you can get an award for catching a one pound perch just as easily as you can for catching a 33-pound chinook salmon.

You can enter your catch in any of three categories: annual award; state record; and catch and release (this category is limited to 14 major gamefish species). During 1995, over 70 individuals entered award-winning fish, including three separate state record smallmouth bass that weighed over seven pounds!



To find out more about participating in New York's Angler Achievement awards program, pick up an official entry form available at any of DEC's Regional Fisheries offices, or write to: NYSDEC, Bureau of Fisheries, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12233-4753.

Spring 1996

Wild in New York

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Produced by the New York State Department
of Environmental Conservation, Division of
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Making Fishing Simpler

The DEC Bureau of Fisheries is proposing to reduce the number of special fishing regulations that New York's freshwater anglers must comply with. The proposed changes are a part of DEC's agency-wide efforts to streamline and improve the state's regulations and make them easier to understand and follow. If adopted, the fishing regulation changes will go into effect in Fall 1996.

Fishing regulations are important tools used by fisheries managers. Open seasons, size limits and bag limits for popular fish species, and restrictions on the types of fishing gear that anglers can use, are all major components of fishing regulations.



When establishing fishing regulations for New York's tremendous and varied waters, DEC has to strike a balance between two, sometimes seemingly opposing, goals. We need to make sure it is enjoyable and satisfying for anglers to use the resource, and at the same time ensure the resource is wisely used so that there are healthy populations of fish for the next generation to enjoy.

To be sure this balance is maintained, DEC annually reviews its existing fishing regulations and makes

adjustments when necessary. Most New York waters are covered by a standard set of regulations known as the statewide regulations. Some waters, however, have additional special regulations. These special regulations were designed to either provide a particular type of angling experience, or provide additional protection to the particular fishery resource. Over the years, more and more regulations have been added to protect these waters.

While all of the fishing regulations were established to protect the state's fish, in certain instances they have become confusing to anglers. Since regulations are only effective if they can be understood and followed, DEC recognizes the need to simplify the current regulations.

As a first step, DEC has proposed to consolidate the number of special regulations for inland trout waters and to simplify Great Lakes trout and salmon bag limits. Currently there are more than 25 special regulation combinations for trout streams alone. The Department's goal is to reduce that number to ten or fewer.

The resulting fewer regulations will be easier for anglers to understand and comply with, but at the same time will enable DEC to

continue to effectively protect and manage the state's trout fisheries. In time, DEC hopes to simplify most of its current fishing regulations to make it easier for all anglers to wisely use any of the state's waters.



The Rainbow Birds of Spring

catch the warbler wave!!

The inauguration of spring is usually announced by the return of robins to our greening lawns. This annual migration stirs the souls of those looking forward to the warmer days of summer and signals that migrating waves of warblers will soon follow.

Identifying Warblers

Sometimes referred to as the rainbow birds of spring, warblers come in a wide array of color patterns. But despite their bright colors, these tiny birds are often overlooked since they are smaller than sparrows.

Identifying warblers is difficult. They typically don't sit still for very long, flitting about in search of food. And when warblers do sit still, their preferred habitat of thickets, hedges, or near the tops of the newly-leafed trees, keeps them well hidden.

When clear viewing is not possible, these vocal songbirds can sometimes be identified by their loud musical phrases. For example, a loud rhythmic crescendo of "teacher, teacher, teacher, TEACHER!" is a sure way of knowing that an ovenbird is present.

Warbler Diversity and Viewing

Of the approximately 56 known species of wood warblers, at least 38 species have been recorded in New York. In certain areas of the state, it is possible to see 20 or more warbler species in a single morning during their spring migration.

The greatest concentration of warbler species can be found in areas where migratory routes overlap. In New York, the principle warbler migration routes lie along the Great Lakes and the Lake Champlain-Hudson River Valleys. Warbler diversity along these flyways depends on the availability of favorable habitat.

Each year, large numbers of birds pass around the eastern end of Lakes Erie and Ontario to avoid crossing open water. The Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Genesee County sometimes gets as many as 30 warbler species visiting.

Since river valleys function as migratory funnels, the Hudson River Valley receives many types of migrating warblers. Bear Mountain State Park in northern Rockland County is one area in which

migrating warblers congregate. To view warblers in large cities, look to the wooded parks. For example, Central Park in Manhattan has hosted all 38 warbler species that visit the state.

What is a Warbler Wave?

For most warblers, their migration northward keeps pace with the opening tree buds and available food. This tide of nature — leaves unfurling, caterpillars emerging and warblers advancing — creates what is called a *warbler wave*. This ushering wave is short-lived and subsides within two weeks.

The wave phenomenon can be magnified by weather fronts that bring unfavorable flying conditions and cause migrating birds to bunch. An area having only a few warblers on one day, can have overwhelming numbers of birds the next day.



Bay-Breasted Warbler

The Timing of Migration

The earliest migrants, such as pine, palm and yellow-rumped warblers, begin migrating through New York in April, soon after the last threat of snow. These birds are not dependent on the warm weather and emerging insects and can survive on berries and seeds.

As the weather warms, ensuing waves of warblers move over and past the others already on their nesting grounds. During this time, species diversity increases, peaking between late April and mid-May. Some of the more common migrants seen in May are the magnolia, blackburnian, black-and-white, chestnut-sided and yellow warblers.

The appearance of blackpoll warblers in late May and early June indicates that the spring warbler migrations are nearly over. Species diversity drops off at this time as warblers that nest primarily north of New York State— such as the bay-breasted, Tennessee, Cape May, and Wilson's— head for their final nesting destination.

Warbler Diversity in Nesting Habitat

Thirty-three species of warblers breed in New York. Some, such as hooded, Kentucky and worm-eating warblers, nest only in the southern portions of the state, which is the northern edge of their nesting range.

Habitat type is what closely defines the nesting range of individual warbler species and warbler diversity varies with each habitat type. Since habitat can be delineated by a number of factors, such as elevation, ecozones, and/or land-use practices, it is not uncommon for several different warbler species to nest in close proximity to each other. For example, the same large spruce tree can be home to several species of warblers: magnolia warblers will nest near the ground; black-throated green warblers will inhabit the central part of the canopy; and Blackburnian warblers will nest in the very top branches.

Certain warblers, such as the blackpoll, bay-breasted and the Tennessee, nest only in the higher elevations within the state. Other species, such as the northern parula, are considered uncommon in their very localized habitats within the Adirondacks. In contrast, the yellow warbler is one of our most common warblers and nests in every area of the state except the high peaks of the Adirondacks.

In New York, the northern coniferous forests and swampy thickets of the Allegheny Plateau provide the state's highest species diversity of nesting warblers. Northern waterthrush and Nashville, Canada, mourning, black-throated blue, yellow-rumped, black-throated green, Blackburnian and magnolia warblers all nest in these areas.

Changes in Warbler Diversity

As land use practices change in New York State, so will the habitat types available for nesting. As such, corresponding changes in population size

Cerulean Warbler



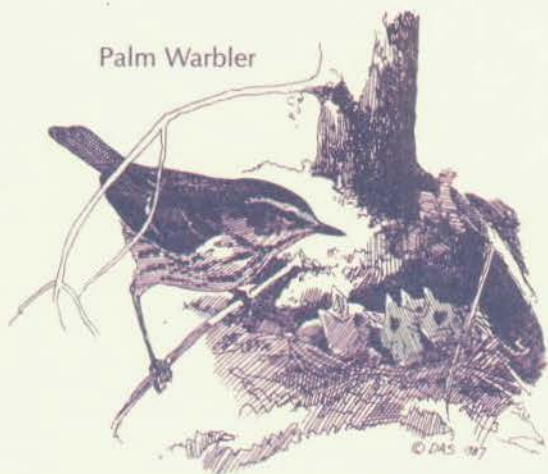
and distribution of warblers within the state are likely. For example, brushy areas characteristic of abandoned farmlands provide nesting habitat for prairie, blue-winged and golden-winged warblers. As these areas become overgrown, the habitat will become less favorable and these species will seek new areas to nest.

