



## Fall 2020

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Indian Creek Nature Center  
PO Box 286  
Canton, NY 13617



### From the Board President, Nick Hamilton-Honey

The last few months have been challenging, to say the least. In times of stress and uncertainty, we all use differing coping mechanisms. "Spending time in nature, by watching a sunset, gazing at the ocean or mountains, sitting in a park, escaping to the countryside or a nature retreat, or even just spending a few minutes to stare out the window, provides us with the opportunity to rest, reflect, and restore our very selves."

In this time of COVID-19, you likely have noticed that getting outside—working in a garden, taking a walk in your neighborhood, going for a bike ride, taking a drive in the countryside, traveling to Indian Creek Nature Center to bird watch or go for a hike, or just getting out in nature—has improved your state of mind. These experiences demonstrate "nature's valuable role in our lives and hints at another potential role: contributing to overcoming mental fatigue and improving our ability to focus and direct our attention effectively."

That nature can have a restorative effect is not new idea, but research-based analysis of this effect is. Rachel and Stephen Kaplan, professors emeriti at the University of Michigan, published *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective* in 1989. This research-based analysis of the vital psychological role that nature plays in our lives was the first of its kind. The Kaplans called this psychological perspective of nature Attention Restoration Theory, or ART. As the name implies, Attention

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Fall 2020 Public Programs!

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

**ALL PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19.**

**We look forward to when we can safely meet in person for our public programs. Until then, please check our website, Facebook, or Instagram for updates.**

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED...

Restoration Theory asserts that after a period of time in nature or looking at nature, our ability to focus and direct our attention is improved.

Two decades of research leading up to *The Experience of Nature* compelled the Kaplans to publish their work into ART. From the preface, "The first is that these many nature-related and nature-influencing activities – designing, planning, managing, interpreting – are going on right now, often based on little theory and even less data. ... Second, we feel the outlines of what is known and what needs to be known have become clear enough that it is time to invite others to join the fun, to participate in the process themselves."

They did not put forth this research with a narrow definition of nature, either. Nature, to them, was any green space. Again, from the book's preface, "This book is about the natural environment, about people, and about the relationship between them. It is about things many have known but few have tried to study empirically. It is about things for which there is only a limited vocabulary.

"Nature connotes many settings. ... The discussions of nature here is not limited to those faraway, vast, and pristine places where there has been little human intervention, or to places designated as "natural areas" by some governmental authority. Nature includes parks and open spaces, meadows and abandoned fields, street trees and backyard gardens. We are referring to places near and far, common and unusual, managed and unkempt, big, small, and in-between, where plants grow by human design or even despite it."

I had the great good fortune to be at the University of Michigan for my master's degree, in the School of Natural Resource and Environment, focusing on human behavior as it relates to the environment. I took many classes with Dr. Rachel Kaplan, and almost twenty years later, still use the principles I learned in her classes to engage youth and adults in natural resource and sustainable energy education. Research on ART continues to this day and has expanded into many different psychological specialties. Now more than ever, ART can guide us to restorative environments and battling the directed attention fatigue that is part of the COVID-19 crisis. Whether you are in the North Country or New York City, nature is a way to help us restore – ourselves, as well as others. Please enjoy Indian Creek Nature Center safely and with care, and while there, please take pictures that you can share to our social media sites. These pictures will provide others with psychological benefits.

Ackerman, CE. "What is Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory (ART)?"  
<https://positivepsychology.com/attention-restoration-theory/>, July 10, 2019

Kaplan, Rachel and Stephen. *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.

## Poetry Corner

NIGHTSCAPE  
(An Amerasian Fusion)

BARRED OWL QUESTIONS  
WHO COOKS FOR YOU  
HINT OF MOON'S ICY HALO  
BEHIND SLEEPING BIRCH  
VEILED AND ARMORED  
SHADOWS ON WHITE  
COLD CHARGE OF SNOW  
DEFENDS THE WINTER NIGHT.

— JOAN GAIL HOWLETT



Photo: "File:Strix-varia-005.jpg." *Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository.* 30 Jul 2019, 12:58 UTC. 3 Jun 2020, 01:27 <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Strix-varia-005.jpg&oldid=359998396>>.

## Nature in Focus: Barred Owls



By Jan Trybula



"Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?"

