

Newsletter IRLC *Indian River Lakes Conservancy*

SPRING/SUMMER 2005



The goal of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy is to preserve the natural character of the area, with a focus on protecting clean water, fish and wildlife, and the scenic vistas along the shores of the lakes and the Indian River and to educate ourselves and the community about the natural habitat in which we live.

Formed in 1998 to conserve critical lands in the Indian River Lakes Area of Northern New York, the IRLC is a non-profit land trust with 501(c) (3) tax exempt status operating in a manner consistent with the published standards of "Land Trust Alliance", a national organization.

CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Exceptional generosity and enthusiasm have highlighted Indian River Lakes Conservancy's first seven years. We, all the members, volunteers and land donors, who are the Conservancy, have preserved 1,045 essential acres. The nearly 600 acres of conserved wetlands are a nursery to fish, amphibians and birds while filtering and cleansing the water that cycles through to our lakes and wells. The conserved upland buffers around those wetlands and the preserved shoreline help insure that the clean water and inspirational beauty we enjoy will be there for future generations.

This year we are facing new challenges. The Congressional Committee on taxation has proposed changes to the tax code that will reduce deductions for certain types of conservation donations. Stricter limits would be put on deductions for conservation easements and outright donations of land. If you have donated land or are thinking of preserving land through gift or conservation easement in the future, if you have enjoyed conservation lands anywhere or you think setting aside small pieces of our most critical lands is prudent, write your congressional representative. Information is available at the Land Trust Alliance website, www.LTA.org. Click on "Congressional Action Center".

GRANTS

The Conservancy has been awarded a \$2,400.00 grant from the NYS Conservation Partnership Program. The 1 to 1 matching funds required for this grant have been pledged by the Conservancy's Board of Directors. This grant will be used to develop a strategic plan for the Conservancy that will address conservation priorities, human resources, financial resource development, stewardship and partnership opportunities. This grant is available thanks to the generous support and commitment of New York State, The Land

Trust Alliance and the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation. The NYS Conservation Partnership Program grants are funded by the State to strengthen land trusts and accelerate land conservation in New York.

MEMBERSHIPS

We welcome all our new members and thank you, along with our returning members, for sending in your 2005 membership donations. If you have not sent in your renewal, or you wish to join, please complete the form attached to this newsletter and mail it with your check in the enclosed envelope. Your support is your commitment to preserve, protect and improve the community that you live in.

HUNTING PROGRAM

The hunting program on Grand Lake Reserve that was initiated in the Fall of 2003 has been a great partnership between the Conservancy and the hunter/volunteers. Each participant volunteers 16 hours in maintenance at the Reserve in return for deer hunting privileges for the up coming season. This permitted program has a waiting list for new members.

To be added to the list, please contact Steve McDonald or any board member.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The scholarship winners for this year are still in the selection process. These scholarships, awarded each year to a graduating student from JCC and to a high school senior from our lakes region, have been enthusiastically received by students continuing their studies in the field of environmental science. Any member, or a child or grandchild of a member, is eligible to apply for this scholarship. Please consider a gift to this fund to help us to continue our effort to help deserving students.

EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, July 23 at 1:00 at Grand Lake Reserve. Hike the Butterfield Lake Trail immediately following.

WINE & CHEESE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, July 16 at 4:00. Hosted by Marge & Sandy Hillback on Butterfield Lake, this has been a very popular event. Weather permitting, pontoon rides will be offered along the 2 mile shoreline of Grand Lake Reserve. For a donation of \$30.00 per couple or \$20.00 per person you will enjoy wines and cheeses selected from around the world.

For reservations call 482-2446 or any IRLC board member.

PADDLE & OAR OUTINGS

Sunday, June 26 at 1:00 PM at Payne Lake. Meet at public put-in on Oxbow Rd. (Rt. 22) between Theresa and Oxbow, on left just a couple of miles before Oxbow.

Sunday, July 24 at 1:00 PM at Grass Lake. Meet at Millsite Lake public put-in on Cottage Hill Road. Caravan from there.

Sunday, August 21 at 1:00 PM at Clear Lake. Meet at Simpson Rd near the intersection of Rt. 37. Caravan from there.

SPRING & SUMMER BIRDS OF THE INDIAN RIVER LAKES

By Gerry Smith

As I write this article in early April the ice is beginning to leave the lakes. Soon northbound waterfowl and water birds will be landing, feeding and resting on their way to northern breeding grounds. The presence of conspicuous species such as loons and waterfowl is an obvious sign of spring migration to anyone visiting the open water and wetlands of our region during April and May. The return of groups of Turkey Vulture and the first Osprey in late March and early April are other easily observed signs of the season. In the brushy and wooded habitats of our region other less easily detected species including many of our summer songbirds are headed north. For those who enjoy birds the months of April through mid-

July should be seven months long so that we might keep up with all the frantic activity of the avian world

Spring migration through the Indian River Lakes area is subtler than along the Lake Ontario shore. With the exception of waterfowl and other large conspicuous species one has to look for groups of migrants spread across the landscape. By visiting a variety of natural communities from wetlands to woodlands a great variety of birds can be found in the region. This is particularly true after mid-April when migrants from the southern states and tropics begin to appear. In wetlands waterfowl and rails that will nest have arrived although they are tough to locate since rails may not start calling until May. A close eye to the sky will detect hawks of several species drifting northward and waterfowl flocks passing through. The sharp-eyed observer may see common Loons as singles, pairs and small groups overhead, particularly during the last two weeks of April. The motto of birders in spring is "look up often and listen constantly".