The mature deciduous forests of the state provide nesting habitat for the ovenbird, American redstart, and cerulean, hooded, Kentucky and worm-eating warblers. As these forests are logged or disturbed, the warblers are affected. But what is bad for some warbler species, can be good for others. The resulting new second-growth woodlands is ideal habitat for the chestnut-sided warbler which is presently one of the more abundant warblers in New York. As these forests mature over time, however, the composition of warbler species will again change.

The habitat losses resulting from development on Long Island have changed the distribution of many warbler species. But while there have been many changes, the coastal lowlands of eastern Long Island still provide a variety of habitats suitable for nesting American redstart, common yellow-throat, ovenbird, black-and-white, pine, prairie, blue-winged, chestnut-sided and yellow warblers.

Ultimately, future changes in land use patterns will dictate what habitats will be available for nesting warblers, and so will determine the colors of the rainbow that are enjoyed every spring when the warblers return to New York.

Palm Warbler



Mark Woythal

Bureau of Environmental Protection

Illustrations by David A. Sibley

(warbler cover art by Steve Sanford)

Baby Deer Do Need Your Help

People and deer live in overlapping worlds where they frequently encounter each other. This can lead to various problems for both deer and people.

One problem is when fawns are *saved* by well meaning people when they do not need to be saved. We need people to spread the word that lone fawns are **not** abandoned by their mothers and should **not** be touched.

During the first few weeks of a fawn's life it is protected by being camouflaged, scentless and still. They are what we call "hiders." Hiders have used hiding as their primary means of survival for thousands of years. The doe assists in her fawn's protection by staying away most of the time. She only makes contact with the fawn for a few brief periods each day to nurse and groom it. The fawn usually moves at least a short distance between visits. By staying away, the doe does not attract a predator near her fawn by either her sight or scent.

If a doe has two or more fawns, she keeps them separated for their first few weeks—usually by a distance of at least 100 yards. During these first two weeks, siblings are rarely found together. By six weeks of age, however, siblings are found fairly close together nearly 80 percent of the time.

This "hider" pattern of behavior works well most of the time. But with about 200,000 fawns born each year in New York State, and with a human population of 17 million, approximately 200 or more fawns get found each year.

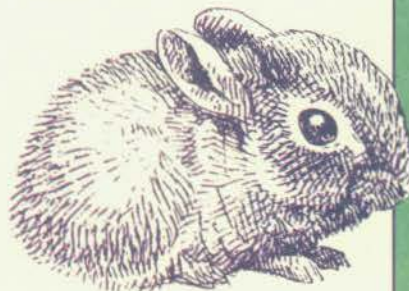


To us, fawns are cute and helpless. And if we don't see a mother deer around, we assume the fawn is abandoned. Even the most hard-hearted person has an immediate empathetic response, and being unaware of the basic normal pattern of deer behavior we just have to "save" the fawn. However, if not returned immediately, a "captured" fawn is unlikely to become a normal deer.

So, remember, ***If You Care, Leave Them There!*** And help spread the word to other well meaning people that:

- ❖ It is normal for fawns to be alone.
- ❖ Do not disturb a fawn—take a quick look and leave.
- ❖ If you know of somebody else who *saves* a fawn, explain why they should return it to the wild immediately.

Nate Tripp, Region 4, Bureau of Wildlife



Young Wildlife

Each year, especially during the spring, numerous baby animals are mistakenly *rescued* by people trying to help. But, like fawns, in most cases these young animals are fine—they have not been abandoned or orphaned. Removing these animals from the wild actually does them harm by not allowing them to learn how to fend for themselves in their natural world.

Here are a few guidelines to follow for some of the more frequently encountered young wildlife:

- ❖ Young raccoons on the ground should be left alone—they are probably just exploring with their mother nearby.
- ❖ Leave baby rabbits alone—their mother is nearby and will return when you leave.
- ❖ Fledgling birds on the ground should also be left alone. They are practicing to fly and will take off soon. Just be sure to keep pets away.
- ❖ Baby birds too young to fly can be put back in their nests, and a fallen nest can be put back into a tree.

Shaupeneak Ridge Cooperative Recreation Area—The Scenic Hudson Land Trust (SHLT), DEC and the West Esopus Landowners Association reached a precedent-setting agreement on the public use of the newly created Shaupeneak Ridge Cooperative Recreation Area. Located in Ulster County in the Town of Esopus, the 489-acre parcel provides outstanding views overlooking the Hudson River. As a result of this agreement, both open space preservation and traditional uses, such as fishing, hunting and boating, are being accommodated, subject to some limitations.

The public is permitted to use the Shaupeneak Ridge Cooperative Recreation Area from 5:00 am until 9:00 pm. Hunting is allowed here from October 15th through December 20th. A permit is required, and hunters must follow several restrictions. Fishing is permitted on the glacially-carved Louisa Pond from the shoreline and from cartop boats and canoes. Ice fishing is permitted in season. The area also provides good opportunities for hiking, picnicking, boating, nature study and cross-country skiing.

Adopt A Bluebird Box—As part of the effort to create better public awareness of the plight of the bluebird, the New York State Bluebird Society has begun an *Adopt-A-Box* program. Anyone can adopt a nest box for \$10 apiece. Each box will have the sponsor's name and a number on it, and can be placed in an identified project area of that person's choice.

It is hoped that the *Adopt-A-Box* program will generate enough funds to help complete the Route 20 Bluebird Research Trail. The trail is already well under way in some areas and is expected to take two to five years to complete. When done, the trail will stretch across the entire state along Route 20 and the estimated 4,000 nest boxes will boost the bluebird and other cavity nesting bird populations. In addition, the trail will be used for research to test new styles of experimental nest boxes, predator controls and parasite controls.

To participate in the *Adopt-A-Box* program, or to find out more information about the Route 20 Bluebird Trail, write: New York State Bluebird Society, Dave Smith—Treasurer, 15 Brindle Lane, Dryden, NY 13053.

Non-Toxic Sinkers—DEC is encouraging anglers to voluntarily use non-toxic sinkers instead of the traditional lead sinkers. Loss of sinkers and lures is a routine part of fishing. Unfortunately, lost sinkers (especially split shot) may be mistaken for food or grit and eaten by waterbirds. The toxic effects of ingested lead can cause these birds to sicken and possibly die. While the number of birds poisoned by lead weights is very small, studies have shown that lead weights can poison birds.

So, next time you purchase sinkers, consider non-toxic ones. A trip to your favorite tackle shop or a quick look through a sporting goods catalog will show you there is a wide variety of alternatives to lead sinkers.

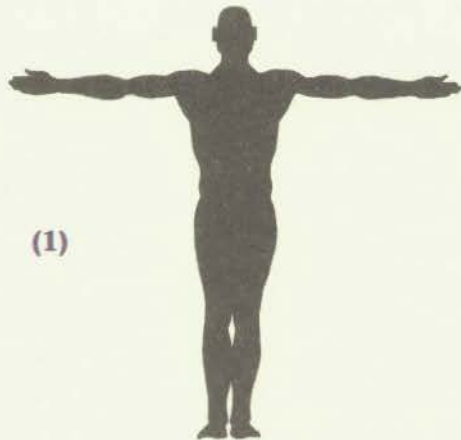


**DRIVE HOME
YOUR
SUPPORT
FOR
OPEN SPACE.**

For information about
Bluebird License Plates
Call:

1-800-364-PLATES

Along with songbirds, spring also marks the return of raptorial birds such as the kestrel and turkey vulture. Sometimes we see these birds only as shadows over the ground—as circling, soaring kite-like objects. Other times we see them as birds sitting in a tree or on a post. Often we can't even guess how large they are, but if you're interested, check out the sketches below and read on about wingspans and arm spans... How do you measure up?



