

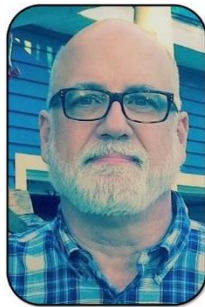


Quarterly Newsletter of the Buffalo Audubon Society

## President's Message

*From Jeff Beich*

Once again, we have a time of transition at Buffalo Audubon. Melissa Fratello, our Executive Director (ED), has accepted a job in Tucson, Arizona and will be leaving at the end of December. Melissa has a long history with our organization, having served on the Board of Directors for 8 years and Executive Director for close to two years. She has been very active in establishing and strengthening linkages with local environmental/community organizations and with National Audubon. Perhaps most importantly, she helped guide the Board through our recent strategic planning process.



Recruitment of a new ED is the Board's highest priority. We have established a search committee and have engaged a professional recruiter to find a new ED. The ED position is a challenging one requiring a mix of administrative and development (aka, fundraising) skills, combined with a passion for birds and the environment. Our goal is to find a candidate with the right mix of skills and a vision for the future of the organization. Given Buffalo Audubon's long history, our linkages with the community and our assets, such as Beaver Meadow and our preserves, we are in a good position to attract excellent candidates for the job.

The Board is committed to implementation of the new strategic plan and this will be a key challenge for the new ED. But we also recognize that the new candidate will bring a fresh perspective and new ideas to the organization. A big change, such as this, brings uncertainty, but also provides opportunities!

Until our new ED comes on board, Lauren Makeyenko, our longtime Director of Education, will serve as our interim ED. We appreciate her willingness to “step up to the plate.”

I would like to thank Melissa for her many years of service to the organization. While we will miss her, we wish her much success in her new endeavor.

Jeff Beich

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## Director's Message

*From Melissa Fratello*

Greetings Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I write my last outlook message as Director of Buffalo Audubon. For many years, I have dreamed of a life out west in the mountains, and when the opportunity came to take a role in Tucson, Arizona, I knew this was my chance. While I am excited for this new chapter, it is undoubtedly bittersweet.

As I was packing up my things at home in preparation for the move, I came upon a board packet from 2011, and realized just how much a part of my life Audubon has been, how deeply I care about its future in conservation, and how much the birds are depending on us to advocate for them in this time of crisis. I am confident in the board of directors to find the right person to lead Buffalo Audubon forward in executing our newly adopted strategic plan, and to further define our role in the region's conservation landscape.

In the meantime, you are in such capable hands with Lauren Makeyenko! I'd like to thank you for years of experiences – learning, connecting with champions for the birds, and allowing me the opportunity to help craft a roadmap for Buffalo Audubon's future. It has been an honor.

For the Birds,  
Melissa Fratello



# A NATURALIST VIEW

## A New Resolve

*From Mark Carra*

What's the difference between walking in the woods on December 31<sup>st</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>? We as humans tend to look at 12 am on New Year's Day as the turning of another year and a time of new beginnings. This perspective is so completely centered on humans that we're convinced that our disregard for good and responsible behavior in the past is somehow replaced with this promise of a new year and therefore a fresh start. This gives each of us hope for a better tomorrow, but somehow forgiving our past failures doesn't seem to weigh too heavily on our conscience. Such thinking is good for the human psyche but bad for the environment. There are too many of us making mistakes daily to simply ignore our own personal ignorance of the workings of nature causing us to throw our hands in the air on New Year's Day and attempt to start over. Don't get me wrong, change for the better is welcome anytime, but shouldn't we each try a little harder to change some of our bad habits and learn to do new tricks without regrets the following January 1<sup>st</sup>?

Every living creature that inhabits our home planet is functioning on a day to day, if not, a minute to minute basis with each choice made resulting in mostly life or death decisions. If we've done nothing else, we've pretty much eliminated most of the risks that would have shaped our decision-making thought patterns of the past.

The hunger that causes a rodent to risk its life every time it ventures out into the open at night dictates this risky behavior and sometimes allows an owl to pinpoint the activity and satisfy its own need for food.



