

# Washington Crossing Audubon Society



# The Crossing

*The Crossing* is the newsletter of Washington Crossing Audubon Society, a nonprofit organization and the local chapter of National Audubon Society. Correspondence should be sent to **WCAS, PO Box 112, Pennington, NJ 08534**. Visit us at [www.washingtoncrossingaudubon.org](http://www.washingtoncrossingaudubon.org).

## Spring/Summer 2010

### PROGRAMS/MEETINGS

*Meetings of the Washington Crossing Audubon Society are held on the third Monday of each month from September to May. At 7:30 PM, join us for a refreshment social; at 8:00, our program begins. Programs are held in Stainton Hall on the campus of the Pennington School. The campus is on Delaware Avenue between Route 31 and Main Street in Pennington; enter from Delaware Avenue between the brick lamp posts (across the street from tennis courts), proceed a short distance to an intersection, and turn right into the parking area. Parking is free. The walkway to Stainton Hall is evident at the end of the parking lot.*

### NIPPING INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE BUD: THE CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

A program on Monday, May 17, 2011 at 8:00 pm, presented by Mike Van Clef.

Oriental photinia, Siebold's viburnum, Japanese aralia, Purple loosestrife ... who are these new invaders in our natural areas?

The Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is an early detection & rapid response (ED/RR) network, which uses GIS mapping to track populations of emerging invasive species and eradication efforts. Presenters will discuss program implementation and offer tips on

identifying some of the most threatening emerging invasive species.

CJISST represents New Jersey's first comprehensive effort toward invasive plant management through public-private partnerships. In 2008 the Upper Raritan Watershed Association and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space partnered to create CJISST, which has grown to include over forty partners in eight counties.

Mike Van Clef is Director of Stewardship for Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space.



### **DO NOT**

plant the invasive purple loosestrife as an ornamental!

**Have a HAPPY and SAFE Summer!**

**See you in the Fall!!**

Two Corrections:

- 1) Date for Bedens Brook Trip
- 2) Treasurer

## FIELD TRIPS

*For more information or notification of cancellation of field trips, call Field Trip Chair Lou Beck at (609) 737-0070; if the trip is described as co-sponsored with the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (SB-MWA), advance registration is required. To register for such trips or to get more information on them, call SB-MWA at (609) 737-7592. There is no fee for most of our field trips; exceptions are noted in the trip description.*

### **BULL'S ISLAND STATE PARK**

A field trip at 8:30 AM on Saturday, May 22, led by Lou Beck.

There are always interesting birds, especially warblers, nesting in the trees along the Delaware River and cliff swallows under the bridge. Join us and see what's there this year.

Directions: North on Route 29 through Stockton to park entrance on left 3.5 miles north of town. Turn left at sign for park and cross over bridge to parking lot straight ahead. There is a shaded picnic grove here, so bring a lunch for after our walk. Contact Lou Beck (609) 737-0070 if additional information is needed.

### **TED STILES PRESERVE AT BALDPATE MOUNTAIN**

A field trip at 9:00 AM on Sunday, May 23, led by Pat Sziber and Lou Beck.

We plan to visit this Mercer County Park located north of the New Jersey Washington Crossing State Park.

Directions: From Pennington - Washington Crossing Road (Route 546) go past Washington Crossing State Park to the intersection with Route 29. Turn right and go two miles to Fiddler's Creek Road. Turn right and go 0.2 miles to a parking area on the left. You can also take Church Road from Bear Tavern Road (Route 579). Follow Church Road and make your first right onto Fiddler's Creek Road. Follow Fiddler's Creek Road 1.4 miles and watch for the parking area on your right hand side. Contact Pat Sziber at (609) 737-1189 for more information.

## DELAWARE WATER GAP, NORTH JERSEY

A field trip for warblers to an area around Stokes State Forest on Saturday, May 29, led by Charles Brine, Sharyn Magee and Rick Van Kirk. We plan to leave the Princeton area at 7:00 AM.

This trip involves driving to numerous stops after we reach the Stokes State Forest area, so we would like to car pool to minimize the number of cars. The trip route is straight up Route 206 from Princeton about 60 miles to a meeting place/rest stop at Stokes Forest Office about one mile north of Culvers Lake. Please register with Lou Beck (609) 737-0070 prior to the trip.