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)

Turkey vulture soars on uptilted wings.



(7)

Measuring Raptor Wingspans

When you watch a soaring hawk or eagle at a distance, it's hard to get an idea of its size. To imagine what it would be like to get up close, make a *span-o-graph*, a device that lets you compare your arm span to a bird's wingspan. Here's how:

- Measure several lengths of string to match the wingspans of the birds listed below. You may want to add your own, from information you find in a reference book about birds.

(1) Human, adult	about 5½ feet tall	
(2) Robin (not a raptor)	1¼ feet	0.4 meters
(3) Kestrel	1¾ feet	0.5 meters
(4) Red-tailed Hawk	4½ feet	1.4 meters
(5) Great Horned Owl	4¾ feet	1.5 meters
(6) Turkey Vulture	6 feet	1.8 meters
(7) Bald/Golden Eagles	7 feet	2.1 meters

- Label each string with the name of the bird, and perhaps its picture, on a 3x5 card.
- Tape one end of each labeled string to a wall. Choose a string and ask a friend to hold it out straight, and see how your arm span compares to it.
- Turn this project into a bulletin board display of various raptor's actual sizes by copying their soaring silhouettes (from a bird field guide such as the Peterson Guide) onto large sheets of paper, and then cut them out and glue them to a sky-colored background. Imagine what it would be like to soar on wings the size of an eagle's!

Adaptation courtesy of Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History, Jamestown, NY 14701-9620.

I♥NY Get-Away Weekend

Adirondack Elegance

by Ann Carroll

Enter the Adirondacks and you find yourself in one of the oldest mountain ranges on earth. Peaks, valleys, shores of thousands of lakes carved by glaciers millenniums ago are covered by a great forest that stretches toward Canada. Although it was one of the last areas of the United States to be surveyed and mapped, this remote region in northern New York State did not remain uninhabited.

The key to the history and culture of the Adirondacks is found at the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake. Described by the *New York Times* as "... the best of its kind in the world," the museum offers visitors the stories of people who settled this remote region in northern New York. Who were the hunters, the farmers, the homemakers, loggers, guides and caretakers? What was travel like when only boats, and a few trains and stagecoaches provided access to the wilderness? How have industries like logging, mining and tourism changed the character of the region? And who, inspired by the beauty of the land, continues to give back something just as beautiful?

Exhibits in 22 buildings at the museum include favorites like a luxurious private railroad, a classic racing boat, a hermit's camp and Bull Cottage, furnished entirely with rustic furniture. Children delight in scrambling over a railroad locomotive or participating in special programs. When combined with a light lunch at the museum's cafeteria overlooking spectacular Blue Mountain Lake and shopping for the perfect gift in the Museum Shop, you

can easily occupy an entire day at the Adirondack Museum.

Known for its authentic rustic architecture and its turn-of-the-century heritage as a mountain retreat for the Alfred Vanderbilt family, the Great Camp Sagamore in Raquette Lake is a 27-building National Historic Site in the heart of the Adirondacks. For a special treat, consider staying for a weekend. Three lodges and two cabins on the shores of private Sagamore Lake host conference and overnight guests. Canoeing, croquet and bowling in the semi-outdoor alley are just a few of the options available.

You can explore Sagamore's history with a guide or venture into the Forest Preserve for a taste of the wilderness on any of the 20 miles of marked hiking trails.



B. Priddy

Relax in rustic elegance at the Great Camp Sagamore at Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks.

Reflect and unwind aboard the W.W. Durant, an elegant, 60-foot, double-deck vessel with turn-of-the-century decor and fine dining. Lunch, brunch, dinner and excursion cruises sail past many of the fabled Great Camps built by William West

Durant for captains of industry like Andrew Carnegie and Collis Potter Huntington. Narrated cruises bring the history of the region to life in the midst of some of the most spectacular scenery in America.

Ann Carroll is the director of public affairs for the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake in Hamilton County.

For information about attractions of the Adirondacks, call 1-800-CALL NYS (225-5697) or contact:

Adirondack Elegance
c/o Adirondack Museum
P.O. Box 99, Drawer 25
Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y. 12812
(518) 352-7311

FROGS and TOADS

of New York



American Toad



Fowler's Toad



Bullfrog



Swamp Cricket Frog



Tree Toad



Spade foot



Green Frog



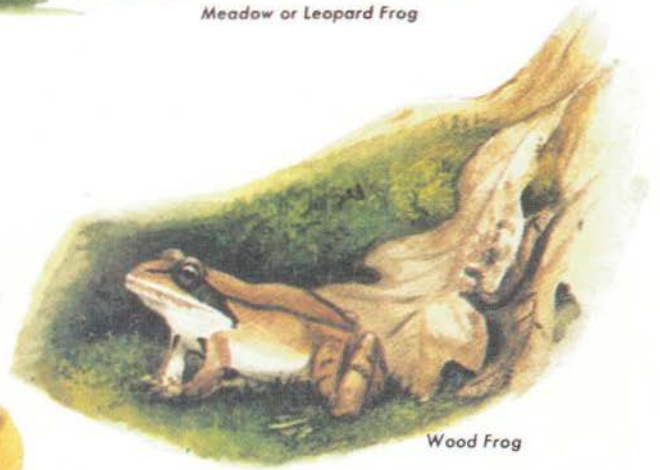
Peeper



Meadow or Leopard Frog



Pickerel Frog



Wood Frog



Mink Frog



Cricket Frog

The passenger pigeon was once North America's most abundant bird. Each spring their flocks—numbering millions, if not billions of birds—darkened the skies. Migrating the length of the Mississippi Valley and across the Southeast, they nested throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and southern Wisconsin, Michigan and Ontario.

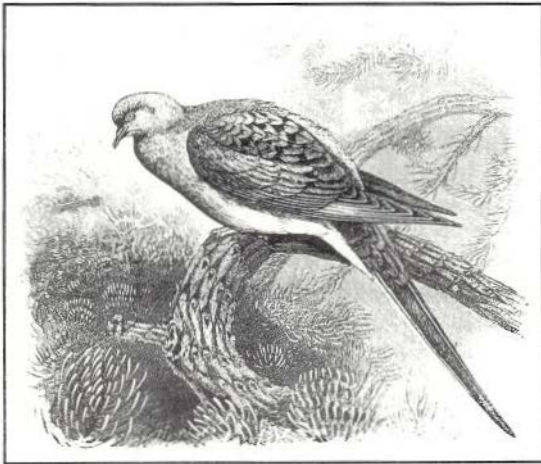
In the forests that blanketed New York State, passenger pigeon nesting colonies covered tens or hundreds of square miles. Their favorite habitat was our mixed forest, where white pine and hemlock stood beside hardwoods like oak, beech, white ash, hickory, black cherry, sugar maple, tulip poplar, American chestnut, and cucumber magnolia.

My interest in passenger pigeons began on a dairy farm in northwestern Pennsylvania. As a farm boy, I understood that just a century or so earlier our woodlots and fields were part of a vast continuous forest. If I could have transported myself back in time, my hunger for ornithology would have been fed by flocks of *Ectopistes migratorius*—passenger pigeons—instead of starlings.

