



Audubon Community Nature Center

The connection begins with you.

September – October, 2020
Volume 64, Issue 5

The bi-monthly newsletter of ACNC,
featuring upcoming programs and events.



Audubon Community Nature Center builds and nurtures connections between people and nature by providing positive outdoor experiences, opportunities to learn about and understand the natural world, and knowledge to act in environmentally responsible ways.



Nature Center Newsletter

The free, bi-monthly publication of Audubon Community Nature Center, Inc.

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Hosting a chapter of National Audubon Society
Serving Chautauqua and Warren Counties

Kim Turner, Newsletter Editor

Cover: Bee and Aster. Photo by Capri23auto

Nature Center

Please visit auduboncnc.org or call (716) 569-2345 for up-to-date information about programs, resources, and building use.

Trails are open from dawn to dusk.

Visit auduboncnc.org by scanning this code.



Follow Audubon on these platforms:



Executive Director's Desk

Leigh Rovegno

Dear Members and Friends of the Nature Center,

We made it! The month of March feels like it was six years ago instead of six months. Together we've witnessed so many transitions take place, and yet, Audubon Community Nature Center has remained whole.

Thank you to all of our dedicated staff, volunteers, members, and supporters who have been incredibly understanding of all the changes that have taken place over the recent months. From closing the building, to limiting volunteering, to establishing new health and safety protocols... so much has changed, and yet, we have survived.

Nature teaches us that adaptation is key for the survival of a species. This also holds true for individuals, families, organizations, communities, and countries. My hope is that we continue to adapt together into something that is in the end; greater than what once was. Adaptation requires creativity, flexibility, and being willing to take a chance. Audubon has already proven that it is up for this challenge, and it's not over yet!

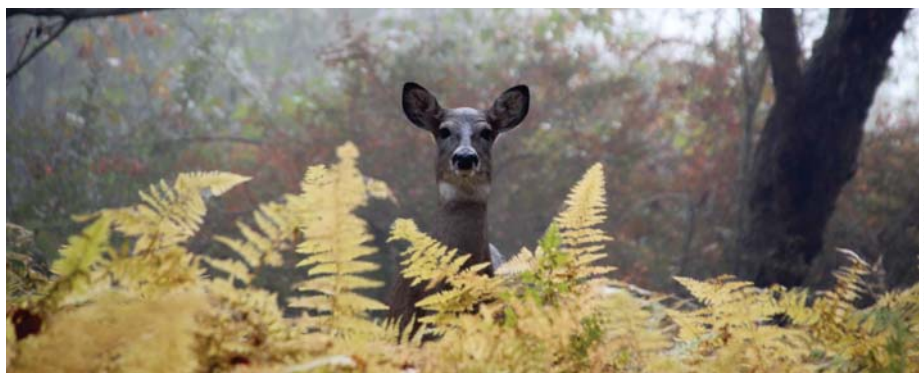
Stay tuned as we continue to reimagine traditional Audubon programs, find new ways to fulfill our vision of creating real and healthy connections to nature for local children, and discover how you can be an involved member of the Audubon community.

Reimagined events for September and October include: the Volunteer Recognition Picnic (rescheduled twice due to COVID-19 concerns), ACNC Virtual Annual Meeting, as well as the Dragons and Fairy Activity Day, and the ever popular Enchanted Forest.

As always, please continue to check the ACNC programs page at auduboncnc.org/programs for the most up to date program information as we continue to adhere guidelines issued by New York State and the CDC.

I hope that you find ways to stay happy and healthy this fall, and I look forward to seeing you at the Nature Center again soon.

Leigh J. Rovegno



White-tailed Deer and ferns. Photo by Jeff Tome.

ACNC Through the Years

Audubon has changed a lot since it was founded in 1957 around a kitchen table. The following excerpts are from past September – October newsletters.

1960

“The bluebird has become so scarce as to be almost totally absent throughout much of its normal range... The National Audubon Society calls it a ‘disaster species’.”

1970

“A cuckoo visited us during the last business meeting — suppose he knows something?”

1980

“We are preparing to launch our Bird Seed Savings Day (BSSD) for the third year.”

1990

“Nearly 100 children enjoyed our day camp experience this year, participating in activities related to the general theme that “People are a Part of Nature’.”

2000

“On the far side of the Clark Trail bridge (now Hemlock Bridge), our fern fans were rewarded by finding once more the reclusive crested fern.”