Barred Owls, *Strix varia*, is a medium-large owl about 18 inches long with a wingspan of about 40 inches. They are mottled brown and white on their back, horizontal bars on their neck and upper breast, and their legs and underside have bold vertical bars.

Barred Owls are a non-migratory bird that ranges throughout the eastern half of the US and Southeastern Canada. They have invaded Southwestern Canada and parts of Northwestern US and there are considered an invasive species, which has been encroaching on or (rarely) hybridizing with the regionally threatened Spotted Owl, *Strix occidentalis*.



They inhabit forests of all sorts. They are nocturnal predators. Although their prey are varied, Barred Owls typically eat various voles, mice, and rats as well as a variety of other mammals and birds.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barred\\_owl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barred_owl)  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barred\\_Owl/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barred_Owl/overview)

# Volunteer Thank You – Emlyn Crocker

by Nick Hamilton-Honey



Emlyn Crocker, an Indian Creek Nature Center Board Member since 2018, recently left us to take some time off before pursuing a master’s degree. Emlyn was instrumental in getting Indian Creek Nature Center’s social media presence going and helping to organize our website.

Emlyn also promoted our programs and tended the membership list. She led many programs at the Center, including: Forest Ecology and Citizen Science, Climate Change and the Future of Sugar Maples, Salamander Woods Walk, and more. Through her former day job as Program Manager for Nature Up North, Emlyn taught at our Conservation Field Days. While she was with our Board for only a few years, her impact is lasting.



Thank you for your service, Emlyn! We appreciate all you have done!

## Please note!

**Starting in January 2021, all memberships will shift to a calendar year schedule.**

### Please consider becoming a MEMBER of the Indian Creek Nature Center!

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

If you are already a member, look at your newsletter address. The top right of your address shows the season and year that your membership expires. The last letter identifies your membership category.

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! \$ \_\_\_\_\_

We send complimentary newsletters to schools, libraries, and other entities.

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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.

# Asters in the Vicinity of the Nature Center

by Nancy Eldblom and Anne Johnson

## Blue Asters

Most everyone recognizes the deep purple **New England aster** (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) which is common in dry fields. It has clasping leaves on its stem and if you look closely (try smelling it too), you will see lots of gland tipped hairs on its stem and flowers.



*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*



A roadside patch of *Symphyotrichum puniceum*

If you see an aster with somewhat clasping leaves but whose flowers are a paler shade of purple growing in a moist spot or a wetland, you are likely seeing rough- or **purple-stemmed aster** (*S. puniceus*). If you see masses of something like this in a moist field, it could be the rhizomatous, very closely related *S. firmum*.

The **large-leaved aster** (*Eurybia macrophylla*) is frequent throughout our county and is distinctive – it has large, heart shaped basal and lower stem leaves and a flat-topped, hairy and glandular few flowered head. It is usually found in woods and at the edges of woods. You may also see another aster with heart-shaped lower leaves (though they are much smaller) – **heart-leaved aster** (*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*). It also differs in that it flowers later and has many heads in its inflorescence.



*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*



*Symphyotrichum lanceolatum*

## White Asters

Among the white asters, the tall, early blooming **Flat-top white aster** (*Doellingeria umbellata*) is quite frequent here in brushy country, while the lower growing **whorled wood aster** (*Oclemena acuminata*) is common in woods (there are some at the Nature Center, but it much more common closer to the Adirondacks). And of course, there are a few small flowered asters that are hard to identify without a hand lens – **calico aster** (*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*), **lance-leaved aster** (*S. lanceolatum*), and **Ontario aster** (*S. ontarionis*). The small-flowered white aster with the bright yellow center that eventually turns brown is likely *S. lanceolatum*, and the small-flowered white aster whose center turns a wine color with age is likely either *S. lateriflorum* or *S. ontarionis*. Don't forget that there are more asters in the county than those listed above, so keep your eye out when you are in different habitats.