Skins, Bones and Words

I have no time machine, but I've found three ways to encounter the passenger pigeon anyway. First, I became a curator of birds at the New York State Museum. The museum has one of the country's finest collections of extinct North American birds. In our ornithology laboratory, I can admire the mounted skin of a Labrador duck or heath hen, Carolina parakeet or ivory-billed woodpecker, or any of ten passenger pigeons. These specimens, which I handle very infrequently because of their rarity and fragility, are links to our past.

Another way I stay in touch with passenger pigeons is through archaeology. The birds were eaten regularly by prehistoric Indians; and lots of passenger pigeon bones show up in New York's archaeological sites. A prime example is the Hiscock site, a marshy depression near Byron, Genesee County. Hiscock provides an unparalleled look at the plants and animals of western New York over the last 11,000 years; and 80 percent of the birds excavated there are passenger pigeons.



Finally, historic documents help me keep company with the extinct bird. Seventeenth-century Europeans were impressed with New York's abundance of passenger pigeons. Just after they occupied Manhattan Island in 1625, the Dutch reported the birds to be so numerous that their flocks shut out the sun. Similar reports were written from Fort Orange, the future Albany, in 1639.

Pigeon Pie

The first hundred years of European settlement of New York diminished the numbers of passenger pigeons but little. In June 1749, the Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm saw multitudes of the birds near Saratoga. Kalm noted that their crops contained seeds of red maple and elm. He also remarked that "Their flesh is the most palatable of any bird's flesh I have ever tasted." This tastiness was a major factor in the pigeon's decline and extinction.

How might Kalm have prepared this flavorsome relative of the mourning dove for his table? In those pre-refrigerator days, passenger pigeons were brought to the kitchen fresh, salted, smoked, or dried. Then they were either roasted, stewed, fried, put in a soup, or baked in a pie.



New York State Conservationist, April 1996

...And Live on Pigeon Pie

The passenger pigeon finally expired at the Victorian dining table

by David W. Steadman

"Passenger Pigeons" original watercolor by Virginia Carter Steadman (1992).



New York State Conservationist, April 1996

21



Author Margaret Mitchell
recorded an old-time
Ontario rhyme that goes:

When I shoot my
rifle clear
At pigeons in the sky,
I'll say goodbye to
pork and beans,
And live on pigeon pie.



Iroquois Hunters

In August 1750, Kalm was amazed at the number of pigeons killed by the Onondaga at a salt spring near their town in central New York. Like another salt seep near Montezuma, the Onondaga springs were known to the Iroquois as a good place to hunt the delectable fowl.

In southwestern New York, passenger pigeon was an ancient food among the Seneca. In fact, the Seneca word for the bird, *jah'gowa*, means "big bread." Beginning in 1822, the Friends' Indian School at Tunesassa (Quaker Bridge, Cattaraugus County) closed for several weeks each spring to allow the Seneca students to help their elders harvest maple sugar and pigeons for their family larders.

Nests by the Square Mile

Throughout the first half of the 19th century, nesting colonies of the passenger pigeon were still very large. In 1823, a nesting ground six miles wide stretched north for 30 miles from the Allegheny River in the Town of South Valley, Cattaraugus County, to the Town of Collins, Erie County. This 180 square mile tract was heavily forested at the time, and a witness claimed that every tree in it held between one and 50 nests of the passenger pigeon. In about 1847, a nesting three miles wide extended 30 miles northward from Annsville, Oneida County, nearly to Watertown. Other immense roosts were noted near Norwich in Chenango County in 1835, and at Ashford in Cattaraugus County in 1852.

Hunters and Loggers

Railroads and canals sped the decline of the passenger pigeon. Barges and lumber cars moved millions of board feet from forest to mill to market. Clear-cutting the forests eliminated the bird's nesting sites. Railroads also meant that farm produce and forest game could be shipped fresh to the cities. Market hunters snared or killed passenger pigeons by the hundreds of thousands and shipped the birds, either alive or gutted and salted, to urban areas, particularly to New York City.

Allegany Decline

The fastest decline in New York's passenger pigeon population occurred in the 1850s and 1860s. The last nesting measured in square miles took place in 1868 in southwestern Allegany County, where, during that spring and summer, millions of passenger pigeons nested in a forested tract along Bell's Run. The event was described by Fred R. Eaton, an uncle of Elon H. Eaton, author of *Birds of New York*. The elder Eaton estimated the colony to be 14 miles in length, extending into Pennsylvania. This great gathering of pigeons seems to have attracted a lot of attention, for Eaton notes: "Great numbers of wagonloads were frequently seen coming into Olean. The whole tribe of Indians from the Cattaraugus Reservation moved to the nesting ground and remained for two weeks to capture pigeons. Professional netters who followed the pigeon nestings also captured them by tens of thousands." By the mid-1870s, passenger pigeons ceased to nest in this area of New York.

Adirondack Decline

The last major nesting of passenger pigeons in the Adirondacks took place in 1867 in northern Clinton County. On May 2, 1876, A.R. Fuller reported “pigeons flying in all directions” near his cabin at Meachem Lake; but where, or if, these birds nested is unknown. In April and June 1878, C. Hart Merriam, author of the 1886 classic *Mammals of the Adirondack Region*, collected some passenger pigeons at Fourth Lake and Big Otter Lake. Five of these specimens are preserved as skeletons in the Smithsonian Institution.

Passenger pigeons nested irregularly in scattered, small flocks in the 1870s and 1880s, after which they were no longer recorded in the Adirondacks. The last two reports of passenger pigeons from northern New York were from the Black River. Here a flock of about 300 birds was seen at Constableville on May 22, 1896, by Henry Felshaw, an experienced pigeonier who had shot, trapped, and netted thousands of the birds in his lifetime. A single bird was sighted at Lowville in October 1896 by ornithologist James H. Miller.

Market Hunters

The birds were shotgunned, netted, or snared. To obtain the valuable squabs, nests were knocked from trees with long poles; or the trees themselves were felled by the thousands. As the birds declined in numbers, the retail price of a dozen passenger pigeons in New York City increased from \$0.50-\$1.50 in 1855, to \$1.50-\$2.50 in 1876, to \$2.50-\$3.50 in 1884. After 1884, hunting and logging had so depleted the pigeons that market hunters could no longer supply them reliably.

Lone Birds

Although in decline, passenger pigeons remained widespread in New York State less than a decade before their extinction. A passenger pigeon was killed at Oyster Bay, Nassau County, on July 8, 1874, by Theodore Roosevelt—then more ornithologist than politician. Not a single passenger pigeon is reported nesting in New York State in the 1890s. In 1904, one active nest was found in a cedar swamp near Scottsville, Monroe County. The last passenger pigeon recorded in New York, and one of the last reported anywhere in the wild, was a single bird seen during the summer of 1907 on what is now the E. N. Huyck Preserve in Rensselaerville, Albany County. The lone pigeon was sighted by Edmund Niles Huyck, after whom the 1800-acre sanctuary would someday be named. In May that same year, renowned naturalist John Burroughs noted a mile-long flock of passenger pigeons in the mid-Hudson Valley at Kingston. The destination and fate of this flock have never been learned.

The End

The pitiful end of the passenger pigeon came in 1914 with the death of a captive, Martha, in the Cincinnati Zoological Garden. After surviving a million years of predation from goshawks and peregrine falcons, and ten thousand years of hunting from Amerindians, North America’s most prolific bird was unable to withstand one hundred years of market hunting. *Ectopistes migratorius* was finally slain by Victorian knives and forks.

