ANNUAL ART AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL – 2020

Our annual Art and Crafts Festival, held at the Wallenpaupack High School, was cancelled this year to keep our volunteers, craftsmen and visitors safe. Every year our Art and Crafts Festival provides the funds for our annual scholarships. Each summer we send a parent and child to family camp on Hog Island, Maine. The connection to nature that children make while at camp can last a lifetime. This program has inspired careers and life long environmental stewardship.

We also help young nature lovers succeed in environmental careers by granting a college scholarship of $4,000 to a local student, going into an environmental field. In the article below, you can read about our latest scholarship winner, Sinclair Ogof.

These scholarships can be vital to the education and development of the next generation of environmentalists. Despite this year’s festival cancellation, we would like to continue offering assistance to students, with the help of our volunteers and donors. If you would like to help support our 2020 scholarship, go to our website www.nepaaudubon.org

If you would like to support our festival craftsmen, see page 3 for information on buying crafts virtually.

Congratulations to our College Scholarship Winner: Sinclair Ogof

Sinclaire Ogof of Western Wayne High school is the recipient of our 2020 college scholarship. Co-valedictorian of the class of 2020, Ogof is a member of the Wildlife Leadership Academy (WLA), the tennis team, track and field team, and served as the Treasurer for the National Honor Society for the 19-20 school year and has been a part of CATS/Key Club for over 4 years. She is an active volunteer with Lacawac Sanctuary where she helped Lacawac become involved in the American Chestnut Tree Restoration Project, done trail restoration, Deer Exclosure monitoring, and is both a past and current participant in the Citizen Scientist Program through PLEON (Pocono Lake Ecology Observatory Network).

Ogof will be attending Rochester Institute of Technology for Public Policy with a minor in Environmental Studies to focus her degree in Environmental Policy.
Notes From Our Chapter President

Current national events have taken up most of our attention for the past several weeks, and fortunately, the Northeast PA Audubon Society has not been very negatively impacted by them directly, but we have had to cancel our annual fundraiser, which will require us to find alternative ways to raise money for our annual scholarships. Please see a separate article on that in this newsletter, and please keep this in mind when you get our annual appeal letter.

We are also fortunate to be able to get out to enjoy hiking and birdwatching, but the awareness of recent stories about black birdwatchers being viewed with suspicion and distrust makes us aware of how far we have to go to have a culture that truly values and respects all of our citizens. The incident in New York’s Central Park led to the National Audubon Society’s president making a statement about inclusion, and welcoming black birdwatchers, and we should all be committed to creating a welcoming environment to people who appear to be different from us. There’s an irony in this: we delight in birdwatching and nature because we relish seeing the myriad differences: colors, shapes, sizes, etc., but when we see another person who is different from us, what is our reaction? Suspicion? Fear? Distrust?

Let’s work to make everyone welcome, and every birdwatcher, hiker, and nature watcher respected and valued.

-Jim Sanders

Gardening for Birds

Conservation Chair Sarah Hall-Bagdonas and Vice President, Katharine Dodge presented a webinar sponsored by Penn State Master Gardeners called “Gardening for Birds” on June 3rd. It was attended by about 200 people. This program helped explain the importance of birds, and the vital role insects play in the life of birds. About 96% of birds rely upon insects to raise their young. The presenters discussed how to assess and inventory one’s property to create backyard habitat for biodiversity, including plant choices, stressing native versus non-native species, as well as reducing the size of your lawn and avoiding pesticides and herbicides. If you know of any group that would like to sponsor this program, please contact Audubon at 570-253-9250 or email: audubonworks@gmail.com. Left is a beautiful slide from this program.
Golden-Winged Warbler Project

Barbara Leo, Georgette Pascotto, Haley Main, Denise Bussiere, and Kathy Dodge have been monitoring bird populations at Lacawac Sanctuary during the first two weeks of June. The study is part of an effort to create habitat for the golden-winged warbler. These birds like open scrubby areas surrounded by forest. Because of loss of this particular kind of habitat, the population of this bird has dropped. “The Golden-wing Warbler is a species of concern in NEPA, and this survey gave us the opportunity help understand its needs better”, says Audubon Education Chair Haley Main. “With pandemic restrictions in place, we completed the survey while still maintaining social distancing, working in teams of two and wearing our masks when in close proximity to one other. It was an exciting experiment! When the terrain was challenging we increased our social distance so that we removed our mask without danger, which made hiking uphill much easier!” Each team catalogs bird species for 5 minutes at each designated spot within the study area a number of times during the two-week period. This will help establish base-line data that scientists can use to assess the success of the project.

Virtual Fun for NEPA Audubon

If you are missing the Arts and Crafts Festival this year, just like us, we have good news! Every year this festival is made possible by our hard working volunteers, and this year our festival committee was able to move a portion of the festival to a virtual format. A selection of our educational programs will be available on our social media and our website. We will be connecting you with several of our crafters and artists. Where you can purchase their beautiful work. It’s a perfect way to support local artists and get incredible art while staying socially distant. Follow us on our Instagram and Facebook, listed below, to see the festival content that will be coming out all year. It will be fun for the whole family while staying safe!

Find us online:
- Instagram: @nepa_audubon
- Facebook: @nepaaudubon

Go Paperless with Us!

The best way to stay connected with NEPA Audubon is by email.

Sign up at www.nepaaudubon.org

It’s a great way to find out about special events, and any changes in our 2020 schedule! You can also sign up to get this newsletter via email, saving paper and getting your newsletter earlier!
Mark Your Calendars!
(Check our website at nepaaudubon.org for the latest information and updates)

2020 NEPA AUDUBON PROGRAMS/FIELD TRIPS

September 19, 2020: Bird Walk at Lacawac Sanctuary. Begins at 8:30am. Meet at the visitor center.

Join the experts from the Northeast PA Audubon Society as we take a walk around the grounds of the Lacawac Sanctuary, looking especially for birds heading south to their wintering grounds. We’ll search around the lake, pond, field and forest, hoping to see a good diversity of birds, both resident and migrant. We recommend you bring binoculars.

December 19, 2020: Audubon’s 12th Annual Christmas Bird Count
This survey provides critical data for scientists who study the long term trends in bird populations. Participate and learn how we conduct this local count within a 7.5-mile radius of White Mills PA. For more information call Barbara at 570-253-2364.