### **MERCER COUNTY PARK NORTHWEST**

A field trip at 8:00 AM on Saturday, June 5, led by Lou Beck.

This new park was known for years as the AT&T Overseas Transmission Station, or more familiarly as "The Pole Farm". It is adjacent to Rosedale Park which is now part of the new Northwest Park. Come with us as we walk the paths and compare the flora and fauna to that of Rosedale.

Directions: From the traffic light at Manors Corner shopping center on Pennington-Lawrenceville Road take Keefe Road toward Princeton for 1.1 miles to the bend where it meets Cold Soil Road. At that bend, the entrance is on the left through a chain link gate. There is a white barn on the left inside the gate. Go straight on the macadam road to the parking area. If starting in Princeton take Cold Soil Road, go 1.1 miles past Blackwell Road to bend, look for entrance on right.

### **GREAT WATERSHED STREAM EXPLORATION – BEDENS BROOK IN OPOSSUM ROAD WOODS**

A field trip on Saturday, ~~June 6~~, from 10 AM-12 PM; for families and adults.

Correction: May 22

Join this ongoing series focusing on the waterways that drain our watershed and join our communities. On this day we will visit the Bedens Brook in Opossum Road Woods in Montgomery Township. Explore the web of life that connects the aquatic environment of the stream and the surrounding terrestrial habitat using a variety of tools including seines and nets. Meet a variety of creatures including

water pennies, caddisflies, tadpoles, pumpkinseeds, and more while learning about our role in the health of streams. Bring old sneakers for wading, dry shoes to change into, and a sense of wonder. *This program is co-sponsored by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. Please pre-register for this free program by calling (609) 737-7592 – directions will be provided.*

### **DRAGONFLIES**

A field trip from 10:00 – 12:00 noon on Saturday, June 12, led by Herb Lord.

Meet at Spring Lake - Roebling Park (end of Sewell Ave., Hamilton). Contact / information, 732-821-8310.

Cosponsored by with Friends for the Marsh, Mercer County Parks, and D & R Greenway Land Trust.

### **ASSUNPINK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**

A field trip at 8:00 AM on Saturday, June 26, led by Lou Beck and Brad Merritt.

We will be looking for resident birds such as blue grosbeaks, orchard orioles, and cedar waxwings. We also will be looking for butterflies.

Directions: East on I-195 to exit 11, Imlaystown. North on Imlaystown Road 2.6 miles to parking area at Lake Assunpink. Contact Lou Beck (609) 737-0070 if additional information is needed.

### **BUTTERFLY HOUSE WEEKLY TOURS**

Mondays June 21 through August 16, 10-11 AM; Families and Adults; FREE

Join one of the SB-MWA staff naturalists for an insider's view of what's happening in the Kate Gorrie Butterfly House. Learn about host plants for butterfly larva, mating strategies for different butterflies, caterpillar predators and parasites, native New Jersey butterfly lifecycles and much more. *This program is co-sponsored by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. Please pre-register for this free program by calling (609) 737-7592 – directions will be provided.*

## **MERCER COUNTY BUTTERFLY COUNT**

The Mercer Butterfly Count, sponsored by WCAS, will be held on July 11. Persons interested in participating in the count should contact Frank Bader at [frank.bader@comcast.net](mailto:frank.bader@comcast.net) or 609-530-1229. Please give him some indication of your experience and skill in identifying butterflies, including skippers (the LBJ's



of the butterfly world) so he can match beginners and novices with more experienced butterflyers.

## **CONSERVATION**

### **IT'S BABY ANIMAL SEASON!**

When I heard a scratching sound coming from the doorway at my office, I went to investigate and found a young squirrel climbing on the screen door. I had time to grab my camera while it enjoyed its gymnastics and it showed no fear when I got close. The next time I saw the baby, its mom was carrying it to a safer location by the scruff of the neck.

Animal moms rarely abandon their young but it can appear that they do. This is the time of year when it is not unusual to come across baby animals with no parent in sight. In reality, they attempt to hide their young while they forage or they may move away from the nest to draw a perceived danger away from it. According to a recent article by the Mercer County Wildlife Center, which treats more than 2,100 injured or ill animals a year, they can assist residents in determining whether an animal needs help and, if so, how to handle and transport the animal safely to an appropriate facility.

