



Spring 2021

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413-885-5725

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Indian Creek Nature Center
PO Box 286
Canton, NY 13617



From the Board President, Nick Hamilton-Honey

Hope springs eternal.

As I see spring plants peeking above ground and hear of more and more people getting the COVID vaccine, I think of this proverb by Alexander Pope, an 18th century poet. Spring is coming. A time of growth, birth, and possibility. I hope you all did get out to the Center over the winter. We had wonderful snow this year for skiing or snowshoeing. But I have to admit that I am very much looking forward to what the future holds and all the possibility.

With that in mind, I would like to invite all members to join us, your ICNC Board members, for an informal Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 7th, 7 pm via Zoom. The link and phone number are listed under our Spring and Summer 2021 Public Programs. Please drop in and say hello, ask a question, or share an idea. We want to hear from you, our members!

Continuing with the theme of hope: We are excited to be able to have programs again for Spring and Summer. Sticking to mask and social distance protocols, we are looking forward to seeing you at the Center. For more information about programming, see page 2 of the newsletter or check our Facebook page.

Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love. –Sitting Bull (Tȟatȟánjka Íyotake), Hankpapa Lakota leader

Spring and Summer 2021 Public Programs!

Outdoor programs will be restarting, with mask and social distancing protocols.

Please check our website, Facebook, or Instagram for updates on programs

Public programs are provided free of charge by volunteer naturalists and educators.

All programs take place at Indian Creek Nature Center, meeting at the main drive parking area off County Rt 14. Directions are available at www.indiancreeknaturecenter.us. Please **RSVP** for programs by contacting indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com with your name and group size.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please join the Board Members for a virtual open, informal discussion about ICNC, what changes are happening, what programs you enjoyed in the past or would like to see in the future.

Interested in becoming a board member or have other questions? Please ask! Want to learn more about how you could volunteer time and energy? We want to hear from you!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://cornell.zoom.us/j/98908986782?pwd=KzNvUnBSWkpxSVFQWGgvZDgzR1VVUT09>

Meeting ID: 989 0898 6782; Passcode: ICNC
Phone:

+16465189805, 98908986782# US (New York)

+16468769923, 98908986782# US (New York)

Leader: Nick Hamilton-Honey

Date: Wednesday, **April 7**, starting at 7:00pm

SPRING WORKDAY

Join Board members for a workday to set the Center in order from the winter. Tools will be supplied or bring your own. There's plenty of work for all.

Leader: Roger Hutchinson (315) 386-4795

Date: Saturday, **May 1**, 8:30am – 12:00noon

BIRDWALK – MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Join us for some spring birding on the Indian Creek Nature Center trails. Whether the birds are returning to Indian Creek to nest or just passing through, there will be lots of bird song and colorful species to observe. Binoculars, long pants, and insect repellent are recommended.

Leaders: Eileen Wheeler and Joan Howlett

Date: Saturday, **May 15**, starting at 8:00am

DRAGONFLIES OF ICNC

Dragonflies and damselflies are aerial acrobats that can be found in and around many aquatic habitats. We will check out the ponds and various trails and fields of the Center. All ages and levels are welcome! Some nets will be provided, but feel free to bring your own equipment. Insect repellent is recommended.

Leader: Jan Trybula

Date: Saturday, **June 12**, 10:00am – 12:00noon

NATIONAL MOTH WEEK CELEBRATION AT INDIAN CREEK

Each year National Moth Week highlights the ecological importance and incredible biodiversity of moths with locally sponsored "moth night" events across the country and around the world. Join us at ICNC this July for a night of discovery in celebration of NMW. We will set up a black light and use sugar baits to attract a variety of moths for us to identify, photograph, and discuss. Bring a headlamp or flashlight, a camera, and your curiosity. Mosquito repellent might be helpful as well. (see NMW website for information <https://nationalmothweek.org>).