2010

“Looking for an alternative to a sugar-induced coma this Halloween? ... Children, their parents, and grandparents have a fun — but not scary — experience when magic fills Audubon’s trails during the Enchanted Forest.”



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<i>Secretary</i>	Penny Lester
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<i>Education Coordinator</i>	Sarah Hatfield
<i>Senior Nature Educator, Marketing</i>	Jeff Tome
<i>Senior Nature Educator, Exhibits Manager</i>	Katie Finch
<i>Nature Educator</i>	Chelsea Jandreau
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<i>Receptionist, Resource Person</i>	Joanne Miller
<i>Building and Grounds</i>	Terry LeBaron

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<i>Bird Seed Sales</i>	Mel Feather
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<i>Roadside Cleanup</i>	Denny Anderson
<i>Wild 5K</i>	Jeff Rupp

Audubon Community Nature Center’s Board of Directors, Chairs, and Committee Members are volunteers.

Thank you to those listed above who contribute time, thought, and energy to help ACNC run smoothly and effectively.

Buttonbush around the ponds. Photo by Jennifer Schlick.



Browse from hundreds of book titles online while still supporting ACNC with your purchase.

Blue Heron Gift Shop – What’s New?

Blue Heron Gift Shop has become an affiliate on Bookshop.org.

This website offers thousands of titles available to ship direct-to-you from the warehouse, to benefit independent booksellers and nonprofits.

Their selection offers far more titles than what Audubon can stock in the physical Blue Heron Gift Shop at the Nature Center.

Your direct purchases from the Blue Heron Gift Shop are greatly appreciated as the profit margin is higher. But every little bit helps, and all books purchased from Audubon’s Bookshop.org page, whether from your own title searches or from the suggested listings, will give 10% back to ACNC.

Next time you are considering buying books online stop by Bookshop to help support ACNC.

Browse and shop at:

bookshop.org/shop/blueherongiftshop



Beaver with branch greens. Photo by Amanda.

Beavers at Audubon

The beavers at Audubon have been very busy over the last couple of months. Their inclination is to stop the water from flowing in to the water control boxes, plugging up all the pipes and pathways that water flows to make the water stand still. With beavers around, ponds tend to flood and overflow onto trails.

Audubon’s maintenance crew has tried many things to slow the beavers down, and have had great success this summer with a floating electric fence that gives the beavers a mild shock when they swim over to plug the pipes leading in to the water control boxes.

You may have seen this contraption of floats and wires floating on one of the ponds.

The beavers themselves are most active at dawn and dusk. Visitors are most likely to see them on an early morning or a sunset hike.

Look for their lodge near the Big Pond Dike on one of the islands.

Programs and Events

September – October 2020



Please Note:

As of printing this newsletter, ACNC is still closed due to COVID-19. Without being able to predict how things will unfold as the region re-opens, these programs may or may not happen as planned. For the most accurate information about ACNC programs and events, please visit auduboncnc.org or call (716) 569-2345.

Face coverings are required for all participants ages 3 and up for indoor programs; they are also required for outdoor programs during which participants cannot maintain 6 feet of distance between family groups. Please have a face covering available should situations change. If you are feeling ill, have any symptoms of COVID-19, or have come into contact with a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case, please stay home. If you have traveled from one of the states on New York's travel advisory list, please complete your quarantine before attending programs.

Please be aware that if Audubon discovers that a program instructor or participant tests positive or is considered presumptive positive for COVID-19, they may use registration information to assist with contact tracing.



Dragons and Fairies Activity Day

(Adult+)

Saturday, September 19
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.*

\$8 Adults
\$6 Nature Center members
\$6 Children 3 – 15
Free 2 and under.

**Reservations slots are every 45 minutes.*

Paid reservations required by September 16.

*Please arrive close to your reservation time.
Limited enrollment.*

Come and engage in a dragon egg hunt, make a fairy crown or wizard wand, do an enchanted scavenger hunt, try the kid-friendly archery range, and more.

When you sign up for an hour time slot, you'll move through a series of activity stations. There is choice within those stations, such as which project you would like to do, which hunt you would like to participate in, or which costume element you would like to make. ACNC will have photo opportunities along the way, with other magical props and additions as weather allow. At the end of the hour you are welcome to hike the Enchanted Trail to see if you can spot the fairy houses or gnome villages.