Depending on the size and type of the hungry owl that's hunting said rodent, this mere act of survival risks predation by a larger and more powerful owl. A python in a tropical rainforest will ascend a tree with the anticipation of a meal climbing into its branches. The snake can minimize the risk to its life by using the adaptations it possesses to determine if it's worth slithering out toward the end of the limb to attack its prey or not. Is it a guarantee that the branch will support its weight? No! So it must choose in an instant, and in doing so reap the benefits of its actions or suffer the consequences of that decision. The extremely wary nature of most birds has given them a leg up in the survival game, but every time one of us decides to take the easy route of pesticide or herbicide use we choose, whether conscious or not, to eliminate a bird's adaptive advantage and inflict unavoidable harm through toxic exposure.

Many of the choices we make today are firmly rooted in the historically industrialized society we have chosen to live in, but so much harm has come to the creatures inhabiting the ecosystem we ourselves depend on for health and survival that we have severed the critically necessary connection we share with all living things.

We need to truly take responsibility for our personal actions. The human race is affecting the processes that keep our home in balance so if each of us searches for an alternate avenue that allows a person to tread a bit lighter on the planet we will be able to turn a positive corner toward a more sustainable future. Let's not waste this opportunity by resisting our normal routine after New Year's Day to fall back into to same old same old and push things off until later. Instead let us resolve to usher in the new beginning we so desperately need for the good of all the earthly beings we share our world with and embrace a new beginning we can all live with and benefit from.

*Mark Carra*

**Buffalo Audubon Donations and Memberships can be made online at**  
[www.buffaloaudubon.org](http://www.buffaloaudubon.org)

## Get Involved with New York State's Third Breeding Bird Atlas

From Tom Kerr

Between 2020 and 2024, birders from all over New York State will be helping to create New York State's Third Breeding Bird Atlas. The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas provides New York State agencies and conservation organizations with a definitive resource for planning efforts and conservation strategies.



New York's First Breeding Bird Atlas was produced in 1988, and the Second Breeding Bird Atlas was produced in 2008. 248 Species of birds were recorded in the Second Atlas, with a few changes in populations recorded between the two editions. Black Vultures and Red-bellied Woodpeckers have expanded their range north into New York, and Merlins have expanded their range south from Canada into New York. Loggerhead Shrike have lost their breeding habitat in New York, and can no longer be found nesting in our State. Breeding Bird Atlases are important in showing these changes over time, as they are more regulated and consistent than Christmas Bird Counts and other community science projects.

The compilation of New York State's Third Breeding Atlas will take place from 2020 to 2024. The goals of the Third Atlas are to provide an update on the distribution of New York breeding birds, investigate the habitat relationships of birds, and to engage the public in studying bird populations.

Birders of all skill level are encouraged to participate in building this atlas. By participating in this 5-year survey of New York's bird populations, you will get a chance to improve your birding skills, visit places you haven't birdwatched in before, and learn more about bird behavior.



To participate in the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas, all you need is your binoculars and an eBird account. The Volunteer Handbook for the Breeding Bird Atlas can be found online, and you can submit your checklists to the Breeding Bird Atlas by heading to [ebird.org/atlasny](http://ebird.org/atlasny). You can also join us at Beaver Meadow on Saturday February 8<sup>th</sup> for our eBird tutorial, where we will go over to how to submit to the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas.

## Snowshoe Adventure at Beaver Meadow

Anyone can snowshoe! Bring your school, scout group or civic group to Beaver Meadow to snowshoe. An Audubon naturalist will share the history of snowshoes and then lead you on a hike and play snowshoe games. We provide the snowshoes. Call our office at 585-457-3228 to setup your snowshoe program.

We also rent snowshoes. Our rental fee is \$5 for snowshoes for ages 3 and up. We are happy to help you get started. While we don't rent cross-country skis, feel free to bring your own and enjoy our trails. Don't miss this wonderful way to experience Beaver Meadow.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual

Allegany Nature Pilgrimage

Friday – Sunday

May 29 – 31, 2020

Lodging is available through  
Allegany State Park.

