

**2009 ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT
RUTLAND COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY
JUNE 26, 2009**

CONSERVATION/ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

- Participated in the seventeenth annual West Rutland Marsh Green-Up Day on 05/02/2009.
- Continued to raise funds primarily through a continuous bottle drive. \$200 was contributed to the Vermont Center for Ecostudies toward the Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas and the Vermont Butterfly Survey. RCAS members were involved in both programs.
- As of this meeting RCAS has undertaken ninety-five consecutive months of bird monitoring of the West Rutland Marsh, a Vermont Important Bird Area. To date 1,103 participants have tallied 137 species and the data recorded on e-Bird.
- Completed 8 years of bird monitoring of Leffert's Pond, Chittenden. To date 117 species have been tallied and entered on e-Bird.
- Continued the bird inventory of Rutland Community Gardens. To date 76 species have been tallied, and recorded on e-Bird. List posted on community bulletin board.
- Continued the bird inventory of Pine Hill Park, Rutland. To date 70 species have been tallied and recorded on e-Bird. List posted on community bulletin board.
- Continued to stimulate interest in the Diamond Run Mall Nature Trail and its potential for bird watching. To date 67 species have been recorded and entered on eBird.
- Continued monthly monitoring of waterfowl and related wetland species of Lake Bomoseen Wetlands, Hubbardton. Since 1997, 19 waterfowl species, 11 wetland related species, (including loon, grebe, bittern, rail and heron), 6 raptor species, 11 shorebird species, 3 gull species and one tern species, also kingfisher, marsh wren and swamp sparrow have been recorded. All the above has been entered on e-Bird.
- Rutland County Audubon completed a yearlong inventory of the birds of Aitken State Forest for Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation. Seventy-four species were recorded and entered on e-Bird. A final report was submitted that included flowering plants, mammals, reptiles and amphibians that were observed.
- A bird inventory of the Pomainville Wildlife Management Area has been initiated. Ninety species have been tallied and recorded on e-Bird. A list will be posted at the entrance to the WMA.
- Submitted articles on West Rutland Marsh to *Birders World* and *Rutland* magazines to promote to highlight the Important Bird Area.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Maintained the kiosk and immediate area at the entrance of the West Rutland Marsh. Signage has been added and marsh related information posted. Vandalism has occurred and a Plexiglas sheet has been added to protect the signage.
- The kiosk has been dedicated to the memory of David Yates and a wooden plaque has been attached with his name.
- Signs have been completed and maintained at the ten stations that constitute "The Bridge to Bridge Interpretive Trail" along the east side of the marsh. Several schools have been contacted and invited to take advantage of the trail and supplemental brochures and teacher manual. A \$50 reimbursement toward transportation has been offered.
- Marv Elliott spoke to the West Rutland Rotary on RCAS programs and plans for the marsh on 10/27/2008.
- Sponsored Kim Royar of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department presented "The Fur Bearers of Vermont," at the Rutland Free Library on 02/18/2009.
- Sponsored Mike Blust, a RCAS director, and his program, "The Birds of Spain" on 03/16/2009 at the Rutland Free Library.
- Continued the distribution of "damaged/donated bird seed" to area nursing homes, senior centers, schools and other non-profits.

- Continued with the Audubon Adventures program. Currently in use in 8 classrooms and 11 home schools, thanks to coordinator Marsha Booker's efforts.
- RCAS will continue to advocate for "Cats Indoors," an American Bird Conservancy program.
- Bird and butterfly records obtained along power line right of way in West Rutland submitted to VELCO.
- A \$1,500 Collaborative Chapter Funding Grant was received to purchase a LCD projector and laptop computer. PowerPoint programs are been developed and presented.
- A PowerPoint program, "The Nesting Strategies of Birds" was presented to the Field and Forest Club, founded in 1916, in New Haven, Vermont on 05/04/2009.
- RCAS participated in the area schools Conservation and Field Day at the Diamond Run Mall nature trails on 09/25/2008, involving 87 children.
- Manned booth with display board at Long Trail Festival at the State Fairgrounds in August.
- Manned booth with display board at Shrewsbury Harvest Festival on 11/1/09.

ADVOCACY

- Continued to represent the environmental voice on the Rutland Regional Planning Commission with Peter Upton as RCAS delegate.
- Rutland County executive members, Doug Parker, Director of Audubon Vermont, along with Attorney Bill Meub established a memorandum of understanding with the developer of the Rutland Commons that would be activated upon receipt by the developer on receiving an Act 250 permit to proceed. Audubon Vermont has an easement to 15 acres that is adjacent to the proposed development. The proposed development access needs to cross Audubon's right-of-way.
- Rutland County Audubon actively advocated for the acquisition of the 55-acre Belden property at the West Rutland marsh by the Town of West Rutland. The funds necessary to purchase the property have been "realized" through a Vermont Housing and Conservation grant. Thanks to Marv Elliott of RCAS and Mary Ann Goulette, West Rutland town manager, for their sustained and successful effort in protecting this property that contributes to the viability of the marsh as a whole.
- Joined with representatives of the USDA in visiting several properties that are potentially slated to gain protection under the Wetland Reserve Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

ORGANIZATION

- Monthly board meetings, scheduled for the last Thursday of each month, were held throughout the year except in December, (Christmas Bird Count), and June, (Annual Meeting).
- *The Bicknell's Thrush*, a comprehensive spring and fall publication was continued, augmented by winter and summer solstice editions limited to a single feature article and a calendar of events. A tri-fold calendar of events was published quarterly for distribution to the public and at meetings and field trips.
- Marv Elliott received the Steve Young Award from Audubon Vermont.
- RCAS delegation did not participate in the Vermont Chapter Assembly meetings held in Huntington, 11/08/2008 as it conflicted with the funeral service of RCAS board member, David Yates. The chapter was represented at the meeting on 04/18/2009 in Huntington, chaired and hosted by Green Mountain Audubon.
- Current RCAS membership stands at 310 members.
- Hosted www.rutlandcountyaudubon website that has been completely redesigned in order to remain current and user-friendlier. Thanks to Webmaster David Jenne and Sue Elliott.

ACTIVITIES

- Fifteenth Annual West Rutland Butterfly Count, 07/05/2008, tallied 36 species and 630 individuals with an initial 12 participants

- Tenth Annual Tinmouth Butterfly Count, 07/06/2008, tallied 38 species and 890 individuals with and initial 19 participants.
- Mount Philo Broad-winged Hawk Migration Watch field trip, 09/13/2008.
- Dead Creek birding field trip, 10/18/2008. 11 checklists submitted to eBird.
- Annual Bird Seed Sale, Bottle Drive and Membership recruitment in Rutland on 11/01/08 and Brandon on 11/15/08. Combined seed sales netted \$520, memberships \$180 and bottles, \$32.85.
- Thirty-fifth Annual Christmas Bird Count and Pot Luck Supper were held on 12/27/2008, involved 29 field observers and 8 feeder watchers tallying 10,533 individual birds and 55+2 species.
- Champlain Valley birding field trip, "Winter Regulars and Rarities," 01/10/2009, had 25 participants who tallied 33 species. 25 checklists were submitted to eBird.
- *Great Backyard Bird Count* on 02/13/2009-02/16/2009 included a West Rutland Marsh walk on 02/14/2009.
- Century County Count XIV. Twenty-two participants recorded 108 species in Rutland County during 15 hours on 05/30/2009. 27 checklists were submitted to eBird. Donations were accepted for the Vermont Heritage and Non-game Species Program and Audubon Vermont.
- Annual Meeting and Social, Proctor Free Library, Friday, 06/26/2009.