If you find a baby bird on the ground that is not fully feathered and, if the nest is within reach, you should return it to its nest. Contrary to lore, adult birds do not reject young that have been handled. Fledglings that can only flutter can be put up on a shrub branch or hidden in ground cover. A downed nest can be put in a berry box and tied to a tree branch.

The Wildlife Center recommends that you call them at (609) 883-6606 if you find an animal in distress, whether bird, mammal, reptile or amphibian. They

note that the animal may not actually need assistance and removing it from its environment may cause more harm than good. If the animal does need help, do not attempt to feed it or offer water but simply keep it warm and quiet until you get it to its destination. A carton or shoebox containing an old towel or t-shirt, or paper towels and tissues, can be used for transporting the animal.

The Mercer County Wildlife Center is located on Rt. 29 in Titusville, just south of Lambertville. Hours during this busy season are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, check the following links:  
[www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/bornwild.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/bornwild.htm)  
[www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/rehablst.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/rehablst.htm)  
[www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/rehab\\_info.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/rehab_info.htm)

*Pat Sziber*

### **REDUCE CHANCE OF NUISANCE ENCOUNTERS WITH BEARS**

DEP Commissioner Bob Martin recently posted the following recommendations regarding steps residents can take to reduce the risk of bad encounters with bears in populated areas:

With black bears now entering their most active period of the year as they search for food and mates, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin today urged residents to follow some simple precautions to reduce the risk of bad encounters with bruins.

"A black bear seen in a residential area should not be considered a problem, as long as it is behaving normally and not posing a threat," Commissioner Martin said. "However, bears that learn to associate food with people can become habituated to easy sources of food and become a nuisance as they forage for more. So the best thing to do is to not give bears the opportunity to equate you or your property with food.

"Naturally you should never feed a bear," Commissioner Martin said. "But the most common problem is bears feeding on garbage. Properly securing your garbage is one of the best ways to prevent bears from looking at your property as a food source."

Feeding a bear is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 per offense.

The proposed New Jersey Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy developed by the state's Fish and Game Council and approved by Commissioner Martin emphasizes managing black bears through research and monitoring, non-lethal and lethal control of problem bears, public education on co-existing with bears, law enforcement to reduce conflicts between bears and people, and a controlled hunt.

Commissioner Martin offers the following tips to avoid conflicts with bears:

- Use certified bear-resistant garbage containers if possible. Otherwise, store all garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids and place them along the inside walls of your garage, or in the basement, a sturdy shed or other secure area.
- Wash garbage containers frequently with a disinfectant solution to remove odors. Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.
- Avoid feeding birds when bears are active. If you choose to feed birds, do so during daylight hours only and bring feeders indoors at night. Suspend birdfeeders from a free-hanging wire, making sure they are at least 10 feet off the ground. Clean up spilled seeds and shells daily.
- Immediately remove all uneaten food and food bowls used by pets fed outdoors.
- Clean outdoor grills and utensils to remove food and grease residue to minimize odors. Store grills securely.
- Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.
- Remove fruit or nuts that fall from trees in your yard.
- Properly installed electric fencing is an effective way of protecting crops, beehives and livestock.
- If you encounter a bear remain calm and do not run. Make sure the bear has an escape route. Avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak with a low, assertive voice.
- Black bear attacks are extremely rare. Should a black bear attack, fight back. Do not play dead.

Report bear damage, nuisance behavior or aggressive bears to the Wildlife Control Unit of the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife at (908) 735-8793.

During evenings and weekends, residents should call their local police department or the DEP Hotline at (877) WARN-DEP.

To learn more about New Jersey's black bears and ways to avoid problems with them, visit <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/bearinfo.htm>.

## HELP WILDLIFE IMPACTED BY THE BP OIL

### SPILL

The catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico caused by the April 20, 2010 explosion of an offshore oil rig has put local economies, wildlife and the Gulf's delicate coastal ecosystem at risk. As of May 7, the oil slick from the BP gusher in the Gulf was beginning to reach critical bird breeding habitat on shore. Many other animals are being affected as well. This could be one of the **worst environmental disasters in our nation's history**. For the latest information on impacts to wildlife and rescue efforts and how YOU can help, go to the National Wildlife Federation website at:

[www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Wildlife-Conservation/Threats-to-Wildlife/Oil-Spill.aspx](http://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Wildlife-Conservation/Threats-to-Wildlife/Oil-Spill.aspx).

