



Spring 2009

# STONY KILL ALMANAC

By and About  
Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center

Calendar of Events Inside

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[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

## Red-headed Woodpecker at Stony Kill Farm

There's nothing like a rare bird to attract people to a new bird feeding and viewing area at Stony Kill Farm, and the big draw on January 8 was the rare, red-headed woodpecker, unmistakable with its totally red head and black and white, nearly robin-sized body.

In a classic example of cooperation, Stony Kill staff alerted Dutchess County's Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club which posted a Rare Bird Alert (RBA) on its website [www.watermanbirdclub.org](http://www.watermanbirdclub.org). The next day, club members, visitors of all ages and DEC staff began flocking to Stony Kill for a look. Within a few more days, Waterman photographers had posted many photos on their website of the bird eating at the Manor House's suet feeder and in flight. Be sure to take a look. Even into late February, the lone bird was still visiting the suet feeder and the corn crib at the farmstead. When at the Manor House, please view from indoors to prevent bird disturbance.



Not to be confused with its near relative, the burgeoning red-bellied woodpecker, the red-headed woodpecker is in sharp decline and is listed as "A Species of Special Concern." Despite being at home in old burned-out areas, recent clearings, wooded parkland and farms, where it enjoys a variety of food resources, this bird is in trouble, likely due to human land development and nest-hole competition with European starlings. It feeds on insects found in bark and foliage and even snatches flying insects from mid-air. Plant foods include acorns, beechnuts, corn, berries and seeds, which are cached in natural cavities, but starlings and jays raid these cache sites.

Compare the nest site maps from the 1980-85 and 2000-05 newly published *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State* by visiting DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7312.html> for complete information, or stop by Stony Kill's library for a look at the atlas.

## Waterman Bird Club

Founded in 1958, the Waterman Bird Club has nearly 400 members today. The club has enjoyed a long and positive relationship with Stony Kill; both promote conservation by educating the public through lectures, nature walks and related programs. Waterman also has a strong research and bird-publication component, and Stony Kill is a frequent venue for Waterman bird trips and social events. Visit Waterman's website to enjoy all their photos of red-headed woodpeckers. After browsing the website, please consider becoming a member of the club.

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**

David Paterson, Governor

Alexander B. Grannis, Commissioner

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# SLATE OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

All programs are approximately 90 minutes long unless otherwise noted.

We welcome people with disabilities to all of our programs. Call ahead, 845-831-8780, ext. 300, to let us know your specific needs, and we will be happy to accommodate you.

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## MARCH

### Survival Skills Seminar

*Saturday, March 7 at 2:00 PM*

Do you have the knowledge it takes to survive in the wilderness? Join Shane Whitefeather of Mountain Scout Survival School, and learn the sacred order of survival, animal tracking and other outdoor skills. Recommended for ages seven and older. **Registration required:** Call 845-831-8780, ext. 300. *Fee \$5.00.*

### Winter Wildlife Tracks and Traces

*Saturday, March 14 at 2:00 PM*

Join a Stony Kill naturalist and become a "track detective." Find out which animals are active in the winter, and hunt for evidence of their presence in the woods at Stony Kill. We'll make our own tracks with snowshoes (available for loan, free of charge, for this program), snow



conditions permitting. **Registration required:** Call 845-831-8780, ext. 300.

### Spring is Here!

*Saturday, March 21 at 2:00 PM*

It's official! Come on a leisurely ramble along Stony Kill's wooded trails to look for the first signs of spring on the day after the vernal equinox.

### Mind Your Own Beeswax!

*Saturday, March 28 at 2:00 PM*

Join us for an introduction to beekeeping and to the vital role that bees and other pollinators play in producing our food and in natural ecosystems.

## APRIL

### Introduction to Fly Tying

*Saturday, April 4 at 2:00 PM*

Join Pat Crisci, trout angler and fly-tying instructor, to learn why and how trout anglers create their own "flies." Observe a brief demonstration of materials and techniques; then try your hand at creating your own fly to take home.

### Frogwatch!

*Saturday, April 11 at 8:00 PM*

We'll look and listen for signs of amphibian mating activity in our vernal pools. Learn to recognize native frogs by their calls and how you can help scientists keep track of these sensitive indicators of environmental quality.