Leader: Ray Erickson

Date: Saturday, **July 17**, 9:00pm –

11:00pm; Rain date to be determined

New Gate Location, Gate Closure, Parking Spots, and Sign

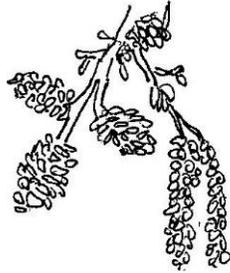
Have you been out to the Center recently? There have been many changes in 2020 and more to come in 2021. The gate that was at the end of the driveway has been relocated closer to the building. This relocation allows us to be able to close and lock the gate when needed. The gate will be closed and locked for mud season, potentially mid-March to mid-April, depending on weather. Please enter with caution during this time. Due to the closing of the gate during mud season, DEC has added parking just outside the gate. This parking connects you to the Upland Trail or you can follow the driveway to access other trails. See the picture on our cover to see our new parking area.

Our old sign was removed, and we have a NYS DEC sign on the North side of the main entrance. We are planning on placing a new sign where the old sign was located. Hopefully, the new sign will be installed during our Spring Workday on Saturday, May 1st

Early Signs of Spring

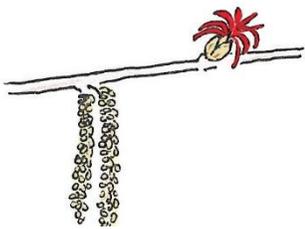
by Nancy Eldblom (with Anne Johnson)

Some often-overlooked flowers appear weeks before most of our long-awaited "wildflowers". Two native shrubs have dangling male catkins evident throughout the winter. The 1-2" long pendulous red-brown male catkins of the alders begin to shed pollen by mid-April at least. Look for the little pinecone-like female flowers above the male catkins. The speckled alder, *Alnus incana*, is a common shrub in our lowlands and can be seen lining the boardwalk at the Nature Center.



Alnus incana rugosa

Another member of the birch family, the beaked hazelnut, blooms early in shrubby old fields and open woods. Its male catkins are a lighter brown than the alder. Look for its tiny female flowers which have distinctive deep red/fuchsia-colored pistils protruding from its buds in early April. These bits of brilliant color are a treat in the still drab landscape. This species, *Corylus cornuta*, is related to the cultivated filbert.

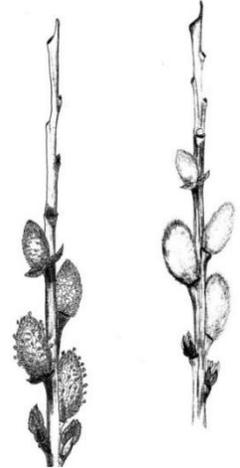


Alnus incana rugosa

"Pussy willows" can often be found throughout March and April. These furry male catkins contain the buds of the tiny male flowers of one or more of about 15 species of willow found in our area. As spring progresses, the flowers bloom and pollen is shed, resulting in the fading of the pussies; this also happens if you put pussy willow twigs in water. Around here, the shrubs or small trees bearing relatively large pussies before any sign of opening leaves are probably *Salix discolor*, commonly called pussy willows. They grow in both wet and dry places.

Different plants bear the female flowers, also contained in catkins. If you return to your pussy willow area in early May, you will probably see the pale green catkins of the neighboring female plants, which bloom about the time the pollen is

being shed from the male flowers, i.e. late April and early May. This species is termed "precocious" because its catkins appear before its leaves. One other willow blooms before it leafs out – the similar upland willow (*S. humilis*).



Other Willows to Watch for at the Nature Center and nearby:

As you look over a low-lying meadow, you will probably notice many reddish shrubs at this time of year. Some of these may be dogwoods, but many may be willows. Some, perhaps many, may be the slender willow (*S. petiolaris*). It can form large clumps in moist fields. Its "pussies" are much smaller and can be found at least by early May, when its tiny leaves are beginning to unroll; hence these willows are called "coetaneous".

The shining willow (*S. lucida*) is distinctive because of its heavy glossy yellow branchlets, especially evident in early spring. Unlike the slender willow which grows in often large colonies, shining willow usually occur as isolated plants along pond and wetland margins. Later in the growing season, you can tell shining willow by its shiny, very long pointed leaves as well as its yellow twigs. Look for this willow on the shore of the first pond.

There are a number of other willows found in the county, and as a group they are notoriously difficult to identify to species level, especially when catkins are not present. However, because they are so common and bloom so early, it is rewarding to become familiar with them. It helps to observe or sample bits and pieces from the SAME plants throughout the season. I have found ½ dozen different species growing close to a single farm pond!

Good luck and happy shrub hunting this spring season!

Do you have something to say about your experience at the ICNC?