Pat

## GO NATIVE WITH YOUR GARDEN

Are these warmer days making you think about adding some new plants to your landscaping? Are you having a hard time choosing among the tempting offerings in the catalogs you have spread before you? Do you wince when you scan through the pages and see that many nurseries are still offering invasive non-native plants such as burning bush, Japanese barberry and autumn olive—and many more—often with an icon indicating that they are “deer resistant?” Local nurseries often are no better.

With a bit of research and due diligence, it is possible to find sources of plants native to our own region, some of which are being overwhelmed in their wild habitat by invasive plants. The caveat is that native plants tend to be more attractive to deer than non-native ones and you may have to invest in deer protection strategies, such as fencing, netting and sprays or inter-planting with less tasty plants. But it's worth the effort and you will be doing a good deed by helping to halt the loss of New Jersey's

biodiversity. And our native trees and shrubs are better providers of nutritional sustenance for birds than alien ones.

Some regional sources of native plants are:

Toadshade Wildflower Farm, Frenchtown, NJ  
<http://www.toadshade.com> (includes planting guide for our area)

Earth First Native Plant Nursery and Gifts, Egg Harbor Twp., NJ  
<http://earthfirstnatives.com>  
(list of bird and butterfly attracters)

Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve  
<http://www.bhwp.org>  
(mail order seeds; spring and fall plant sales)  
Native plant sale days  
(watch websites for sale days):

D&R Greenway Land Trust  
<http://www.drgreenway.org>

Delaware Riverkeeper Network  
<http://www.delawariverkeeper.org>

For information on native plants:

<http://plantnative.org/index/htm>  
(all-round resource for info specific to north and south NJ)

<http://www.npsnj.org>  
(lists of native plants by County and deer-resistant species)

Information on invasive plants to avoid:

<http://www.invasive.org/eastern/>  
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/factmain.htm>



# WCAS NEWS

## NJ BIRDS, WINTER 2009 DECEMBER 2009-FEBRUARY 2010

Perhaps enticed by mild temperatures and open conditions with lots of wild fruits and seeds, 50 species inhabited the vicinity of the Featherbed Lane Bird Banding and Research Station. They were not using the feeders heavily until the big snow of Dec 20. The surprise was two Red-headed Woodpeckers on the Dec 27 Christmas Count, an adult and an immature, photographed on that day and on New Year's Day. A Merlin buzzed two feeders on Jan 9. More big snows came on Feb 9-10, 15-16. The only 'winter finches' this year were 2 pair + 1 Purple Finches. Attrition due to harsh storms was evident among the Carolina Wrens and House Finches. No owls were seen or heard.

Highlights are as follows, (high numbers) seen throughout unless indicated by dates:

- Snow Geese (144) flyover Jan 3, (400 est.) Jan 25.
- Black Vulture over Dec 27, (2) Feb 13
- Turkey Vultures (pr)
- Red-shouldered Hawk Feb 13
- Red-tailed Hawk (2)
- Cooper's Hawk Dec 8 & 15, Jan 5
- Wild Turkey (15-24) Dec 17 and on hunter's motion activated camera in Jan
- Mourning Dove (only 8)
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Dec 5 & 18, Jan 1
- Downy (4), Hairy (2), Red-bellied (6), Pileated (pr)
- Woodpeckers
- Common Flicker (Yellow-shafted) (4)
- Red-headed Woodpecker (2) Dec 27, Jan 1 & 9
- Chickadees, Black-capped (5), Carolina (6), Hybrid (6)
- Tufted Titmouse (16)
- White-breasted Nuthatch (6)
- Carolina Wren (4, down from 10 last winter)
- Golden-crowned Kinglet (1) Dec 31
- N. Mockingbird (1)
- E. Bluebird (11) Dec 31, 3-6 thereafter
- Hermit Thrush
- Robin, northern subspecies (25+)
- Cedar Waxwing (25) Dec 15
- European Starling (10)
- Yellow-rumped (Myrtle)Warbler Feb 14
- Northern Cardinal (18)
- Eastern Towhee (2)
- Am. Tree Sparrow (6)

