



CHAUTAUQUA

BIRD, TREE & GARDEN CLUB



Photo of the moonrise over the Casto Garden at 3 Taps taken by Tim Renjilian on July 31



DAY BY DAY WITH THE BTG

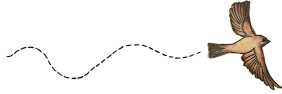
Monday, August 7



4:15 PM [Lake Walk: "Becoming a Naturalist" with Ginny Renjilian](#)

Location: Meet at Shoreline & Wetland Gardens by the Pier Building

Tuesday, August 8



12:15 PM [BTG Brown Bag Lecture: "The Birds of Our National Parks" with Nick Lund](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

4:15 PM [Garden Walk with Horticulturist Joe McMaster](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - Lakeside

Wednesday, August 9



8:00 AM [Wednesday Weeding](#)

Location: Continue on Massey south past the Butterfly garden to the other side of the Ravine.
Fun and friendly morning of weeding. Bring garden tools if you have them!

12:30 - 2:30 PM [Open Garden: Shipman Garden at Miller Cottage](#)

4:15 PM [Tree Walk with Naturalist Jack Gulvin](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - Lakeside

Thursday, August 10



8:00 AM [Bird Walk with Twan Leenders](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall
Bring binoculars if you have them, and please leave dogs at home!

12:30 - 2:30 PM [Open Garden: Shipman Garden at Miller Cottage](#)

Friday, August 11



9:00 AM [Nature Walk with Naturalist Jack Gulvin](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - Lakeside

12:30 PM [Garden Walk with Betsy Burgeson](#)

Location: [Carnahan-Jackson Garden](#) (just south of the Amp on Clark Brick Walk)

Sunday, August 13



3:00 - 4:30 PM [Life Members Event: Flower Arranging Workshop with Chris Flanders and](#)

[Melissa Woolcott](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

BIRDMAN OF THE SENATE

The BTG is partnering with long-time Chautauquan, the Honorable Jane Campbell, President and CEO of the [United States Capitol Historical Society \(USCHS\)](#), to co-sponsor a webinar on

Thursday, August 17
Noon to 1:00pm

We will discuss *A Connecticut Yankee Goes to Washington: Senator George P. McLean, Birdman of the Senate* with the author, Will McLean Greeley, a distinguished author with a passion for American history, politics, and birds. Together, we will explore the life and legacy of Connecticut's George P. McLean who helped establish lasting legal protections for birds. Senator McLean oversaw the passage of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a landmark environmental protection legislation that is still in effect today. Greeley, McLean's great-great nephew, puts McLean's victory for birds in the context of his distinguished forty-five-year career marked by many acts of reform during a time of widespread corruption and political instability.

Like all USCHS and BTG programs, this webinar is free and open to the public; registration is required.

[Register for the Webinar Here](#)

WRENS

by Dennis McNair, PhD



Photo of a house wren taken by Twan Leenders

For several years, **House Wrens** (*Troglodytes aedon*) have nested in a faux polo helmet that a former owner attached to the outside wall above the deck at our condo. The “button” (hole) at the crest of the helmet is just the right size for them, the capacity of the space apparently suits them, and the twigs they use as primary nesting materials seem to fit nicely. They’re courageous little brown parents, flitting back and forth with caterpillars for their babies, and eventually fledging them to join the chorus that endears Chautauqua to us. Karen and I share the deck with wrens until about the end of June and it’s ours for the rest of the summer. They scold us loudly when we dare to come onto the deck while they’re feeding their young, but they persist.

It might seem kind of silly for me, as a biologist, to worry about those little birds. They’re not particularly endangered - yet. **Charles Darwin** made it clear that, on average, only one female of each species can survive to replace her mother, or else Earth would be overrun by that species. (Humans – with a population of about 1.2 billion in 1859 when Darwin published his famous book and now over 8 billion - seem to be hell-bent on proving him correct.) Still, something urges me to want “my” wrens to succeed. They work so hard, they’re so cute, they’re brave – I anthropomorphize like crazy.