If so, please contact Indian Creek at: indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com or send us a Message through Facebook.

If you have photos or other items for the newsletter, please send materials to the editor, via email trybulj@potsdam.edu

Volunteer Profiles – The ICNC Board of Directors

Ann Beaulieu

Ann developed an interest in birds when she moved from Europe to Nova Scotia at age 10. She found satisfaction in photography around that time, an interest her maternal grandfather shared. Ann chose teaching as a career and focused on elementary school instruction. Later, she taught ESL at Algonquin College in Ottawa. She planted trees, bushes, and flowers on almost 2 acres specifically to attract birds and insects that sustain some bird species. If Ann was a bird, she would choose to be a swallow because she loves their swooping flight. She enjoys working with her hands with ceramic tiles and various woods. Ann traveled throughout Europe, South and Central America, and Asia. Birding remains her most motivating interest when she travels. Ann especially enjoys visits to ICNC because of the varying habitats and species found there. She loves birds but also treasures all wild species that enhance our lives with the pleasure of their visits.

Ray Erickson

Ray finds that life in the North Country suits him well after a career with a software company in North Carolina and Toronto. He combines a life-long enjoyment of photography and natural history with interests in lepidoptery, gardening, fishing, church fellowship, the occasional card game with friends, and the poetry of Mary Oliver. He divides his time between Canton and his camp on Lake Champlain, where he can go on nature walks with his granddaughter and play golf with both of his brothers. Alas, he is not especially a snow enthusiast! For him life is renewed each year "the day the leaves come out." (cf. Gwen Frostic)

Jevonnah Foster

Jevonnah works at St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District as the District Conservation Technician, providing conservation assistance and agricultural plans to landowners and producers throughout the county. She enjoys many outdoor activities including gardening, hiking, nature photography, fishing, hunting, and taking care of her chickens! After college she moved to and worked in Iowa as a Natural Resource Manager at a nature center, working on prairie and wetland restoration as well as being a seasonal Water Patrol Officer for the Department of Natural Resources. She is excited to be back in her home county and looks forward to being involved with an education center again!

Nick Hamilton-Honey

Nick loves being outdoors and especially enjoys teaching, exploring, and sharing knowledge about the natural world. Nick's day job is the Natural Resource & Sustainable Energy Educator for the Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County. Nick has a M.S. from the University of Michigan in Human Dimensions of the Environment (what is now called Behavior, Education, and Communication). When they are not working you will find them reading a book, cooking, playing D&D, swimming, biking, hiking, snowshoeing, or spending time with family and friends, including their 7-year-old Tibetan Spaniel Eli and 21-year-old ball python Chindi.

Joan Howlett

When Joan moved to the North Country in 1987, one of the things she looked forward to most on weekends were field trips to ICNC. Before retiring, she worked for two decades as an LCSW therapist and supervisor at SLC Mental Health Outpatient Clinic. That was her second career. Prior to that, Joan taught HS English in San Francisco and was briefly an adjunct at UC Davis and Rogue Community College in Oregon. Joan worked as a freelance writer for a number of years, covering mostly environment and politics. Joan was a performance and published poet and worked under a grant of the Oregon Commission for the Humanities on Women and the Arts. After retiring, she became fascinated by bird life and behavior, watching and listening to them, but song ID remains a challenge. She traveled widely on birding adventures. Joan loves to read, hike, and spend time with friends, especially her Gang of Five, active for many years and focused mainly on Chinese history and current events. Joan loves playing with her dogs Ella and Gunther and trilling with her 22-yo red-fronted macaw, Julio, who has a cage with the door always open.

Roger Hutchinson

Roger is an avid supporter of conservation education and has been associated with the Nature Center for many years. He worked as a forester for the NYSDEC and in that capacity worked with Conservation Field Days and for a number of years with the St Lawrence County Youth Conservation Corps. During this time much work has been accomplished on the trails, boardwalks and much of the Center infrastructure has been built and maintained. In the past, he worked for the US Forest Service and National Park Service. He looks forward to continued interest and development at the Center.

Anne Johnson

Anne Johnson has been botanizing in St. Lawrence County for 40+ years, many of them with Nancy Eldblom (now deceased). They spent many happy hours at Indian Creek Nature Center exploring and learning plants in all seasons, then branched out and explored the rest of the county, resulting in their 2010 book "Plants of St. Lawrence County, NY: An Annotated Checklist of Vascular Plants". Since then, Anne and friends have continued to explore and add to botanical knowledge in the North Country.