There will be a Fairy Shop for other magical items and snacks that you might want to take home with you.

Special Information: This family-friendly activity day takes some highlights of Dragons and Fairies Festival and turns them into an hour-long exploration, creation, and imagination session. For more in-depth workshops for older children and adults, check out the Wonder-filled Wednesday series running September 2 through October 7.

Intended Audience Key

Adult = designed for adults

Adult + = designed for adults, mature, and interested children 9 and up when accompanied by an adult.

All = Something for everyone, but children must be accompanied by an adult.

Children = designed for kids — drop them off and pick them up later.



Tuesday, 1

Raising Monarch Caterpillars (Adult+)

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

\$12 Adults; \$9 Nature Center members
\$9 Children 9 – 15

Paid reservations required by August 31.

Learn how to find and raise Monarchs from egg through adult. Get a hands-on experience with different parts of the Monarch life cycle. Then go on a short walk to look for signs of Monarchs.

Special Information: Includes a short walk up a small hill just outside the Nature Center.

Wednesday 2

Fairy House Make-n-Take (Adult+)

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

\$12 Adults; \$9 Nature Center members
\$9 Children 9 – 15

*Paid reservations required by August 30.
Limited enrollment.
Also happening on October 7.*

Build a little magic into your life by designing and creating a fairy house. Directions, examples, and basic building materials, natural materials, and glue are provided.

Special Information: This workshop is designed for an older audience. Please check the programs on September 19 for younger children.

Thursday 3

Creating a Butterfly Haven (Adult+)

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

\$12 Adults; \$9 Nature Center members
\$9 Children 9 – 15

Paid reservations required by September 1.

Learn how to create the ultimate butterfly habitat in your yard by adding what butterflies need to survive and thrive. Then take a short walk to look at examples of butterfly-friendly plants.

Special Information: Includes a short walk up a small hill just outside the Nature Center.

Friday 4

First Friday (Adult)

Eastern Hellbenders: Ancient Salamanders of NY
11:00 a.m. – noon

\$8 Adults; \$6 Nature Center members

Reservations required. Limited enrollment.

Hellbenders are the largest salamander in the region, reaching lengths of up to 29 inches. They live locally in larger rivers and were recently made Pennsylvania's state amphibian.

Special information: in the past, this program has included a social gathering afterward. Due to current concerns, this will not be the case. Participants may plan to eat outside in the Stephanie Frucella Education Pavilion afterward if they wish.



Tuesdays 8 – Fridays 25

Nature Play Care (Children ages 4 – 6)

Session 1: September 8 – 25,
Tuesdays – Fridays
8:00 – 11:30 a.m.

\$336; 10% Member discount

*Paid reservations required by September 1.
Limited enrollment.*

See page 9 for more info.

Wednesday 9

Magic Wands and Elven Crowns (Adult+)

Session 1: 5:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Session 2: 6:45 – 7:30 p.m.

\$10 Adults

\$7.50 Nature Center members

\$7.50 Children 9 – 15

*Paid reservations required by September 6.
Limited enrollment.*

Add a touch of magic to your life with a crown or wand inspired by fantastical creatures. Directions, examples, and basic materials, including forms, natural materials, and glue are provided.

Special Information: This workshop is designed for an older audience. Please check the programs on September 19 for younger children.

Saturday 12

Little Explorers (Children 3 – 8 with an adult) *Bone Deep*

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

\$8 Adults; \$6 Nature Center members
\$6 Children 3 – 8

Paid reservations required by September 10.

A vertebrate is any animal with a backbone, and there are vertebrates of all shapes and sizes found around Audubon. Explore real animal bones to learn which parts of a skull and what other bones can help you discover more about an animal's life and diet.

This program is sponsored by Univera Healthcare.

Special Information: Rain or shine, please dress for the weather.



Fall Fungus

Chelsea Jandreau, Nature Educator

Fall is a great time to search for fungi and mushrooms. Although the aboveground appearance of mushrooms depends on temperature and precipitation, many kinds of fungi thrive with the slightly cooler nights as long as it continues to rain throughout the autumn months.

Fungi are an important part of the forest. There are thousands of species, with varying shapes, sizes and colors, but they all do the job of decomposing dead plants and turning them into new soil, water, and air. Many fungi use decomposing logs and decaying leaf litter as an energy source, while conks, bracket fungi, and other shelf mushrooms grow on the side of dead and dying trees. In fact, fungi are the most effective decomposer when it comes to woody plants as they are the only major organisms that can break down the cellulose and lignin in the cell walls.

