

## Putnam Highlands Audubon Society Newsletter

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Putnam Highlands Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 292, Cold Spring, NY 10516  
[www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org](http://www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org)



### ***THE JOYS OF BIRD FEEDING***

*Peter Conway*

Birds are some of the most wonderful manifestations of nature; they are characterized by endless variety and diverse personalities. I've always loved spotting and watching birds, a pleasure that was rekindled upon joining the board of the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society this spring. With some work, I have been rewarded with a perpetual show viewed from my living room and deck. Here are some tips for happy bird feeding:

#### Choosing a Feeder

There are many types and sizes of feeders, easily found online or in local stores. (One such store, located in Tilson, New York, near Rosendale, is the Tilson Birdwatchers Country Store.) Some feeders are more decorative than functional, and some are poorly made. I've found that functional feeders produced by well-known company are best. Keep in

#### ***PUTNAM HIGHLANDS AUDUBON SOCIETY: CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE***

The mission of the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society (PHAS) is to preserve and maintain the lands and waters that have been entrusted to our stewardship; to inform and educate the public on issues involving birds, wildlife, and the environment; and to encourage membership in the chapter and participation in its activities.

mind where the feeder will be placed: hung from a tree, on a pole, or on a hanger from a wall or fence. You'll want a feeder that has good capacity, as hungry spring and summer birds can consume a lot of seed. Hang your feeder in an easy-to reach-place.

### Choosing Seed

Good-quality birdseed produced for the Northeast region will attract a greater variety of birds. Watch out for seed that has become moldy. A great source of seed is PHAS's annual birdseed sale, coming up soon.

### Downsides

Squirrels are hungry too, and they are extremely ingenious at getting onto bird feeders. There are a lot of tips online about how to prevent squirrels from raiding feeders, but it is often a futile effort. Some people just give in and throw seed on the ground for the squirrels. I have found that creating a barrier with chicken wire is pretty effective. Another downside is that birds can be messy, littering the ground with cracked seed shells or bits they don't like. Some cleaning up is necessary but is worth the effort.

### Rewards

Birds are an essential part of our natural ecosystem; they help everything else survive. They are also beautiful and entertaining to watch. This was our third summer here in the Hudson Valley and our first feeding the birds. I was amazed at how many more birds came to visit us and feed and grow.

## ***FALL BIRDSEED SALE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21***

Enjoy the endless spectacle of overwintering birds of all shapes and sizes by putting up a bird feeder and watching them in the comfort of your own home. The beautiful autumnal display in the Hudson Valley is a signal for bird lovers to start cleaning out and putting up feeders. It is also time for PHAS's Fall birdseed sale. We hope you will support this fundraiser, which also benefits our feathered friends. We sell only high-quality clean birdseed without fillers.

An order form can be found on the PHAS website:

[www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org](http://www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org). Orders should be sent in by Monday, **October 16**, with pickup on Saturday, **October 21**, from 9 A.M. to noon, at the Taconic Outdoor Education Center. Audubon birders will be available to provide advice on feeder placement and birdseed choices.



Putting a variety of feeders around your yard will attract many different species of birds. Some birds are ground feeders (e.g., juncos and sparrows), while others are attracted by sunflower seed (e.g., cardinals and chickadees). Niger (thistle) seed attracts finches, and suet is favored by woodpeckers. When we feed these birds we not only help them overwinter but also give ourselves endless opportunities to observe and enjoy them.

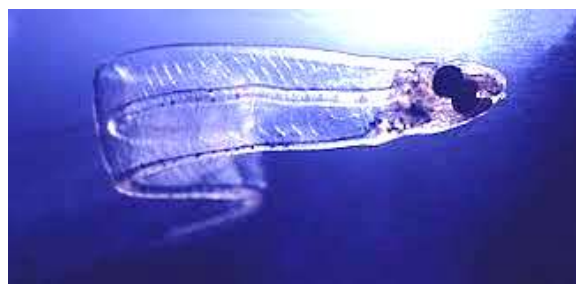
### ***AMERICAN EELS AT RISK FROM POACHING***

*Connie Mayer-Bakall*

American eels live in the Hudson River and its freshwater tributaries, leaving only to migrate to the Sargasso Sea, where they were born, to spawn. They are found along the East Coast of North America, including our local streams and the Hudson River Estuary. Their unique natural history makes them one of the most fascinating animals in our region.

After she has migrated to the Sargasso Sea, the female can lay up to a few million eggs, after which she dies. The eggs hatch without parental help, and the early-stage larvae develop into a second stage known as *leptocephali* (“thin-heads”). These drift on the currents toward North

America, where they metamorphose into so-called *glass eels*. When glass eels leave the ocean to enter estuaries and ascend rivers, they are known as *elvers*. Elvers gradually mature into adult eels and may live for ten to twenty-five years, feeding on crustaceans and aquatic organisms, after which they return to the Sargasso Sea and the entire life cycle is repeated.