### Spring Ramble!

*Saturday, April 18 at 2:00 PM*

Join us on a leisurely ramble to look for early signs of the season, including the first wildflowers and early-arriving migrants on the wing, like tree swallows.

### Spring Birdwalk

*Saturday, April 25 at 2:00 PM*

Orioles, catbirds and phoebes are among the birds we hope to see and hear on this easy walk.

### Earth Day at Stony Kill

*Sunday, April 26 from 12:00 to 4:00 PM*

Help us celebrate Earth Day through nature discoveries and environmental activities, including family scavenger hunts, leaf crafts, tree planting and a talk on honeybees with a live demonstration.

## MAY

### Spring Wildflower Walk

*Saturday, May 2 at 2:00 PM*

Trout lily, trillium, bloodroot and rue anemone are among the delicate flowers gracing our woodlands. We'll look for them in bloom on this leisurely ramble.

### Birdwalk

*Saturday, May 9 at 9:00 AM*

The woods will ring with morning birdsong as we look and listen for springtime's migrant songbirds, including scarlet tanagers and rose-breasted grosbeaks.

### Talkin' Turkey

*Saturday, May 16 at 2:00 PM*

Wild turkey courtship and mating is in full swing this season. Come and learn about wild turkeys and why they were Ben Franklin's choice for our national symbol.

### Eels of the Hudson

*Saturday, May 23 at 2:00 PM*

Tom Lake, noted Hudson River biologist and editor of the *Hudson River Almanac*, will reveal the life cycle and habits of eels, which are mysteriously declining throughout their range.

**For more information about any of our programs, please call 845-8780, ext 300.**

### Garlic Mustard Pull

*Saturday, May 30 at 2:00 PM*

Garlic mustard is a non-native, invasive plant that is taking over many areas, including parts of Stony Kill's trailsides. Come help remove this plant while learning the secrets of how to best eliminate it from your own backyard. One good way of getting rid of this plant—eat it! You'll go home with some tasty recipes to try on your own.

### Nature Discovery Encourages Kids to Get Outside After School

Discover nature at Stony Kill's weekly after-school program for children 5-12 years old and their caregivers. The Nature Discovery Series is offered from 4:00 to 5:00 PM every Thursday through June 25. This program features fun, stimulating outdoor experiences in Stony Kill's woods, including animal tracking, scavenger hunts and environmental games.

### Saturday Morning Guided Nature Walks

Stony Kill Farm offers guided nature walks every Saturday at 10:00 AM through June. Venturing outside brings personal rewards as we discover the sights, sounds and smells of nature. Chirping birds, scenic landscapes and the comings and goings of animals that leave their tracks and traces behind all contribute to an exciting morning in the woods. Join a Stony Kill naturalist as we explore.

### Attention *Almanac* Readers—*Almanac* Now Available Online

We are moving toward an online-only newsletter format to reduce mailing costs and conserve resources. See [www.dec.ny.gov/education/1841.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1841.html) to read or download and print a PDF of the *Almanac* from DEC's website. You need to sign up only once to receive an e-mail notification when each new issue of the *Almanac* and program announcements are available from Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center. To sign up for e-mail notices, go to <http://lists.dec.state.ny.us/mailman/listinfo/stonykillalmanac>, and follow the easy instructions. Paper copies of the *Almanac* will be discontinued except for pickup at the center and at selected locations in the community.

### Online Family Newsletter—DEC Outdoor Discovery

Visit [www.dec.ny.gov/public/43355.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/43355.html) to read DEC's bi-weekly, online, outdoor newsletter for families. Each issue introduces readers to a seasonal environmental or nature topic, suggests a related activity and lists family friendly events at DEC's environmental education centers. Subscribe for free, and have the newsletter e-mailed to you!

# NEW YORK STATE Conservationist

Support Stony Kill Foundation by subscribing to *Conservationist*, New York's premier outdoor and environmental magazine. Half of the subscription price goes directly to support programs at Stony Kill Farm EEC. For renewals, include the word "Renewal" on your order, and provide your name as it appears on your *Conservationist* mailing label.

- YES, start/renew a one-year subscription to *Conservationist* for just \$10. I understand that \$5 from each subscription goes directly to support educational programs at Stony Kill Farm EEC.

Make checks payable to: Stony Kill Foundation

Mail to: Stony Kill Foundation, 79 Farmstead Lane, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

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