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## **Indian Creek Nature Center Annual General Meeting!**

**Because of COVID-19, we will not have a dinner this year.  
Look at our social media for information about a livestream session of the  
meeting and presentation sometime this Fall!**

**Dr. Susan Willson will present:  
The Birdsbesafe™ cat collar cover: Is it an effective tool for bird conservation?**

Songbird populations face so many threats today. From habitat destruction, fragmentation, and climate change, to pollution, toxic agricultural chemicals, and glass buildings, it is unsurprising that bird populations have plummeted over the last 30 years. At the same time, many people find a connection with nature by observing birds, and Americans spend over \$4 billion annually on bird seed to attract birds to our backyards. Recent studies indicate that another beloved animal, the domestic cat, is the number one direct, human-caused threat to birds in the United States and Canada, killing over 2 billion birds per year.

In an ideal world, all owned cats would be kept indoors to alleviate this shocking paradox between our love for birds and our laissez-faire attitude towards our cats. The truth is that many cat owners feel that their hands are tied and continue to let their cats outside for a number of reasons. Is there anything these owners can do besides feel guilty or try to ignore the larger problem?

For a number of years, I have been investigating the efficacy of the Birdsbesafe™ cat collar cover as a conservation tool to decrease the number of birds killed by owned domestic cats. The collar is brightly colored and patterned and is designed to make a predatory cat more visible to backyard birds. I'll discuss the results of studies my colleagues and I have carried out in the North Country as well as in Florida, plus a novel hypothesis that suggests the collars may be more effective at higher latitudes.

### **Susan Willson Biography:**

Dr. Susan Willson received her PhD from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2003. As a graduate student, she spent more than two years of her life living in a tent at the Cocha Cashu Biological Station in Amazonian Peru (<https://cochacashu.sandiegozooglobal.org/>), observing predatory army ants and army-ant-following birds for her dissertation research. She later worked with the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) in Costa Rica (<https://tropicalstudies.org/>), bringing students into the field to study tropical ecology and evolution. Dr. Willson joined the faculty of St. Lawrence University in 2007, and currently has students working with her on kestrel breeding biology (with Mark Manske of Adirondack Raptors), camera trap data and its use in studying big cats in Amazonian Peru, and the effectiveness of the Birdsbesafe™ cat collar. She teaches classes at SLU focusing on birds, ecology and evolution, and biodiversity conservation. In her spare time, she pets her indoor cats while watching birds come to her feeders and teaches her 8-year old daughter about the natural world.

See more about the collar at: <https://www.birdsbesafe.com/>

If you have questions, please contact our president, Nick Hamilton-Honey at 413-885-5725  
Or email at [indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com](mailto:indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com)

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**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/>

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

If so, please contact Indian Creek at: [indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com](mailto:indiancreeknaturecenterny@gmail.com)

Or send us a Message through our Facebook account. It is monitored regularly

**If you have photos or other items for the newsletter, please send materials to the editor,  
Jan Trybula via email [trybulj@potsgdam.edu](mailto:trybulj@potsgdam.edu)**

## ICNC Birdseed Sale 2020 – New prices this year!

The birdseed sale is one of the fundraisers for the ICNC and we need your financial support!

Your purchases are, in part, a contribution toward maintenance and overhead at ICNC.

Please use the form below or copy page.

If you have questions, please call Roger at 315-386-4795

<u>Wt.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Wt.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Total</u>
20 lbs	Choice Blend	_____	\$16.50	_____	20 lbs	Choice Blend	_____	\$16.50	_____
40 lbs	Choice Blend	_____	\$29.00	_____	40 lbs	Choice Blend	_____	\$29.00	_____
20 lbs	Premium Blend	_____	\$19.50	_____	20 lbs	Premium Blend	_____	\$19.50	_____
40 lbs	Premium Blend	_____	\$37.00	_____	40 lbs	Premium Blend	_____	\$37.00	_____
20 lbs	Just Desserts	_____	\$32.00	_____	20 lbs	Just Desserts	_____	\$32.00	_____
18 lbs	Cardinal Blend	_____	\$19.50	_____	18 lbs	Cardinal Blend	_____	\$19.50	_____
20 lbs	Finch Blend	_____	\$27.00	_____	20 lbs	Finch Blend	_____	\$27.00	_____
20 lbs	Chickadee Blend	_____	\$25.50	_____	20 lbs	Chickadee Blend	_____	\$25.50	_____
30 lbs	Value Blend	_____	\$14.00	_____	30 lbs	Value Blend	_____	\$14.00	_____
25 lbs	Black Oil Sunflower	_____	\$15.00	_____	25 lbs	Black Oil Sunflower	_____	\$15.00	_____
50 lbs	Black Oil Sunflower	_____	\$26.00	_____	50 lbs	Black Oil Sunflower	_____	\$26.00	_____
50 lbs	Striped Sunflower	_____	\$34.00	_____	50 lbs	Striped Sunflower	_____	\$34.00	_____
25 lbs	Sunflower Kernels	_____	\$33.00	_____	25 lbs	Sunflower Kernels	_____	\$33.00	_____
50 lbs	Cracked Corn	_____	\$15.00	_____	50 lbs	Cracked Corn	_____	\$15.00	_____
10 lbs	Nyger (Niger Thistle)	_____	\$20.00	_____	10 lbs	Nyger (Niger Thistle)	_____	\$20.00	_____
25 lbs	Nyger (Niger Thistle)	_____	\$43.00	_____	25 lbs	Nyger (Niger Thistle)	_____	\$43.00	_____
Ea.	Nutty Butter Suet	_____	\$ 1.25	_____	Ea.	Nutty Butter Suet	_____	\$ 1.25	_____
Ea.	High Energy Suet	_____	\$ 1.25	_____	Ea.	High Energy Suet	_____	\$ 1.25	_____