- Field Sparrow (5) Jan 16, Feb 15
- Chipping Sparrow (2) Dec 30 & 31, Jan 1 & 2, Feb 12
- Fox Sparrow (2) Dec 25
- Song Sparrow (9)
- White-throated Sparrow (118)
- Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco (65)
- Am. Goldfinch (5)
- House Finch (only 3)
- Purple Finch (5)
- Red-winged Blackbird (3) Feb 14
- Common Grackle (200+) Feb 5, (10) Feb 13

Hannah Suthers hsuthers@princeton.edu

### PREFER TO RECEIVE *The Crossing* VIA EMAIL?

Help conserve resources and get the newsletter sooner by sending an email message to [membership@washingtongcrossingaudubon.org](mailto:membership@washingtongcrossingaudubon.org) to let us know that you want to be "greener" receiving the newsletter electronically. Please include your NAS ID number, name and address including the zip code as it appears on the mailing label attached to this newsletter in your email message. Thanks.

### WCAS OFFICERS AND BOARD

Each year Washington Crossing Audubon Society holds elections for Officers and Board Members at the May general meeting. The 2010/2011 O&B is as follows:

President	Joseph Pylka
Vice President	MaryMargaret Halsey
Secretary	Barbara T. Ross
Treasurer	<del>Mike Kaplan</del> Tom Lederer
Membership Chair	Elena Williams
Crossing Newsletter Editors	Herb Lord & Jeffrey Hall
Conservation Chair	Pat Sziber
Field Trip Chair	Lou Beck
Programs Chair	Jeffrey Hall
Education Chair	Joseph Schmeltz
Garden State Audubon Council Representatives	Joe Pylka & Patricia Sziber
Birdathon Chair	Brad Merritt
Publicity	Herb Lord
Development	Mark R. Witmer
Director at Large	Frank Bader
Director at Large	Franta Broulik
Director at Large	Jeffrey Hall
Director at Large	Mark Harpel
Director at Large	Sharyn Magee
Director at Large	Hannah Suthers
Webmaster	Tom Cosmas

# Audubon Membership Form *Now you have choices!*

**Chapter only membership:** \$10 \_\_ (basic) \$20 \_\_ (supporting) *Enclose check payable to WCAS.*

You get Washington Crossing Audubon Society's newsletter, *The Crossing*, plus programs, field trips, and the opportunity to make a difference on the local level. WCAS gets to use the full amount.

**National Audubon Society membership:** \$20 \_\_ (new members) \$35 \_\_ (renewals)

*Enclose check payable to National Audubon Society or fill out credit card information below.*

You get full chapter membership, plus *Audubon* magazine, and the opportunity to support Audubon's work on national and international levels. WCAS gets back a share of the amount.

**Additional tax deductible donation for WCAS:** \$ \_\_\_\_ *Enclose check payable to WCAS.*

This and a NAS membership result in highest benefits for everyone. Please be generous.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## NAS Membership Only