David W. Steadman, formerly curator of birds at the New York State Museum in Albany, is the assistant curator of ornithology at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

Pigeon Potpie

Pigeons stuffed, larded and cooked in the bake kettle are very nice and are tenderer and more savoury than when baked in the stove. To make a potpie of them, line the bake kettle with a good piecrust. Lay in your birds with a little butter on the breast of each and a little pepper shaken over them. Pour in a teacupful of water; do not fill your pan too full. Lay in a crust about half an inch thick. Cover your lid with hot embers and put a few below. Keep your bake kettle turned carefully, adding more hot coals on the top, till the crust is cooked. This makes a very savoury dish for a family.

Mrs. Catherine Parr Trail, *The Canadian Settlers' Guide*, Toronto, 1857.



Hunters and maple sugar makers often cooked adult pigeons by roughly drawing and then enclosing the unplucked carcass in wet clay, which was then covered with the embers and hot wood ashes. When cooked, the meat was removed from the covering of baked clay, which kept with it all the feathers and most of the skin of the bird.

M. W. Althouse, Toronto.



Cindy House - A Moment in Time

Cindy House was always fascinated with the natural world. From the time she could walk, she followed her mother, a natural history teacher and photographer, into the woods, fields and along the shorelines. She first developed an interest in wildlife art during high school while working at the Norman Bird Sanctuary in Middletown, Rhode Island. She chose to study wildlife biology, however, rather than art while at the University of Maine.

It was during her senior year that the urge to



(above) "Crows" Pastel, 1992

(below) "White-Throat and Willows" Detail, Watercolor



Boy Scouts of America. It was this handbook that prompted initial interest in her work.

Without formal training, House began her career by illustrating *The Birds of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands*. She has illustrated numerous books including the National Geographic Society's *Guide to the Birds of North America* and *Book of North American Birds* for the Reader's Digest Association. Her most recent book, *A Field Guide to Warblers* in the Peterson Field Guide Series, is to be published in 1996 by Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company. She has exhibited in the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's "Birds in Art" show. Her work is included

express herself creatively became overwhelming. Her advisor at that time, Dr. Michael Zagata, presently the Commissioner of DEC, supported her interests by obtaining for her an assignment to design, write and illustrate a handbook on wildlife lore for the



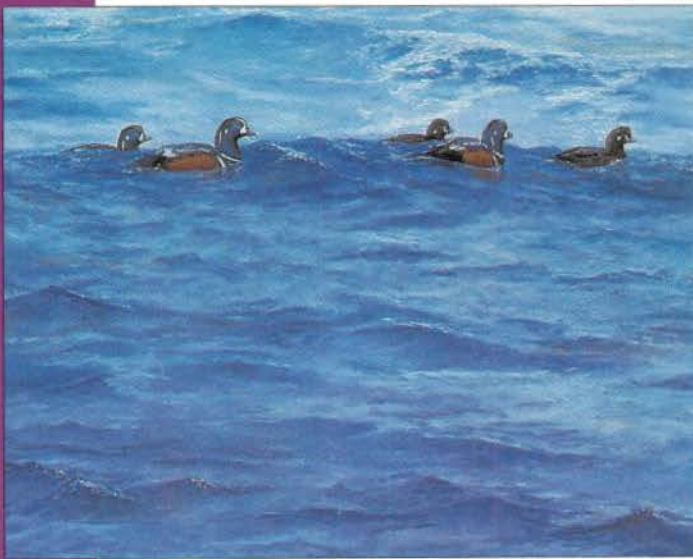
(top left) Ovenbird Watercolor, 1984
(above) Barn Swallow Watercolor, 1992
(below) Waterlily and Dragonfly Pastel, 1995



New York State Conservationist, April 1996



(top) "Reflections with Iris" Pastel, 1995
 (below) "Harlequins" Pastel, 1992



in the permanent collection of that museum along with those of Bausch & Lomb Corporation, the Rhode Island Audubon Society and the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

In the early 1990s, while living on Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in western New York where her husband, Eric L. Derleth, was the refuge biologist, the focus of House's work changed from watercolor bird

illustration and portraiture to pastel landscapes. These landscapes more often than not included birds. Her paintings try to capture a moment in time. In these paintings, House chooses to depict the beauty of small fragments of the natural world. She considers the greatest gift that her mother gave her was the ability to see and observe the out-of-doors and its beauty. She is now using that gift to express herself with pastels.



"White-Throat and Willows" Watercolor



Fly Fishing for Striped Bass

by Josh Kahn

Chris Catan remembers when bringing in two or maybe three striped bass off Long Island was quite a haul — for the entire season, that is.

A decade later, a successful DEC and interstate fisheries management program has resulted in anglers pulling up five or six fish a day on the estuaries, inlets, flats and tidal pools that dot the expansive island from Queens to Montauk.

Not only are stripers back after dwindling to historically low numbers, but Catan and a small but a growing number of fishermen are taking the migratory bass with fly rod and reel. “Other fishermen used to snicker at me when I pulled out a fly rod,” Catan said. “These days they’re a little bit more willing to try it.”

The rebound of the striped bass has led to a resurgence of charter bookings and recreational activity on Long Island and, to a lesser

extent, on the Hudson River, a principal spawning ground for what many rank among the best game fish in the east. Trophy-sized stripers can weigh in at 40 pounds, and larger fish are common.

While all methods of fishing for striped bass have been revitalized, marine fly fishing is experiencing the greatest spurt of popularity. There are more than 200 members of the Eastern Flyrodders of Long Island, a Riverhead-based group that meets regularly and holds seminars throughout the year on fly tying, casting and other striper-related fly-fishing activities.

Guide Paul Dixon, owner of Dixon’s Sporting Life in East Hampton, said that, judging by the size and numbers of stripers taken in the past few years, there is no reason Long Island can’t compare with other well-known marine fly fisheries, including Cape Cod for stripers, and highly-regarded hot spots in Key West and the Caribbean for bonefish and tarpon.

“The 1995 season was superb, and anything near these levels on a regular basis will make the area a first-class fishery,” said Dixon, a former executive with the Charles Orvis Co.

On guided trips to the flats of Gardiner’s Bay, Dixon scouts out feeding fish from a stand above the

STRIPERS ARE BACK

boat deck of a skiff. Once fish are spotted, Dixon and other crew members quietly pole the boat into striking distance. “There are times when the fish are so thick, we couldn’t drop a fly in,” Dixon said. “The stripers would follow huge balls of bait fish and just swarm them.”

Now the striped bass are being landed with increasing frequency and the population size is the largest in recent memory, but 20 years ago the tenacious fighter was in big trouble in the Atlantic Ocean. The rebound of the striped bass fishery can be credited, in large part, to extensive conservation and management programs instituted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, New York and member states from Maine to North Carolina. By sharply limiting the size and number of fish taken, the management program succeeded in allowing the spawning population to recover from earlier overharvesting. By the mid-1970s, low reproductive success and a decline in environmental quality contributed to the decimation of the striped bass population. “The comeback of the striper is an example of how a coordinated management plan of a species can improve both economic development and recreational opportunities,” said Byron Young, a DEC marine biologist in Stony Brook.

Nick Karas, author of the book *Striped Bass*, writes: "We had a regional approach to research and study, a regional approach to minimum length regulation with little regard to the same problem across the border."

Striped bass found in New York waters are from a variety of stocks, spawned in the Hudson River, the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay and some from North Carolina, home to the major migratory population that stretches from Maryland to Nova Scotia. Important federal legislation beginning in 1979 reinforced the need for the coordinated "management of the species...on a coastwide basis, its stock origins and their distributions," Karas writes.