May is a month for birding unlike any other in the year. Large numbers of migrants are pouring north passing through and setting up breeding territories. The diverse habitats of the Indian River Lakes region attract many species of migrants from the American tropics both as transients and breeders. Careful attention to brushy edges in early May will detect groups of White-crowned Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow. Most of these handsome sparrows are headed to breed in the Canadian north woods but some Whitethroats spend the summer with us. One of the greatest treats in the birding world

is the onslaught of 25 plus species of North American wood warblers that appear in northeastern North America annually. Because of its diverse habitats and northern location the Indian River Lakes Region enjoys visits from most of these species. While these birds are easiest to locate by song the sharp-eyed and patient observer can see all but the most secretive species just by quietly observing in a variety of habitats.

During the first three weeks of May migrant warblers, sparrows and many other land birds concentrate in areas where food is most available. Areas where small insects abound, such as brushy wetland edges can be particularly productive. This is true if cold rainy weather forces species that usually feed in the treetops to seek sustenance close to the ground. Under such conditions a wide variety of insectivorous land birds that are usually hard to see may be literally feeding at your feet. Birding on days with cool temperatures and light rain in May can be wonderful. On some days the lucky birder can see often hard to find and spectacularly plumaged migrants such as Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers with great ease.

By late-May to early-June spring migration is coming to conclusion as the last Blackpoll Warblers and several species of flycatchers head north. The varied habitats of our region ring with bird song as local breeding birds announce their territories. In eastern North America mid-May through the third week of June is the loudest time in our woodlands. Twenty plus species of wood

warblers, 5 species of thrushes, 7 species of flycatchers and many other breeders spend their summers with us. The breeding bird diversity of the Indian River Lakes region includes many species of concern within New York State. Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Golden-winged Warbler, Whip-poor-Will and American Bittern are but a few of these species. It's clear that our region harbors important populations of these birds. Other less rare species of land birds spend the summer raising their broods here. Species such as the Eastern Bluebird, Black-throated Green Warbler, Wood Thrush, Least Flycatcher and Blackburnian Warbler call the lakes home for a few months. Many of these birds are migrants to the tropics and are only briefly on loan to us in North America. Research indicates that many adult Least Flycatchers that arrived in Mid-May are already southbound by mid-July. Thus by the time many folks are setting up housekeeping at the cottage some of our birds are closing their housekeeping for the year.

By late June bird song is declining in many species under the pressures of feeding growing young. As young develop rapidly using the long days and abundant food of our northern forests avian summer moves rapidly onward. By early to mid-July breeding Chestnut-sided Warbler and Gray Catbird are seen busily feeding young. The presence of recently fledged weakly flying young confirms local breeding for many species. As late-July arrives the transition from summer to fall for our birds occur rapidly. Song

declines rapidly and familiar breeders such as the Yellow Warblers of our yards disappear as they slip southward. Another migration has begun and the avian year will again come full circle when the first Red-winged Blackbirds return to the lakes the following March.

ARE YOU STILL BURNING GARBAGE?

By burning your garbage, you are actually creating the same harmful chemical contained in Agent Orange. Dioxin is one of humankind's most toxic chemicals. Dioxin contamination lingers for years. It accumulates in our fat cells, where it builds up to toxic levels, contributing to a long list of health problems. This risk is particularly high for children. Birth defects, impaired learning abilities, autism and increased infant mortality rates have all been linked to dioxins. Help keep toxins out of our environment. Please stop burning your trash and start disposing of it safely.

IRLC CONTACTS

Shirley Carpenter, Executive Director

315-482-5250-summer
315-686-9889-winter

Ed Robertson, President

315-482-3235-summer
386-649-4876-winter

Board of Directors:
Elliott Hillback, V.P.
Steve McDonald, Sec/Treas
Mark Scarlett
Bob Wakefield

INDIAN RIVER LAKES CONSERVANCY
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2005

Name: _____ **E-Mail** _____

Permanent Mailing

Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

Seasonal Mailing

Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

_____ **Renewal** _____ **New Member**
Circle One Membership [\$20.00]

Total Check Enclosed \$ _____
Supporter [\$35.00]

Conservator [\$50.00]

Protector [\$100.00]

Benefactor [\$250.00]

Eagle [\$1,000.00 and above]

\$ _____ **Scholarship Fund** **\$** _____ **Endowment Fund** **\$** _____ **Stewardship Fund** **\$** _____ **Additional Donation**

Make checks payable to: **Indian River Lakes Conservancy** and mail with this form to: **P.O. Box 27, Redwood, NY 13679.**
Thank You.

Know someone who might be interested in joining? Please give us their name and address

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Indian River Lakes Conservancy

P.O. Box 27

Redwood, New York 13679

Return Service Requested