Glenn Johnson

Glenn is Professor and former Chair of the Biology Department at SUNY Potsdam where he teaches ecology, conservation biology and vertebrate zoology. He enjoys birdwatching, herping, and hiking, especially in tropical forests and desert settings. He received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, where he worked on conservation issues with rare vertebrates including red-shouldered hawks and eastern massasauga rattlesnakes. Currently, his research focuses on threatened species in the Adirondacks and northern New York, including spruce grouse and Blanding's turtles. He is a principal participant in collaborative region-wide conservation efforts for Blanding's turtles, spotted turtles and wood turtles across the Northeast and serves on the Board of Directors for the American Turtle Observatory. He is co-author of a book entitled "Amphibians and Reptiles of New York State: Identification, Natural History and Conservation".

Casey Sukeforth

You will most likely find Casey outdoors, cross country skiing, swimming, or hiking in the North Country and Adirondacks. She has a passion for facilitating nature experiences for people, especially children, and enjoys teaching people about systems thinking and how we are connected to the natural world. Casey works for Cornell Cooperative Extension and runs 4-H Camp Overlook, a traditional overnight summer camp in the Adirondacks. Casey has a Master of Science from Lesley University in Ecological Teaching and Learning. During her free time you can catch her playing with her young sons Malcolm and Desmond outdoors, playing with dinosaurs near the fire, or loving their pets.

Blanche Town

Blanche is an avid skier and paddler, and also enjoys biking, hiking and other outdoor activities. Prior to retirement in 2017 she worked for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife, for 33 years. As a member of the Bureau of Wildlife she engaged in a wide variety of activities, with a focus on bald eagle research, outreach and wetlands protection. She also served as the Regional Access Coordinator in a five-county area, assessing and assisting with the planning and development of outdoor recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

Jan Trybula

Jan arrived in the North Country in 2003 to teach Biology at SUNY Potsdam, primarily courses in genetics and general biology. His interest in nature goes back to his upbringing in Ohio, where his family fostered an interest in all things nature and science. Jan earned his M.S. degree from the University of Houston chasing toads along the Gulf Coast, interned at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, and returned to Ohio for his Ph.D. at Miami University (aka Miami Ohio), where his interest turned to dragonflies. He was part of the Ohio Dragonfly Survey and, after arriving in New York, he assisted the New York Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey, discovering the first occurrence of the Horned Clubtail (*Arigomphus cornutus*) in New York, right here at Indian Creek Nature Center. He serves as the ICNC newsletter editor.

Brian Watson

Although retired from the physics department at St. Lawrence University, Brian has always taken a keen interest in all facets of the natural world. His main avocation is botany, and he discovered what came to be the first vouchered specimen of the Lesser Centaury (*Centaureum pulchellum*) in St. Lawrence County. He loves to canoe, cross-country ski, and bicycle back-country roads. Have a question about the American naturalist John Burroughs? Brian will probably know the answer. He has served as secretary during his entire tenure on the ICNC board.

Eileen Wheeler

Eileen is a retired music teacher whose current interests include birding, gardening, natural history, and hiking. She and her husband, Tom, like traveling to study birds and experience other cultures. She has enjoyed ICNC since bringing her young scouts there to snowshoe in the 1980s.

Poetry Corner

NIGHTJAR IN DAYLIGHT

(THE COMMON PAURAQUE AT ESTERO LLANO GRANDE STATE PARK, TEXAS, 11/8/15)

THE PAURAQUE POSSESSES
THIS SHADED SPOT OF EARTH
BLENDING SEAMLESSLY
INTO OVERHANG, BRACKEN AND SCRUB
ONLY A LARGE, SLIGHTLY OPEN EYE
REVEALS
A PRESENCE.



Common pauraque, *Nyctidromus albicollis*.
17 October 2005. Karin Schneeberger alias [Felineora](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nyctidromus_albicollis2.jpg)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nyctidromus_albicollis2.jpg

— JOAN GAIL HOWLETT

Please note!

All memberships are now on a calendar year schedule.

If you are a LIFE member or if you have already paid your membership for 2021, Thank You!

If not, consider becoming a MEMBER of the Indian Creek Nature Center!