Enactment of key federal legislation in 1984, said Young, "enabled the federal government to impose moratoriums on states that do not comply with the [earlier] management plan. It was the start of the truly regional, multi-state conservation plan that eventually led to the fishery for striped bass we see today."

Current DEC regulations allow anglers to take one striped bass per day, with the exception that anglers fishing from licensed charter boats may take two stripers. All striped bass kept must be at least 28 inches in total length. Because of past pollution in the upper Hudson River, anglers should follow the state Health Department advisory for eating fish. The advisory is available in the DEC fishing regulations

guide or from any DEC office.

According to Young of DEC, the Hudson River spawning grounds for stripers never faced the critical depletions that plagued the Chesapeake stocks, but nonetheless benefited from the conservation program. Hudson-spawned stripers range primarily from

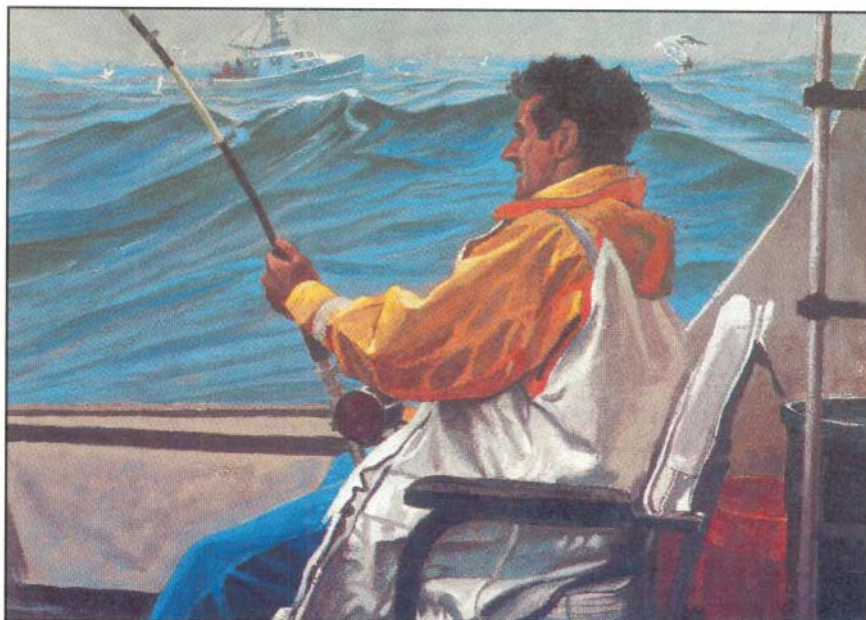


Illustration by Edward Kenney

northern New Jersey to Maine; however, some Hudson River striped bass have been found off North Carolina during the winter. For New York anglers, that translates into improved fishing opportunities from Newburgh on the Hudson to the Rockaways on the South Shore of Long Island to Montauk on the East End.

Striped bass from all stocks tend to mix as they migrate up the coast, making it difficult to tell where they spawned. Speculating on the striper's origin adds to a pleasurable fishing trip. Generally, recreational anglers associate successful striped bass fishing with pounding surf, rocks and riptides. Away from the pounding surf, fly fishermen have reported successes in Long Island Sound from New York City to Orient Point to Sag Harbor. Waders will find stripers in

Heady Creek and Mount Sinai and along Gardiner's Bay, with its multitude of sandbars, reefs and tidal bays. Bountiful food supplies, including sand eel, silversides and bay anchovy in the spring and early summer, attract the fish to small inlets and streams at Wildwood and Sunken Meadow state parks. On the tip of the North Fork, at Orient Point Beach State Park, fly fishermen over the past two years have reeled in trophy-sized stripers of up to 40 pounds. Fly fishermen have reported equal success in and around Long Island's south shore bays.

Recommended fly-fishing equipment for striped bass is a 9- to 10-foot rod in the 9- to 10-weight class. Edward Scalise, a founding member of the Eastern Flyrodders, has been successful with flies in sizes that imitate baits such as herring and crab. When wading, Scalise likes to work a riptide with a fly that imitates a fish moving against the tide. "That will work almost every time," he claimed. According to fishermen's logs, greatest success is during the tides of full moons and new moons, although Dixson said other times can be productive.

Prime fishing for striped bass off Long Island is from early June into late December. Hot spots generally move eastward from late May at Sunken Meadow, usually peaking in September to November around Montauk Point.

Josh Kahn is an avid fly-fisherman and a freelance writer from Albany.

Your Questions Answered

by Frank Knight

Three Short Questions

Rather than a single, more complex question, I have three short questions for you:

Splake is a hybrid between which two species of trout?

What is a newly hatched turkey called?

Which of these states has the most wild turkeys: New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland or Texas?

Joseph J. Sullivan Jr.

Fonda, Montgomery County

The name splake derives from the "sp" of speckled (brook) trout plus lake trout. Some are stocked in New York waters by DEC because they grow fast and mature early. The record splake, weighing 12 lbs., 15 oz., was taken from Little Green Pond near Saranac Lake. Another hybrid, the tiger trout, is a cross between a brown trout and a brook trout that produces a vermiculated tiger trout with worm-like stripes not unlike a tiger's.

Turkey hatchlings are called poult. Poult is from a Middle English word, pulte, young fowl. This same root word gives us pullet and poultry.

DEC wild turkey specialist Bob Sanford gave me the answer from a National Wild Turkey Federation publication. Estimates are from 1989 and are likely to be quite different today, but the relative numbers are interesting. Texas is first with 582,000 birds, followed by Pennsylvania with 175,000, New York with 100,000, and little Maryland with 10,000. It's likely that New York's turkey population is closer to 200,000 today, exceeding Pennsylvania. This is ironic since the first turkey to reappear in New York walked over from Pennsylvania in western New York in the 1940s. DEC's trap-and-transfer programs successfully spread birds to all parts of the state, even to areas where they had not historically existed.

Tree Disease

This diseased tree has survived for the last three or four years with these scars. Can you identify the problem?

Richard Seebode

Climax, Greene County

*The leaves in the lower right of your photo look like red maple. If so, DEC plant pathologist Mike Birmingham tells me your canker fungus, *Balsa ambiens*, is commonly called *Balsa canker*. If the tree were a beech, however, it would probably be a very similar looking *Nectria canker*. *Nectria* fungus enters the bark where scale insects have fed. A reminder to questioners regarding woody plants: press and dry a short twig with several leaves in a big book for several days and send it along with your question and photo so we can confirm the identification.*

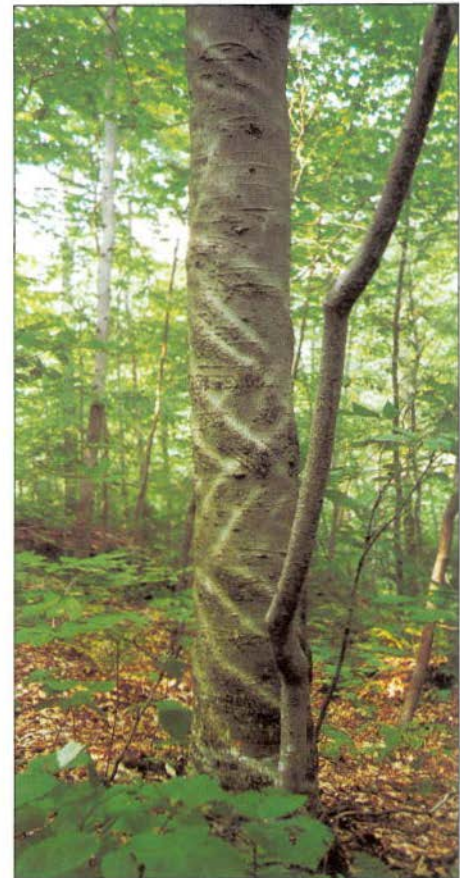


Mystery Marks

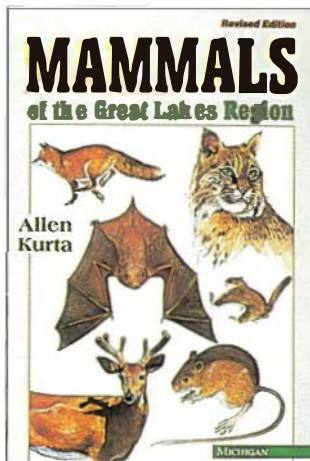
While hiking up Pillsbury Mountain in the Adirondacks last August, we found this trailside beech tree. The diagonal patterns are actually raised ridges in the bark. Do you know the cause?