Most fungi are a lot bigger than they seem and in fact, the mushrooms seen above ground or on the outside of a tree or log are only a small part of this larger organism. The cap of a mushroom is only the fruiting body, containing spores that will eventually fall, spread, and allow for reproduction of that species. However, under the ground lies a network of white, threadlike tendrils called mycelium. The mycelium releases an enzyme to break down plants and absorbs the released nutrients to help the fungus grow.

Mushrooms and other fruiting bodies of fungi are notoriously hard to identify as they can look so similar, but some fungi you can find out there in the fall include oyster mushrooms, certain kinds of chanterelles, puffballs, and artist's conks.



Top: Many fruiting bodies have gills on their underside which contain spores that will eventually fall out. Photo by Jennifer Schlick.

Bottom: Mushrooms are also a food source for animals like squirrels and chipmunks. Photo by Terry LeBaron.

Fungi Word Match



Fungi come in many different shapes, sizes, and colors. They also come with their own interesting and unusual vocabulary.

Test your knowledge by drawing a line from the word to its definition.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Spore | 1. The process of dead organisms breaking down into simpler parts |
| Mycelium | 2. The stem-like section holding up a mushroom |
| Stalk | 3. Something found in woody plants that makes them hard to break down |
| Cap | 4. A tiny particle used for reproduction |
| Gills | 5. The ruffles found on the underside of some mushrooms |
| Cellulose | 6. The top part of a mushroom |
| Decomposition | 7. The white underground network of a fungus |

Answers: Spore = 4, Mycelium = 7, stalk = 2, cap = 6, gills = 5, cellulose = 3, decomposition = 1

Audubon Community Nature Center
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Wednesday 16

Enchanted Doorways to the Fairy Realm (Adult+)

Session 1: 5:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Session 2: 6:45 – 7:30 p.m.
\$10 Adults;
\$7.50 Nature Center members
\$7.50 Children 9 – 15

Paid reservations required by September 13. Limited enrollment.

The entrances to the other realms can be hidden, bright, subtle, or elaborate. Make a doorway to bridge the space between their world and yours. Directions, examples, and basic materials, including doors, paint, natural materials, and glue are provided. You are encouraged to bring additional decorations or supplies to aid in making your creation.

Special Information: *This workshop is designed for an older audience. Please check the programs on September 19 for younger children.*

Saturday 19

Dragons and Fairies Activity Day

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.*
\$8 Adults; \$6 Nature Center members
\$6 Children 3 – 15; free 2 and under.
See page 4 for more info.

Tuesday 22

Testing for Apple Ripeness Workshop (Adult)

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
\$20 Adults
\$15 Nature Center members
\$50 equipment fee

Paid reservations required by September 20. Limited enrollment.

Whether making sweet cider, hard cider, wine, or preserves, knowing when your apples are actually ripe is essential.

Special Information: *Bring under-ripe fruit from your own trees to test. All equipment for testing is provided and is yours to keep.*

Wednesday 23

Dragon Eggs Make-and-Take (Adult+)

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
\$12 Adults; \$9 Nature Center members
\$9 Children 9 – 15

Paid reservations required by September 20. Limited enrollment.

Truly a treasure of the imagination, a dragon egg is the prize item of a magical collection. You can create your own in this workshop.

Special Information: *These workshops are designed for an older audience. If you have younger children please check the programs on September 19.*

Monday 28

ACNC Virtual Annual Meeting (Adults) Celebration and Annual Business Meeting

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Free for all participants.
Open to all ACNC Members.

Although this event is free, please register online to receive the Zoom meeting invite by email.

Join ACNC as they look back on this incredibly unusual year, celebrate their accomplishments, and discuss upcoming projects. The Annual Meeting is also when Audubon says 'thank you' to exiting Board Members, and helps welcome incoming Board Members. This year, you will be 'meeting' from the comfort of your own homes. Get comfy, pour yourself a glass of wine, and make up some fancy hors d'oeuvres.



Wednesday 30

Fairy Lantern Make-and-Take (Adult+)

Session 1: 5:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Session 2: 6:45 – 7:30 p.m.
\$10 Adults
\$7.50 Nature Center members
\$7.50 Children 9 – 15

Paid reservations required by September 27. Limited enrollment.