See the link at [alleganynaturepilgrimage.com](http://alleganynaturepilgrimage.com)



# Upcoming Programs

## Visit Beaver Meadow!

Our flagship preserve and headquarters offers something for everyone! A nature play area for kids of all ages (and adults that like to act like kids), a variety of hiking trails, and several areas to just sit, relax, and BE in a peaceful setting.

Bring a picnic lunch and make a day of it!

For directions, visit: [www.buffaloudubon.org](http://www.buffaloudubon.org)

When you visit please leave your pets at home. Enjoy a hike but stay on the trails. Walk, don't run. Please don't take anything home that you didn't come with. Most importantly, have fun! *Thanks for visiting us at Beaver Meadow.*

## Volunteer with Us

Every Wednesday is volunteer day at Beaver Meadow! Join us from 9am-2pm for coffee and donuts and then help maintain the trails, work in the office or take on the "project of the day." There's no need to register but bring a lunch. Everyone is welcome – even first timers! Call the Center if you have any questions.

Volunteers make all that we do at Buffalo Audubon and Beaver Meadow possible! Thanks to all those who give so generously of their time and talents.

**All programs require pre-registration. To register, call (585) 457-3228.**

## January 2020

2 – Mar 26 Thurs 6-7pm **Open Yoga Practice** - Join Debbie Smith, 500RYT and Yoga Therapist for open yoga practice at Beaver Meadow. All levels welcome. Bring your own mat. To register, call Debbie at 585-457-4210. \$13 per session.

4 Sat 1-3pm **Bring a Friend Birding** - Bring a friend and introduce them to the world of birding at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center! Naturalist Tom Kerr will go over the basics of binoculars, field guides, and everything else you need to know to get started. Binoculars are provided. Pre-registration is required. \$5.

7 – March 3 Tues 6:15 – 7:15pm **Yoga for Adults with Chronic Pain and Arthritis** - Join Debbie Smith, 500RYT and Yoga Therapist for yoga practice that will help alleviate pain. Pre-registration is required. To register, call Debbie Smith at 716-255-2241. 8-week course.

8 – March 25 Wed 6-7pm **Better Back by Bellydance at Beaver Meadow** - Better Back by Bellydance is a mix of dance, yoga and Physical Therapy created for the CNN Fit Nation Tour with physical therapists, physicians and a neurologist to help manage pain plus fighting osteoporosis, MS and depression. Come join Kim Carra for an easy to follow, family friendly, fun fitness class.

Hip scarves and veils available for student use. Well behaved children are welcome and dance free with you! Kim is a certified group fitness, Senior fitness, Dance instructor, Master yoga instructor & professional dancer with 30+ years of experience in dance and fitness! Classes are \$10 drop in.

9 – Feb 13 Thurs 10am-12pm **Women in the Woods** - Women in the woods is a sacred space where one can step away from the ordinary workings of society and enter into a time of rest, reflection, and re-centering; a place where one may seek clarity and renewal without distraction. This program 6-week journey will be led by Lesley Sardo, educator and intuitive life coach. Pre-registration is required. \$125 for 6 weeks. Child care/nature program provided for an additional \$10 per child per week.

11 Sat 10am-12pm **Gorgeous Gulls at ArtPark State Park** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for a hike in the Niagara River Gorge in search of the different species of gulls that make their winter home in the Niagara region. Binoculars are provided. Meet in Fisherman's Parking Lot located down the gravel road past parking lot B. Pre-registration is required. Donations gratefully accepted.

11 Sat 2-4pm **Snowshoes, Cocoa & Fun** – Join Naturalist Mark Carra at Beaver Meadow for a snowshoe adventure with beautiful scenery. We'll look for winter birds, drink some hot cocoa and have a lot of fun. Pre-registration is required. Family friendly walk. \$7 – includes snowshoe rental. Discount available if you bring your own snowshoes.

21 Tues 10-11:15am **Toddler Time: Silly Squirrels** –

Today is Squirrel Appreciation Day! Bring your little ones and join us for some fun at Beaver Meadow learning about squirrels! We will read a story, make a squirrel themed craft and snack, and take a short outdoor walk to look for squirrel activity. Dress for the weather! Pre-registration is required. \$3 per child. Ages 2-4.