Margaret Wooster

Buffalo



Even knowing the tree, your diagonal ridges are still a mystery. You didn't mention whether the scars encircle the tree or are just on the side photographed. DEC Foresters have given me several possibilities, none conclusive. Anything close to a trail makes humans a possible cause. Might someone have beat the tree with a stick or whip causing damage that healed as ridges? Someone suggested scarring by a vine that had climbed the tree. But, very few, if any, vines grow on Adirondack mountainsides. Deer, bear and porcupine scar trees, but this isn't characteristic of these animals. Ice accumulating on young trees bends them over after an ice storm, but the bark scarring is usually horizontal. Readers often come through with the right answer. Any ideas?



Mammals of the Great Lakes Region, Revised Edition by Alan Kurta, 375 pages, University of Michigan Press, 839 Greene St., P.O. Box 1104, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1104, \$16.95 paper, \$42.50 cloth.

This excellent book was designed as a quick reference for teachers, students, naturalists and professional biologists. Although it would probably be used as a reference at home, it is still compact enough to be carried in a backpack.

After a short introduction that explains what it is to be a mammal, the author discusses some of the basic physical features of the Great Lakes watershed and how certain features influence the distribution of mammals in the region. Part of that region includes some of New York State.

The main part of the book consists of short, well-written mammal species accounts for the whole region complete with range maps, photos of the animal being discussed and, in many cases, beautifully done line drawings of the skull. Even the regionally extinct wolverines, mountain lion and bison are discussed.

The last third of the book tells how to capture small mammals for live studies or for specimens. The

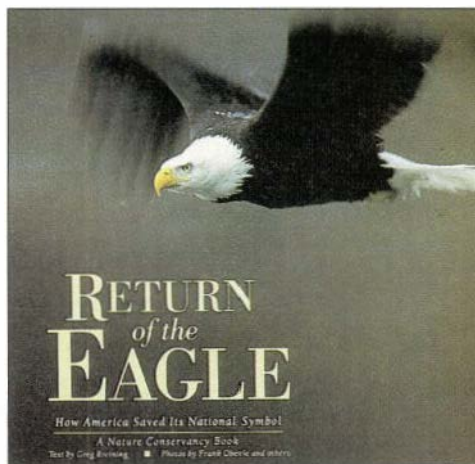
description of specimen preparation is basic but well-explained and could be the introduction to taxidermy.

In case the reader has had problems identifying any particular species, there are two keys that will help. One uses skull characteristics and the other the general form of the mammal in question. This is followed by a summary of measurements, life history information and a dental formula chart. Technical names, a glossary and bibliography conclude the text.

For readers who want a fine well-written reference of regional mammals, I would recommend this book. My only disappointment is that the photos, although of good quality, are not in color.

The original edition was written in 1957 by William Burt and became a classic. With new information this latest edition should enjoy the same future.

Wayne Trimm



Return of the Eagle, How America Saved Its National Symbol, text by Greg Breining, photos by Frank Oberle and others, 125 pages, published in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy, Falcon Press, P.O. Box 1718, Helena, Montana 59624, tel. 1-800-582-2665, \$19.95.

Return of the Eagle is a visual

celebration of the bald eagle—a book of striking photographs supported by text shot through with plenty of real-world anecdotes.

The book opens with an account of a hang glider pilot who, on a pleasure flight over the Mississippi River in Minnesota, suddenly finds himself surrounded by a flock of eagles. Regardless of your level of interest in the subject of bald eagles, I guarantee that this passage will pique your curiosity and prompt you to keep reading.

The book also contains information about ancient eagle lore, the selection of the bald eagle as our national symbol, its eventual decline at the hand of man, and attempts to bring this magnificent bird back from the brink of disaster, including New York State's own eagle hacking program.

Along the way, the reader will pick up some interesting tidbits of information about a bird that once teetered on the edge of extinction. For example, did you know that the State of Alaska offered a bounty on bald eagles as late as 1952? Or that eagles were once commonly shot in New York State because they were considered pests that depleted fish stocks? The real treat comes at the end of the book. Here, serious birders will find the "Directory of Bald Eagle Viewing Sites," a 25-page list of places you can go to see bald eagles. Organized by state, the descriptions of each viewing area are quite complete, giving directions and information about what you will see and when, and a phone number to call for more information.

Even if you're not a serious birder, the pictures alone are worth the price of the book.

Brian W. Swinn

From Dawn To Dusk

With regard to your February issue, page G-4, top photo entitled, "Jones Beach at Dawn," it should really be "Jones Beach at Dusk."

When standing on the beach and facing the Atlantic Ocean, you are looking south, thus, with the sun to your right, which is west, you have dusk.

James A. Minkalis
Palenville, Greene County

Take That, Imposter!

Last fall our son, David, purchased this life-size target to further hone his archery skills. During the night, the target deer was attacked. A real live buck speared the decoy in the abdomen, lifting it from its foundation. It also attacked it head on and punched two holes in the head, breaking off one antler.

I suspect the dominant buck was real proud that he had protected his area and killed his foe.

Kenneth P. Merchant Jr.
Norwich, Chenango County



Bluebird License Plate

Thanks for informing us about the new Bluebird License Plate. We phoned a reservation, then when our new truck arrived, we obtained the plate. We now have it proudly attached.

Merle B. Pratt
Liverpool, Onondaga County

After seeing the notice about Bluebird License Plates, I ordered some. I would like to know where the money from the annual fee goes?

Mary M. Gordon
Ithaca

Under the law signed by Governor Pataki, proceeds from the annual fee for the Bluebird License Plate are dedicated to the state Environmental Protection Fund for the conservation of open spaces.

—Editor

Protect the Trails

I was fascinated with Barbara McMartin's, "Adirondack High Peaks" in the December 1995 issue, but at the same time, saddened by the overuse of the trails.

The first time I camped and climbed Mt. Marcy was back in 1927. Then in 1929 my late husband and I spent our honeymoon camping and climbing in the area. We never met another hiker.

Again in 1943 my daughter and I climbed Mt. Marcy from Keene Valley and met one other traveler—a conservation officer. This is my reminiscence of the beautiful past.

My prayer is that the

management plan drafted by DEC and strictly enforced, will preserve and protect the trails to the High Peaks.

Ruth D. Landrine
Teaneck, New Jersey

Your excellent article on congestion in the Adirondack High Peaks region raises hope that somebody will do something about it. The picture of the eroded trail struck a particularly sensitive nerve in my reactive mechanism.

My few excursions into the mountains around Zermatt, Switzerland, provide the suggestion that heavily used trails such as those around Marcy be "improved" artificially. Similar work has been done in the Canadian Rockies around Lake O'Hara.

