

**RUTLAND COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY
2010 ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT
PROCTOR FREE LIBRARY
JUNE 30, 2010**

I. CONSERVATION/ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

- a. Met with West Rutland Town Manager and County Forester with respect to RCAS's advisory role regarding a management plan for the conserved areas of the West Rutland Marsh.
- b. Participated in the annual Vermont Green-Up at West Rutland Marsh on 05/01/2010 for the eighteenth consecutive year.
- c. As of 06/30/2010, RCAS has undertaken 107 consecutive months of bird monitoring of the West Rutland Marsh, a Vermont Important Bird Area, and Rutland County Audubon Birding Hotspot. To date 139 species have been tallied by 1,252 participants, and recorded on e-Bird.
- d. Completed 9 years of bird monitoring of Lefferts Pond, Chittenden, a Rutland County Audubon Birding Hotspot. To date 119 species have been tallied and entered on e-Bird.
- e. Continued the bird inventory of Rutland Community Gardens, a Rutland County Audubon Birding Hotspot. To date 91 species have been tallied and recorded on e-Bird. A bird list has been posted on community bulletin board.
- f. Continued the bird inventory of Pine Hill Park, Rutland. To date 71 species have been tallied and recorded on e-Bird. A bird list has been posted on information kiosk at the park.
- g. Continued to promote the Diamond Run Mall Nature Trail as a Rutland County Audubon Birding Hotspot. To date 81 species have been recorded and entered on eBird.
- h. Launched Bomoseen State Park as a Rutland County Audubon Birding Hotspot following a year of monitoring, 89 bird species to date.
- i. Continued monthly monitoring of waterfowl and related wetland species of Lake Bomoseen Wetlands, Hubbardton Important Bird Area. 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, as well as kingfisher, marsh wren and swamp sparrow have been recorded. All the above has been entered on e-Bird.
- j. Completed a yearlong inventory of the birds, flowering plants, and butterflies, of the Pomainville Wildlife Management Area, a Rutland County Birding Hotspot with 107 recorded bird species to date. Provided a summary report to Vermont Fish & Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA).
- k. Submitted articles on West Rutland Marsh and Rutland County Audubon Birding Hotspots to *Rutland* magazine. Marv Elliott was interviewed for an article in the *Rutland Business Journal*.

II. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- a. Maintained the kiosk and immediate area at the entrance of the West Rutland Marsh. Signage has been added and marsh-related information posted. Installed thicker Plexiglas on the display. We hope to reduce vandalism.
- b. Signage has been maintained at the ten stations that constitute "The Bridge to Bridge Interpretive Trail" along the east side of the marsh. Wallingford Elementary School third grade class participated in a fall field trip. A \$50 reimbursement toward transportation was provided by RCAS.
- c. Sponsored Scott Darling, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department biologist, who presented his program, *Bats in the Balance*, at the Rutland Free Library on 03/30/2010.
- d. Sponsored Eric Hanson biologist for Vermont Center for Ecostudies, who presented his program *Vermont's Loon Population* on 02/22/2010 at the Rutland Free Library.
- e. RCAS was asked to lead two separate Community College of Vermont (CCV) class visits to the West Rutland Marsh with the function of wetlands as the topic of discussion.
- f. Participated in discussions with the Conway School of Design, which has been engaged to plan a "West Rutland Renewal."
- g. Continued with the distribution of "damaged/donated bird seed" from Wal-Mart to area nursing homes, senior centers, schools and other non-profits.
- h. Continued with the Audubon Adventures program. Currently in use in 14 classrooms and one home school, thanks to coordinator Marsha Booker's efforts.
- i. A PowerPoint program, *Vermont Wild Flowers* was presented to the Killington Arts Guild on 05/17/2010 and at the RCAS Annual Meeting on 06/30/2010.
- j. Participated in the Pittsford Fair in July.
- k. Posted a display, *The Web of Life* at the Vermont State Fair's Forestry Pavilion in September in Rutland. Several RCAS members participated in staffing the pavilion during the fair.

III. **ADVOCACY**

- a. Continued to represent the environmental voice on the Rutland Regional Planning Commission with Peter Upton as RCAS delegate.
- b. Advocated against allowing ATV access to public lands in Vermont.
- c. Rutland County Audubon actively and successfully 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 were provided by a Vermont Housing and Conservation grant. Thanks to Marv Elliott of RCAS, Mary Ann Goulette, West Rutland Town Manager, and Attorney Bill Meub for their sustained effort that will protect this property that contributes to the viability of the marsh as a whole.
- d. Joined with representatives of the USDA and other state and federal officers in visiting several properties along the Otter Creek that are potentially slated to gain protection under the Wetland Reserve Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

IV. **ORGANIZATION**

- a. 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).
- b. A quarterly "Tri-fold Calendar of Events" was updated quarterly and distributed at meetings and field trips.
- c. Participated in the Vermont Chapter Assembly fall and spring meetings sponsored by Northeast Kingdom Audubon in St. Johnsbury.
- d. Current RCAS membership stands at 357 members.
- e. Donated \$100 to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Non-game and Natural Heritage Program and \$300 to Audubon Vermont. Participant donations of \$100 at the Century County Count XV were divided between the above two organizations.
- f. Hosted and developed www.rutlandcountyaudubon.org website averaging 476 unique viewers per month. Thanks to Webmaster David Jenne and Sue Elliott. Inaugurated an electronic newsletter to alert members to updates of events and articles.
- g. Marv Elliott, RCAS co-president, was the recipient of the Steve Young Environmental Award, given by Audubon Vermont. Roy Pilcher, RCAS co-president, was the recipient of the Julie Nicholson, Citizen Science Award, given by the Vermont Center for Ecostudies.
- h. Actively used VTBird, an online listserv for advertising RCAS events and reporting trip results.

V. **ACTIVITIES**

- a. Sixteenth Annual West Rutland Butterfly Count, 07/04/2009, tallied 28 species and 221 individuals with an initial 6 participants. Rain curtailed afternoon monitoring.
- b. Eleventh Annual Danby/Tinmouth Butterfly Count, 07/05/2009, tallied 30 species and 688 individuals with an initial 15 participants.
- c. Mount Philo Broad-winged Hawk Migration Watch field trip, 09/12/2009, included the sighting of an immature Golden Eagle among 25 raptors and 9 species.
- d. A Champlain Valley field trip, 10/24/2009, on a rainy, cold day attracted only 7 participants. American Pipits and Eastern Meadowlarks were observed.
- e. Three Bird Seed Sale, Bottle Drives and Membership Recruitment days were held at Garland's Agway in Rutland (1) and Blue Seal in Brandon, [2].
- f. Thirty-sixth Annual Christmas Bird Count and Pot Luck Supper was held on 12/26/2009. Adverse weather and participant conflicts resulted in a diminished species count, [43 + 5 CW] and the number individual birds tallied, [6333].
- g. Champlain Valley birding field trip, Winter Regulars and Rarities, 01/16/2010, had 19 participants who tallied 42 species. 25 checklists were submitted to eBird.
- h. Participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Rutland County outperformed the rest of the state in the number of checklists submitted [91].
- i. Century County Count XV. Twenty participants recorded 114 species, a record, in Rutland County during 15 hours on 05/30/2010. 27 checklists were submitted to eBird. Donations were accepted for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Non-game and Natural Heritage Program and Audubon Vermont.
- j. Annual Meeting and Social, Proctor Free Library, Wednesday, 06/30/2010.