Student member (in school or college)	\$10 <input type="checkbox"/>	Membership for 2021	New <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Citizen member	\$10 <input type="checkbox"/>	Please notify us of any address changes!		
Individual member	\$20 <input type="checkbox"/>	Name	_____	
Family membership	\$30 <input type="checkbox"/>	Address	_____	
ICNC Patron	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>	City	_____	
ICNC Life Member (nontransferable)	\$200 <input type="checkbox"/>	State	_____	ZIP _____
Please consider an additional donation! \$ _____		Phone	_____	
Members!		Email	_____	
Do you want your newsletter sent to you:				
<input type="checkbox"/> By email				
<input type="checkbox"/> By regular mail				
<input type="checkbox"/> both email and regular mail				

We **never** share member emails or contact information with any outside entities.

Please make checks payable to: **Indian Creek Nature Center**; PO Box 286; Canton, NY 13617

You can also join or renew through PayPal on our website:

<https://www.indiancreeknaturecenter.us/>

Indian Creek Nature Center is run by North Country Conservation – Education Associates, Inc. a section 501(c)(3) organization that relies on memberships, grantors, and donors. Your donations are tax deductible.

Keep up with information about Indian Creek Nature Center!

Visit us on Social Media!

On the web: <https://www.indiancreeknaturecenter.us>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndianCreekNatureCenterNY/>

On Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indiancreeknaturecenterny/>

Nature in Focus:

Nightjars



By Jan Trybula

Nightjars, a group of 98, primarily nocturnal or crepuscular birds in the family Caprimulgidae, with long wings, short legs, and short bills. Species are seen nearly worldwide, except for parts of Oceania. Their plumage is cryptic, blending in with their surroundings. As a result, these species are more commonly heard than seen.

In the northeastern United States, you're probably more familiar with just two medium sized (8-10 inches) species of this group, the common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) and the eastern whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*). Both are crepuscular insect feeders that catch insects in flight at dusk and dawn. Sometimes feeding well into the night when the moon is bright. Both species lay one or two eggs directly on the ground, with no nest. Being ground nesters, they are susceptible to ground predators. The primary differences between the two are their range, their migratory pathways, and their habitats.



By Alan Schmierer from near Patagonia, AZ, USA - 479 -Eastern Whip-poor-will (6-11-2015) Lancaster, Worcester Co., MA -01, CC0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=45423649>

Common nighthawks are more common in open areas throughout most of the US and migrate as far south as the southernmost reaches of Brazil and even into parts of Argentina. Historically they were found in grasslands, dunes, and beaches, but they have adapted to the spread of people and can be seen in woodland clearings, rock outcroppings, roadside berms, and even flat gravel-topped roofs. Eastern whip-poor-wills are more common in woodlands throughout

the eastern US, as long as the woodland has little to no undergrowth. They seem to avoid large dense forests in favor of forest near open areas. They migrate to coastal regions of the Gulf of Mexico and into parts of Central America.

Both species are in decline. Since the 1970s, common nighthawk populations have decreased by 58%, while eastern whip-poor-wills by 69%. Though tied to various aspects of urbanization and climate change, two factors seem to have significance. Increased urbanization means more pets, especially feral or domestic house cats that prey upon these ground breeders. The other important factor is correlated to the decline of insect populations. In general, terrestrial insects have declined and insectivorous birds have declined with them. The decline of the insects is very complicated, including factors such as urbanization, agriculture, pesticides (especially neonicotinoids), and planting of non-native vegetation which supports fewer native insect species. The US Fish & Wildlife Service lists both species as "Bird of Conservation Concern" and the NY Department of Environmental Conservation lists them as species of "Special Concern."

References:

Nightjars

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nightjar>

Common nighthawk

- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Common_Nighthawk/overview
- <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/60051.html>
- <https://partnersinflight.org/species/common-nighthawk/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_nighthawk

Eastern whip-poor-will

- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Whip-poor-will/overview
- <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/59604.html>
- <https://partnersinflight.org/species/common-nighthawk/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_whip-poor-will

Tallamy & Shriver. 2021. Are declines in insects and insectivorous birds related? Ornithological Applications. duaa059, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ornithapp/duaa059>

INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Indian Creek Nature Center
RENSSELAER FALLS, NEW YORK