This does not violate the "forever wild" principle, but enhances it, since it keeps people on the trail in places where they are tempted to detour through the adjacent wild area—bushwhacking to avoid unpleasant trail conditions.

Alfred H. Howell,
Bronx

Jim Papero, head of the DEC project for the High Peaks, says DEC, the Adirondack Mountain Club and other private organizations have on-going projects for trail stabilization and improvement in the High Peaks and other parts of New York State. Hikers can help curb erosion by heeding the recommendation of the DEC management plan to voluntarily disperse themselves to less traveled routes that offer the same, or greater, wilderness experiences.

—Editor

Springtime's Music

by Kimberley Corwin Hunsinger

The spring peeper. It's utterly amazing that such a sound can come from such a small thing. Have you ever held a spring peeper in your hand? I remember the first time I did.

I was about eight years old and I was determined to track down the source of that curious sound that I had taken for granted as simply a part of every spring. My search that warm April evening along the edge of a pond brought me to a tiny pale frog. As I held it in my hand, the creature with an "X" on its back opened its mouth to emit an astoundingly loud noise. I had no idea that springtime's music came from, of all things, a tiny frog.

The trademark discs on the tips of its toes place the spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) in the family Hylidae. Its color ranges from light tan to dark brown to green. Although the "X" on the back is a common identifying characteristic, it can be quite variable. Identification can be more assuredly made by its distinctive call and its size. Males measure 3/4 of an inch from snout to vent; females about 1-1/2 inches. Sex can also be determined by the throat color; males have a dark throat and females have a light throat.

Spring peepers can be found near almost any body of water from early spring until well into June (and sometimes even during a January thaw). The chorus of clear high-pitched notes is the sound of males trying to attract a mate. It's not known exactly what characteristics females use to select a particular mate, but in peepers, it is thought to involve the age of the male. Larger, older males produce a faster call than younger males. Older males are assumed to be better adapted to their environment and therefore more attractive as mates.

Peepers have a "prolonged" breeding season of up to two months, depending on weather conditions.

During this time, males defend small territories from which they call to females. When a female shows a willingness to mate, the pair joins in amplexus, a mating embrace, and the female begins to deposit eggs. "Satellite males" take another approach. They keep a low profile as they silently take a position near a calling male. Their submissive posture is thought to ward off aggression from the calling male. Satellite males move into the perch left vacant when the calling male obtains a mate. In some populations, satellite males attempt to "steal" a female that was

attracted to the calling male by clasping her when she moves within reach.

Pairs remain in the mating position for as long as four hours while the male fertilizes the approximately 800 eggs deposited by the female. The eggs are laid on submerged vegetation and will hatch in about a week. After mating, females return to woodland habitats while males return to the breeding pond and resume calling.

Information about the spring peeper and other amphibians and reptiles are the subject of a continuing study by DEC with the assistance of hundreds of volunteers who submit their observations. The project has been funded, in part, through taxpayer donations to the Return a Gift to Wildlife program. The Amphibian & Reptile Atlas Project will document the distribution of these critters across the state and produce comprehensive baseline data that will assist biologists in the formulation of conservation efforts. If you would like to participate as a volunteer, write to: NYS DEC Atlas Project, 108 Game Farm Road, Delmar, NY 12054.



D. Rhoades



Kimberley Corwin Hunsinger is the coordinator of the Amphibian & Reptile Atlas Project for the DEC Endangered Species Unit at Delmar, Albany County.

In addition to past support from Return a Gift to Wildlife, the NYS Amphibian & Reptile Atlas Project is funded, in part, by Federal Aid to Endangered Species (Section 6), Partnerships-for-Wildlife, the Sobin Conservation Fund, the Biodiversity Research Institute and the New York Cooperative Wildlife Unit at Cornell University.

I ♥ New York State Conservationist Sweepstakes

Grand Prize: Canal Boat Trip

Cruise the inland waters of New York State for a week at the helm of a European-style canal boat that sleeps six. Tour the Erie Canal, the Champlain Canal or the Hudson River on a fully-equipped boat from Collar City Charters in Troy. You're the captain. You choose the trip.

Photo: Gazette Newspapers/Lyn Ferris



Six First Prizes: I ♥ NY Get-Away Weekends

Niagara Falls

Deluxe, guided tour of the wonders of the region, including the Cave of the Winds and a boat ride on the *Maid of the Mist*. Stay at the Best Western Inn on the River with a view of the Niagara. Visit Niagara Reservation State Park and fish the Great Lakes from a charter boat.



Finger Lakes

Your stay at the Rosewood Inn bed-and-breakfast in Corning is the base for your weekend in this famous wine region. Tour the wineries. Visit museums devoted to painting, early American history, aviation and glass making. Hike Watkins Glen or one of the other impressive gorges in the area.



Adirondacks

The Sagamore Lodge combines rustic architecture with luxurious living. Relax on a moonlight dinner cruise on Raquette Lake aboard the W.W. Durant. Sample the lore and art of the region at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake. Hike, fish, swim.



Catskills

The Alpine Inn is a Swiss chalet that overlooks the Oliverea Valley in Ulster County. You're minutes away from the year-round fun at ski centers at Belleayre Mountain and Frost Valley. Hunting and fishing opportunities abound. The shops of Woodstock are just down the road.



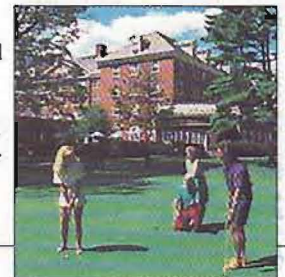
Long Island

Baron's Cove Inn in Sag Harbor is on the South Fork of the Bay. Canoe or kayak from Main Beach Surf & Sports. Marvel on a whale watch with Okeanos Ocean Research. Visit the Montauk Point Lighthouse where New York State meets the Atlantic.



Saratoga

Sample the bountiful brunch during your stay at the romantic Gideon Putnam Hotel. Enjoy a soothing mineral bath and relax with a restful massage. Golf or ski the championship golf course at Saratoga Spa State Park. Stroll the Victorian streets of Saratoga Springs or visit one of the museums.



Second Prizes: Free admission for one year to any New York State park or campground with your Empire State Passport. PLUS certificates good for up to three nights at any New York State Campground. PLUS poster-sized map of the Adirondack State Forest Preserve from the Adirondack Council.

TO ENTER: Fill in coupon on opposite page OR write to Conservationist Sweepstakes Entry, Drawer 496, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12233-4502.

Do you like to hike, bike, hunt, fish, camp? How about bird-watching, photography, travel? You can get all this and more in *The New York State Conservationist* magazine. Great articles, informative facts and beautiful pictures. Subscribe today and get six exciting issues for only \$8.50 a year!

SWEETSTAKES RULES: No purchase necessary. Entrants must be at least 18 years old. Sweepstakes runs 2/1/95 - 5/1/97. Entrants must be an official, former and must be mailed separately. Winners agree to the terms and restrictions in the Eligibility Statement and in the Official Rules. Blackout dates may apply. Entries become the property of The Conservationist, which reserves the right to print the names and addresses of the winners. Employees of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and their families, donors, and promotion contractors for DEC are not eligible. Estimated retail values: Grand Prize - \$2,000; 6 First Prizes - \$500 each; 20 Second Prizes \$100. Prizes are not redeemable for cash. This Sweepstakes is subject to all federal, state and local laws and regulations and is void where restricted or prohibited. Odds of winning are determined by the number of entries. For complete rules and/or winners list, send a SASE to: Sweepstakes Rules, The Conservationist, 50 Wolf Road, Room 549, Albany, NY 12233-4502.