25 Sat 10am-12pm **Native Plant Seed Swap** – Join Naturalist Mark Carra, Kim Carra and Kathy Contrino at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center for an informative morning about native plants and be part of our Native Plant Seed Swap. We'll ID "true" native plants and learn about why they're critical if you wish to help native wildlife. Bring one or more native seed types to share with each other. Pre-registration is required. \$5 if you bring seeds to swap. \$7 if you do not bring seeds.

25 Sat 10am-12pm **Birding at Fort Niagara State Park** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for some winter birding along Lake Ontario! The southern shores of the Great Lakes are some of the best places to find boreal birds that have wandered out of their normal winter range. Binoculars are available. Pre-registration is required. Meet in main parking lot by swimming pool. Donations gratefully accepted.

25 Sat 10am – 2pm **Yoga & Snowshoeing** - Join Spencer Jones Yoga for a mindful adventure into the winter wonderlands of Western New York with Yoga and Snowshoeing! A beginner friendly two hour snowshoe hike through the gentle hills of Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, followed by a 75 minute Vinyasa style flow in Nature Center. To register, visit:

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/yoga-snowshoeing-tickets-79761489763?aff=efbeventix&fbclid=IwAR2Cq1yZr13TlgUMX3un9iKh584DL0eCqTvQm-bx\\_tfdpN4j4rYaDcTvgly](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/yoga-snowshoeing-tickets-79761489763?aff=efbeventix&fbclid=IwAR2Cq1yZr13TlgUMX3un9iKh584DL0eCqTvQm-bx_tfdpN4j4rYaDcTvgly)

## February 2020

1 Sat 1-4pm **Superb Owl Saturday** - Join Buffalo Audubon and Messinger Woods Wildlife Care and Education Center for Superb Owl IV at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center! We'll be hosting an afternoon of crafts, hands-on activities, and live animal presentations celebrating everything about our favorite Owls! Pre-registration is required. \$7.

8 Sat 1-2:30pm **eBird Tutorial** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for a walkthrough of the biggest community science project in the world! Learn how to create a checklist and search the database for sightings to help you find the birds you want to see most. Get set up with your own eBird account and participate in community science projects such as the Great Backyard Bird Count, Audubon Climate Watch, and the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas! Pre-registration is required.

8 Sat 2-4pm **Feminist Bird Club – Snowshoeing in Delaware Park** - A fun, no pressure bird-watching club for feminists of all gender identities and skill levels. Come bird watch on snowshoes with us! Pre-registration is required. Bring your own snowshoes or rent them from us for \$5.

14 Fri 5-8pm **Birds and Brews: Lovebirds** - Bring your Valentine out for a short birding tour at the Outer Harbor (5-6pm), and then join us for a beer at Flying Bison Brewery (6-8pm)! This event will kick off the 2020 Birds on the Niagara Festival, so don't miss out! Pre-registration is required for the 5pm birding tour.

15 Sat **Birds on the Niagara** – Join us for an International winter celebration of the birds that call the Niagara River Corridor home. For more information and a schedule of events, visit: [www.birdsontheniagara.org](http://www.birdsontheniagara.org)

18 Tues 10-11:15am **Toddler Time – Winter Day Play!** – Join us for some outdoor play at Beaver Meadow with your little one(s). We'll paint the snow, play some games and learn how to snowshoe! Dress for the weather! If weather is not cooperative, we'll play some cabin fever games inside the Nature Center! Afterwards, we'll eat a yummy snack. Pre-registration is required. \$3 per child. Ages 2-4.

22 Sat 10am-1pm **Birding at Buckhorn Island State Park** - Start your weekend with the Birds! Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for a Birdwatching Hike through Buckhorn Island State Park. The Niagara River hosts one of the biggest congregations of migrating waterfowl in North America. Meet at Woods Creek lot on East-West Park Drive. Pre-registration is required. Binoculars are available. Donations gratefully accepted.

29 Sat 10 -11:30am **Leap Day Fun Day** – Join Naturalist Mark Carra at Beaver Meadow for an extra good time hiking on this extra day of the year. Let’s learn about who is and isn’t sleeping through the winter and make a frog craft. Pre-registration is required. \$6.