Total Enclosed = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (Check # \_\_\_\_\_)

Total Enclosed = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (Check # \_\_\_\_\_)

Mail your order and payment by **Friday, Oct 9**

To: Roger Hutchinson  
 c/o Indian Creek Nature Center  
 24 Judson Street  
 Canton, NY 13617

Pick up order on **Saturday, October 24, 2020**  
 9:00AM to 12:00 Noon  
 at ICNS, County Road 14, Rensselaer Falls, NY

**Thank you!!**

**Make Checks Payable to:  
 Indian Creek Nature Center**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

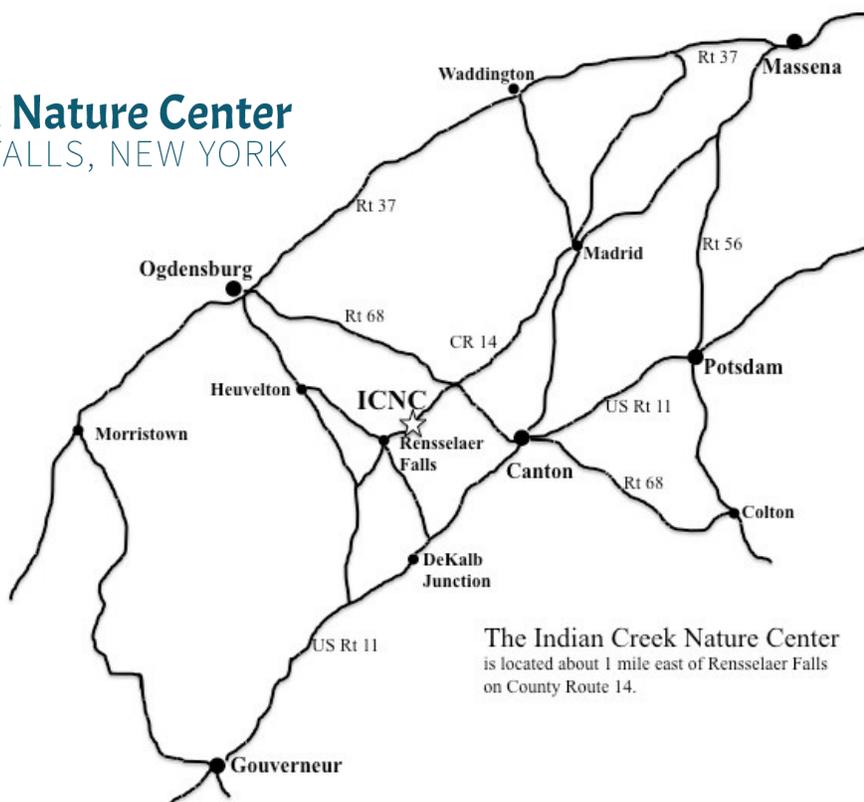
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER  
PO BOX 286  
CANTON, NY 13617

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**Indian Creek Nature Center**  
RENSSELAER FALLS, NEW YORK



The Indian Creek Nature Center  
is located about 1 mile east of Rensselaer Falls  
on County Route 14.