Credit card # \_\_\_\_\_

Visa \_\_\_\_\_ or MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

May we call on you to volunteer? Yes \_\_ No \_\_ Try me \_\_

Mail to: Membership Chair, WCAS, PO Box 112, Pennington, NJ 08534

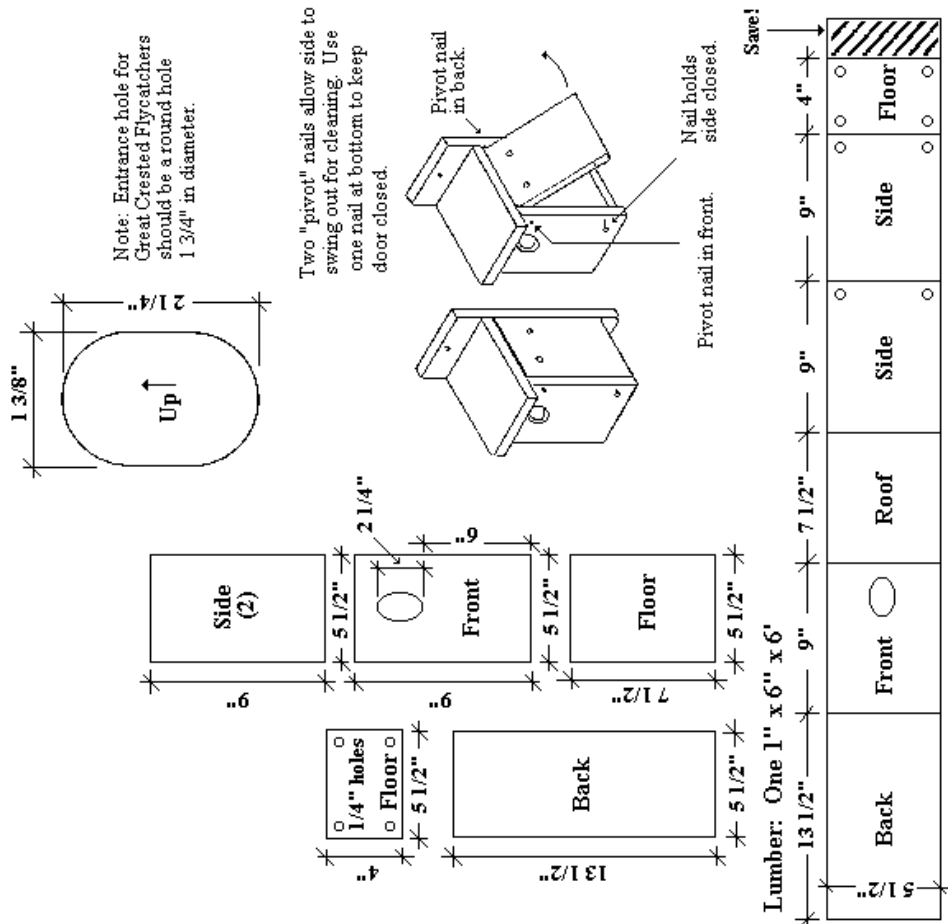
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### BIRD HOUSE PLAN

(One of a series. See web site for more.)

#### Tree Swallow and Eastern Bluebird

Eastern bluebirds nest throughout North Dakota. The best habitat consists of areas comprised of short grasses with nearby fence posts, high line wires, or sparse trees where birds can perch. Bluebirds normally will not nest within city limits or farmsteads where competition from house sparrows is intense. For best results, nest boxes should be placed in pairs about 10-25 feet apart and 100-200 yards between pairs. They should be put 4-6 feet above the ground on steel posts or wood posts with predator guards. The entrance hole should face in a general northeast direction to prevent sun from shining in and over-heating the box.



## 2010 BIRDATHON APPEAL

The WCAS' Birdathon funds programs that make a difference: Audubon Adventures for fourth grade classrooms, educational programs open to the public, Hannah Suthers' bird banding/research, and field trips for inner city children. Let your dollars make a difference by giving to Birdathon and supporting WCAS. Our programs contribute to the quality of life in our community and help to preserve and protect wildlife and their habitat. Join the fun! Please help by making a pledge today. Thank you.

### WASHINGTON CROSSING AUDUBON BIRDATHON 2010 PLEDGE FORM - Please submit funds by June 15.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

I am sponsoring (name of birder/solicitor): \_\_\_\_\_

- I (we) pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per species observed on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> (In 2008: 169 species)
- Enclosed is my fixed contribution of \$25\_\_ \$35\_\_ \$50\_\_ \$100\_\_ Other \$\_\_\_\_\_
- My employer matches gifts: matching gift form enclosed \_\_\_\_ (check if applicable)
- I want to become a member of the National Audubon Society. Enclosed is my separate check, payable to National Audubon Society, for \$20 (special introductory rate).
- Local WCAS membership is also available at \$10\_\_(Basic)\$20\_\_(Supporting) with check payable to WCAS

Please make Birdathon checks payable to **Washington Crossing Audubon Society** and send to:

**WCAS, P.O. Box 112, Pennington, NJ 08534-0112**

Your donation is tax-deductible. EVERY DOLLAR YOU GIVE WILL GO TOWARD AUDUBON'S WORK.  
THANK YOU, VERY MUCH.

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