*Elver*



*Adult American eel*

The eels’ economic value has grown, as there is a large demand for them. The Associated Press reports that federal agencies are actively pursuing poachers along the East Coast because they are jeopardizing the species’s long-term sustainability. “A well-managed eel fishery is critical to the

health of rivers and streams they live in,” says Ed Grace, deputy chief of law enforcement at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Eels are both predator and prey, feeding on fish and mollusks and being eaten by larger fish, seabirds, and turtles.”

Q: If a seagull flies over the sea, what flies over the bay?

A: A bagel.

### ***DATES TO REMEMBER***

**Monday, October 16:** Deadline for birdseed orders

**Saturday, October 21:** birdseed pickup at Taconic Outdoor Education Center

January 2018 (date tba): winter birdseed sale

**Saturday, April 14, 2018:** PHAS annual dinner

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Quickly he was faced with a class-action lawsuit for failure to file an environmental-impact statement.



Can you identify this bird? (See p. 6)



Looking forward to Fall!

## ***MY SUMMER AT CONSTITUTION MARSH***

*Anne Gundeck*

My internship at Constitution Marsh this summer was an informative and invigorating experience. Prior to this summer, I had done environmental work through school programs and a research team. As I go off to college, I think that my work this summer will largely influence the role I want environmental stewardship and awareness to play in my studies.

Overall, my favorite time spent at the marsh was out in the field working on conservation projects. Most of the fieldwork we did consisted of working with phragmites, an invasive reed that overtakes native cattails. I was able to take part in the management of phragmites by smothering patches of them with a geotextile, as well as monitoring vegetation growth in previously treated areas. Also in the field I helped with seining for fish, and monitoring sediment elevation tables (SETs) and tree growth. In addition, I assisted with canoe tours and an education group.

It was in the field that I felt myself grow the most. A goal that I set for myself was to learn to identify different plants, birds, and other animals. I noticed that I learned how to ID things much faster when in the field, as opposed to researching online or through text. When doing

All members of PHAS are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Governors. Board meetings are held at Hubbard Lodge (or at the Red Line Diner in Fishkill on snow days). They're a good way to learn about what PHAS is doing, the problems we face, and the interesting wildlife in our region. The next few board meetings will be held on the following dates:

Friday, October 13, at 6 P.M.

Saturday, November 11, at 9 A.M.

Saturday, December 9, at 9 A.M.

Saturday, January 13, at 9 A.M.

For more information, e-mail Connie Mayer-Bakall at [concoyote@aol.com](mailto:concoyote@aol.com).

### **THE MARTY MCGUIRE AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIP**

The Marty McGuire Audubon Scholarship is available to college students from the PHAS area who are interested in nature. For details, go to: [www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org/scholarships](http://www.putnamhighlandsaudubon.org/scholarships).

vegetation monitoring, I quickly learned the names of the majority of the plants in the marsh. My fellow interns shared great tips on how to ID both plants and animals.

Overall, my internship was an extremely positive experience. Even during times where I struggled with something or wasn't very interested in a particular project, I always felt that I was learning about and seeing the bigger picture of conservation work. While I learned a lot about specific vegetation and bird species, I think most of what I learned was less specific. I have learned why conservation work matters, the big picture of how it is accomplished, and what jobs are available within this field. This was largely because of my fellow interns and the rest of the staff at the marsh. Speaking with them and hearing about their previous experiences opened my eyes to the vast diversity of work available in conservation. As I complete my internship, I feel as though I have a much better idea of my connection to the environment and how I want to interact with it going forward.

***The bird pictured on page 4 is a red-breasted nuthatch.***



Nest in blackberry bush

*Photo by Connie Mayer-Bakall*

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

- In the jungles where most ants live, there are 800 ants to the square yard and 2.4 billion to the square mile.
- The largest badger sett ever found had more than 130 entrances, 50 rooms, and half a mile of tunnels.
- Beavers can stay submerged for up to 15 minutes. Their eyelids work as goggles, and they have closable ear and nostril openings.

Dilemma: What should you do if you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

There was a child went forth every  
day,  
And the first object he looked upon  
that object he became,  
And that object became part of him for  
a day or a certain part of  
the day . . . or for many years or  
stretching cycles of years.



The early lilacs became part of this  
child,  
And grass, and white and red morning  
glories, and white and red  
clover, and the song of the  
phoebe-bird . . .

And the appletrees covered with  
blossoms, and the fruit afterward  
. . . and woodberries . . . and the  
commonest weeds by the road.

*Walt Whitman*



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