An enchanted lantern is just the tool for creating an enchanted evening and discovering the magical creatures of the forests.

Special Information: *These workshops are designed for an older audience. If you have younger children please check the programs on September 19.*



Program Registration

- Online at auduboncnc.org
 - Phone: (716) 569-2345
 - By mail with credit card information or a check payable to ACNC
- Audubon Community Nature Center**
1600 Riverside Road,
Jamestown, NY, 14701

Refund Policy

- If Audubon Community Nature Center cancels the program, participants receive full refunds.
- If a participant cancels **before** the deadline, a refund, with \$5 withheld as a processing fee, will be made.
- If a participant cancels **after** the deadline, no refund will be made, but ACNC still needs to know of your cancellation.

Note: *Programs may be cancelled if there are not enough registered. Register early to ensure the class fills. Some programs have limited enrollment.*

Saturday 3

Roadside Cleanup Volunteer Opportunity (Ages 12+)

8:30 a.m. – noon

Free

Registrations required.

Every piece of trash makes a difference in keeping nature healthy. You can help nature and Audubon by volunteering to collect trash along Route 62..

Special Information: Meet at the Nature Center. If you have your own gloves please bring them. ACNC has some to borrow. Wear closed-toed shoes and dress for the weather. Rain or shine.

Wednesday 7

Fairy House Make-n-Take (Adult+)

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

\$12 Adults; \$9 Nature Center members

\$9 Children 9 – 15

*Paid reservations required by October 4.
Limited enrollment.*

Also happening on September 2.

See September 2 listing on page 5 for more info.

Saturday 10

Little Explorers (Children 3 – 8 with an adult) *The Fungus Among Us*

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

\$8 Adults; \$6 Nature Center members

\$6 Children 3 – 8

Paid reservations required by October 8.

Join Audubon to learn more about what fungi really are, what they need to survive, and how big of a deal these seemingly small organisms can be.

Special Information: Rain or shine, please dress for the weather.

Saturday 17

Fall Birdseed Sale Order Pickup

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Orders are due by Thursday, October 1.

See the included order form for info.



Enchanted Forest (All)

Friday, October 9 and Saturday, October 10

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.*

\$12 Adults

\$9 Nature Center members

\$6 Children 3 – 15

Free 2 and under

**Walks start at 6:00 p.m. and go out every 10 minutes. Each walk lasts about 45 minutes. The last walk starts at 8:00 p.m. (Sunset is approximately 6:45 p.m.) Group rates not available. Paid reservations required. No tickets sold at the door. No refunds. Limited enrollment.*

On this enchanted evening, animals have the ability to speak human language and communicate with visitors. You can follow the luminary-lit Enchanted Trail to meet them after starting at a backyard campfire.

This magical, non-scary event is designed for children and their adults. Talking animals engage your imagination, maybe make you laugh, and teach you something about wildlife in the region.

For an additional \$3, you can also get a Fun Patch, perfect for scouts or others looking for a fun way to learn and experience the event.

Special Information: Rain or shine. Dress for the weather. Halloween costumes welcome! Long pants, long-sleeved shirts, closed-toe shoes, and insect repellent are recommended. ACNC requires a face covering when you cannot maintain physical distance, so please plan to have one available. This event may change to accommodate any changes in COVID-19 compliance or safety recommendations.

Volunteer Hours

174 volunteers (including 27 RSVP) volunteers) logged 2,636.5 hours from January through June 2020.