29 Sat 1-3pm **Backyard Birds and Birdfeeders** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center for a birdfeeder demonstration and learn about the common birds that frequent our backyards. All participants will receive a coupon good for 30% off a birdfeeder or bag of birdseed in the Beaver Meadow Gift Shop. Pre-registration is required. \$5.

## March 2020

7 Sat 7:30-9:30pm **Beaver Meadow Owl Prowl** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr as we continue to search for owls after dark at Beaver Meadow. We’ll be calling for the Eastern Screech-Owls and the Barred Owls that make their home in our 400 acre preserve. Meet at the Nature Center. Pre-registration is required. \$7. Ages 8+.

14 Sat 10-11:30am **Pollinator Awareness** – Join Naturalist Mark Carra for “Learn About Butterflies Day.” From the first butterflies to fly in the spring to the great Monarch migration. What plants do the caterpillars eat and which plants do the adults drink from. We’ll also do a butterfly craft. Pre-registration is required. \$6. Family friendly event.

14 Sat 10am-2pm **Yoga & Hiking at Beaver Meadow** - Join Spencer Jones Yoga for a mindful adventure into the autumn wilderness of Western New York with Yoga and Hiking! A beginner friendly two hour hike through the gentle hills and old growth forest of Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, followed by a 75

minute Vinyasa style flow in the nature center. For more information, visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/spencerjonesyoga/>

14 Sat 3-5pm **Saw-whet Owl Search** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr on a search for roosting Saw-whet Owls at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center! Saw-whet Owls are the smallest owl in New York State, and they are migrating through our area on their way north this spring. Meet at the Nature Center. Pre-registration is required. Binoculars are available. \$5.

17 Tues 10-11:15am **Toddler Time: Sweet Shamrocks** – The word “shamrock” refers to many species of three-leafed plants, including common white clover and wood sorrel. Join us in celebrating the shamrock at Beaver Meadow with a story, themed craft and snack. If the snow has melted, we’ll search for some of our own shamrocks on the lawn outside! Pre-registration is required. \$3 per child. Ages 2-4.

20 Fri 8-10pm **Spring Equinox Campfire Celebration** – Join Naturalist Mark Carra at Beaver Meadow for a warm campfire to celebrate the coming of spring. We’ll hike and, if you like we can dance to the light of the moon. Pre-registration is required. Family friendly event. \$5.

21 Sat 7:30-9pm **North Tonawanda Audubon Owl Prowl** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr for a nocturnal hike through the North Tonawanda Audubon Preserve! We’ll be looking and listening for the Eastern Screech-owls that make their home in this forested wetland. Waterproof footwear is required. Meet at the corner of Raymond Ave. and Birch St. Pre-registration is required. \$7. Ages 8+.

28 Sat 10-11:30am **Strawberry Island Eagle Watch at Aqua Lane Park (Tonawanda)** - Join Naturalist Tom Kerr and check out the Bald Eagles nesting on Strawberry Island in the Niagara River! This nest has been active for over a decade and has been a great place to see Bald Eagles year-round. We’ll also look for the Ducks, swans, gulls and other birds also spend their winter on the Niagara River. Meet at parking lot on Aqua Lane. Pre-registration is required. Binoculars are available. Donations are gratefully accepted.

## Our Sincere Thanks To Our Recent Donors

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*Anonymous (4), Mary Canfield, Barbara Delenkitis, Judith Hoffman, Dorothy Rapp, Susan and Allen Ott Sr., Amy Choboy and Pamela Rossotto, Dr. Scott W. Phillips and Ms. Mary C. Carroll, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Stevenson, Annette & Richard Komroy.*

The *Legacy Society* recognizes individuals who have made a bequest or other estate plans to benefit the Buffalo Audubon Society, and who have let us know of their intent. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to these individuals for the wonderful commitment they have made to the long-term success of the Buffalo Audubon Society.

If you have made such a gift and would like to be recognized in this and other listings, or if you would like information about how to make such a gift, please contact us at (585) 457-3228 or email [info@buffaloudubon.org](mailto:info@buffaloudubon.org)

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### **In Memory of Peggy Christenson, and Maxine and Wavel Barber**

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