Cathy Abers-Kimball • Denny Anderson • Linda Anderson • Todd Anderson • Verna Angelo • Thom Armella • Bill Bale • John Bardo • Janice Barrelle • Ashley Bean • Chelsea Beck • Aquila Becker • Mary Beckerink • Sally Beckerink • Heidi Bird • Greta Bollman • Patricia Borowski • Louise Boutwell • Bonnie Bowen • Katherine C Bowley • Pat Brininger • Brenda Brook • Alan Brown • Larry Brown • David Bull • Leah Bullock • David Burlee • Angelique Burns • Linnea Carlson • Ray Carlson • Pierre Chagnon • Alex Chapman • Allison Chitester • Janette Coleson • Nathaniel Colley • Bill Colter • Barb Conklin • Arlene Connelly • Cindy Conner • Jane Conroe • Elaine Conti • Elaine Crossley • Thomas Dawson • Mary Donaldson • Don Dove • Martha Dove • Kimberly Dunnigan • Kate Ebersole • Kyle Eddy • Shonda El Mohandis • Paquette Ellen • Bonnie Engberg • Tom Erlandson • Mel Feather • Jennifer Felice • Lee Fletcher • Sandy Fletcher • Willow Fodor • Janet Forbes • Shirley Forbes • Dean Frentz • Elaine Frentz • Julie Gable • Patricia Gardocki • Dick Gilman • Hannah Grey • McKenzie Guynn • Mary Hackford • Terry Hallock • Don Hanna • Pam Hanna • Andrew Harrington • Sally Hawkinson • Susan Hedberg • Joshua Holsinger • Cali Housler • Diane Howard • John Hyde • Karen Inwood • Richard Johnson • Ronald Johnson • Valerie Johnson • Kelly Joslyn • Courtney Jung • Kyle Keller • Kaitlyn Kennedy • Steve Kimball • Evan Kirchhoff • Tracy Kirchhoff • Robert Klebacha • Elliott Krudys • Jessica LaBadie • Susan Lampo • Margaret Lane • Terry LeBaron • Justin Leid • Penny Lester • Karen Lobe • Judy Long • Terry Lorenc • Ruth Lundin • Greg Lyle • Sydney Maggio • Julianna Main • Mark Mason • Cheryl Mawhinney • Mary Beth Mazzone • William Means • Jay Mengel • Kelli Merchant • Antoinette Meyer • Barry Millspaw • Abrielle Monaghan • Ashley Myers • Julie Nelson • Joseph O'Hara • Sally Patchen • Jennifer Pierce • Deborah Piotrowski • Tim Piotrowski • Deb Pring • Jamie Probst • Freda Pyles • J.R. Pyles • Carole Reeder • Natalie Reinhardt • Blanche Robbins • Jackson Root • Bridgette Rourke • McLain Rupp • Rick Rupprecht • Avery Salvaggio • Carol Samuelson • Rick Sandberg • Robert Schlick • Judy Schultz • Linda Schummer • Don Sharp • Chris Short • Tina Short • Matt Sirianno • Timothy Smeal • Nancy Smith • Tammy Smith • Chip Spiesman • Barb Suckow • Jim Suckow • Austin Swanson • Paul Swanson • Merle Szydlo • Tom Szydlo • Emily Thomas Perlock • Maia Tome • Lucas Torres-Carvella • Patrick Travis • Linda Trostle • Bob VanEvery • Piper VanOrd • Younghui Waite • Sam Walrod • Donald Watts • Don Weber • Joyce Weber • Sharon Weiler • Taylor West • Mary Jane Whaley • Nancy White • Alaina Whittington • Brittany Wilcox • Marc Wilcox • Jill Wiltsie • Ed Yager • Ellen Yager • Sue Yauchzy •

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

Saturday, September 12, 2020

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Free for all current ACNC Volunteers

Non-volunteers: \$8 per person; \$6 Nature Center Members

Reservations required, with payment if applicable, by September 4, 2020. Volunteers, please call the Nature Center at (716) 569-2345 to register. Non-volunteers can call, or register online. Limited enrollment.

Please join ACNC for a long overdue recognition of the many volunteers that help make Audubon a unique part of the community. Celebrate those who reached significant milestones, ranging from 100 to 11,000 hours of service by sharing a lunch together in their honor. Please note hours and recognition is listed for hours completed by December 31, 2019.

6,000+

Thom Armella

4,000+

Terry LeBaron

3,000+

Pat Brininger
Don Weber

1,000+

Bonnie Bowen
Carol Samuelson
Don Sharp
Nancy White

500+

Elaine Crossley
Dean Frentz
Elaine Frentz

250+

Reg Boutwell
Alan Brown
Karen Lobe
Jennifer Pierce
Rick Sandberg
Donald Watts
Bob Williams

100+

Sonna Alm
Wendy Bale
Mary Beckerink
David Bull
Willow Fodor
Marty Grunzweig
Pamela Johnson
Robert Klebacha
Joseph O'Hara
Isabella Pecina
Logan Pecina
Jarod Smith

New! Nature Play Care

Session 1: September 8 – 25,
from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m.
\$336

*10% discount for Nature Center members.
Paid reservations required by September 1, 2020.
Limited enrollment.*

Your child can spend their mornings at Audubon playing outdoors, engaging with the natural world, and learning about the world at Audubon's newest venture, Nature Play Care.



This program was initiated to provide a nature-based alternative to indoor day care or virtual schooling in a COVID-19 world to promote the playing, learning, and exploring that provide the foundations for successful learning. Children will play outdoors in all but the most inclement weather, explore the trails, and learn about the natural world around them. Throughout each session, Nature Educators will provide a host of supplies and activities that are the building blocks for engineering, science, art, physics, and math skills.

The health benefits of playing outdoors are undisputed by a number of researchers and that becomes even more important as everyone struggles to adapt to the restrictions and consequences of COVID-19. In the open space of the outdoors, children participate in a mix of self-chosen and guided activities. Self-chosen activities develop a number of early childhood skills and benchmarks such as fine motor skills, full-body movement, balance, core muscle development, risk assessment, and socialization. Guided mini-lessons help students get ready for classroom settings and the 3-week sessions allow students to learn routines and develop school-readiness skills.

Special Information: *Children must be completely potty-trained and able to take care of their own toilet needs. ACNC provides no food, so please send a snack and water bottles with your children. Audubon requests that children have face coverings with them, but they will not be required outdoors or when students are spaced out.*

Purple Martins

Audubon has been trying to get Purple Martins to nest at Audubon for years. Twenty years ago, those attempts were made with giant, heavy, wooden boxes filled with tiny compartments for the martins. Five years ago, a fresh attempt was made using gourds and houses that could be raised or lowered on poles.

Purple Martins nested in one of the gourds for the first time late last spring. Four of the five eggs hatched and the young were successfully banded on July 7, 2020. For those who have worked long and hard to get Purple Martins to nest at the Nature Center, this has been amazing.

The insect-eating birds are fun to watch and allow people to stand fairly close to the nests. These birds are often very loyal to a nest site. With luck, this pair and more will return to nest at Audubon again next year.



Purple Martin eggs. Photo by Kim Turner.

What's the Buzz?

Visitors may be familiar with the demonstration Honeybee hive in the Nature Center. The glassed-in hive gives viewers an up-close look at the workings of this social and cooperative insect.

Last winter, the bees in the hive died. While the reason is unclear, it could have been lack of food, invasion of another wild bee colony, or cold. In the spring a wild colony moved in to the hive and started storing pollen and laying eggs. The big question was: Would there be a queen bee?

A hive's inhabitants are divided into three types: queen, worker, and drone. Each has a specific role in the community.

Only queen bees can lay fertilized eggs that grow into worker bees (and eventually a new queen). Without a queen, some worker bees will lay eggs, but they will only become drones. Drones are non-working male bees that fertilize the queen. Worker bees (all female) do the majority of the tasks in a hive including building, cleaning, and defending the hive, foraging pollen and nectar, making honey, and tending to the queen and young. Since workers only live for several weeks, replacing them is essential to the life of the colony. So, unless there is a queen to lay fertilized eggs to create worker bees, the colony cannot survive.

After close observation, ACNC confirmed that there is a queen and new eggs! You can recognize a queen bee by her longer abdomen. Often, there is a circle of worker bees around her too. While viewing the multitude of flowers in Audubon's gardens, visitors may notice honeybees hard at work collecting nectar and pollen. They may be taking it back to their new home inside the Nature Center.



Honeybees at Audubon. Photo by Jeff Tome.

Birdseed Sale

Orders for the Fall Birdseed Sale are **due by Thursday, October 1**. Order at auduboncnc.org/shop, use the birdseed sale form and send by mail, or call (716) 569-2345.

Pick up your seed at the Nature Center on Saturday, October 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Conewango Blend, every bird's favorite birdseed, is always available at ACNC. You can also find Conewango Blend at:



- Ashville General Store, *Ashville, NY*
- Chautauqua Book Store, *Chautauqua, NY*
- Howe's True Value, *Warren, PA*
- Lakewood Apothecary, *Lakewood, NY*
- Lighthouse Point Grocery, *Mayville, NY*
- Oneida Lumber, Ace Hardware, *Warren, PA*
- Russell Veterinary Hospital, *Russell, PA*
- Wegmans, *Jamestown, NY*

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Thank you for your dedicated support this year.

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September/October ACNC Newsletter

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Barn Owl. Photo by ACNC