And birds of many species are being threatened – their prey insects and plants are being killed off or made into sources of long-lived pesticides, we remove seeds by cutting off wilted flowers in our gardens to make them “neater,” bird habitat is being encroached upon or destroyed, humans have imported **exotic species** (House Sparrows, Starlings, House Finches, etc.) that compete with native birds for nest sites and food, the list goes on and on. Researchers at the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** estimate that the North American bird population has **declined by 2.9 billion** and half the world’s bird species have gone, or are going, extinct. I haven’t heard the song of a **Meadowlark** (*Sturnella magna*) or seen a **Bobolink** (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) for years - birds that were quite common earlier in my life.

I believe that people will always find beauty in their world. It may be in art or

the love we feel for each other, but the greatest source of beauty in my world has always been the **diversity of living things**. I never doubted that **biodiversity** would always be there for me to enjoy. It finally dawned on me that things weren't right a number of years ago, when I noticed that both the **species richness** and **abundance** of insects in the stream where I had taken my Ecology class for years was beginning to decline. I'd never worried about depleting my world (or that stream) of "bugs" but suddenly it occurred to me that my students and I were becoming part of the problem instead of learning how to be part of the solution. We were collecting and counting **aquatic insects** from a part of a healthy stream where the numbers of species and the number of specimens within each species were beginning to diminish. The water was also becoming ever so slightly warmer year after year. So, I started returning healthy specimens to the stream after we had identified and counted them. However, we were only there one day per year, and the insects had to deal with changes in their environment for the other 364 days. Their numbers continued to dwindle, so I quit taking my students there and converted my class exercise to using data from prior years.

The major problem with that approach was that the students didn't get to see the **live creatures** that had brought so much joy to me ever since I was a little boy. (My favorite pastime when I was about 10 was turning over rock in the stream that ran near my home and watching the bugs there. It still is.) I also began hearing **alarming reports** of declines of other animals and plants, and of the **disintegration of the intricately evolved biological networks** that support all of us in so many ways, not just providing the beauty of life around us.

So, I'll continue to do what I can to support my tough, perky little wrens. I might not be able to truly do much to directly assist them, but I can at least stop doing things that harm them. For the month of June, the old polo helmet is theirs to use, and my wife and I will minimize our use of the deck. Our gardens are already free of pesticides, so they're feast for caterpillars (and, in turn, will feed the baby wrens). There are plenty of small actions we can pursue to make life easier for wrens and others.

Since the '60s, one of my mantras has been, "**If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.**" These simple gestures are little enough for us to do, considering that the living world has provided such delight. If I can't hear Meadowlarks anymore, perhaps at least the wrens' songs will help to swell the morning chorus and prolong it for a few more decades.

TURKEYS

Be On The Lookout - NY DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) Seeking Citizen Scientists to Report Their Wild Turkey Observations This Summer

Turkey observations are used to estimate the total number of wild turkey poults per hen statewide. This provides information about turkey reproductive success by year and helps to predict future turkey populations. [These are the results for](#)

[last year's survey.](#)

How to participate:

- **Keep an eye out for wild turkeys as you're out and about.**
- When you observe a flock, jot down the number of adult females, adult males, and poults (young of the year) that you see.
- When you're at a computer or on your phone, [please enter your observation online.](#)
- If you happen to see what you believe to be the same flock later in the month, **please do not double report** the group.
- Observing and counting wildlife can be challenging. In order to not bias the results, we ask that you only report flocks when you're confident you observed the entire group. Partial flock observations can bias the poult per hen estimates. Using binoculars can greatly improve the odds you're able to observe an entire flock.

HAWKS

Jennifer Francois and I were in Miller Park on Monday ahead of the Lake Walk and were very surprised to see two unfamiliar hawks fly overhead.

Turns out they were Harris's Hawks that Falconer Jonathan Clarkson had brought to Chautauqua for the day. He is using the hawks to scare off geese which had become a nuisance along the shoreline and at the golf course. You may remember the article about this project from our April newsletter. [Click here to read it.](#)

- Leslie Renjilian

- photo below by Beth Brockman Miller @chq4u



FREE DESIGN HELP FOR YOUR GARDEN!

You may not be aware the [Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy](#) offers FREE personal at-home yard consultation to local homeowners and landowners and gives knowledge and guidance on easy ways to add lake-friendly landscaping and lawn care practices into your own yard. The program, called LakeScapes, is a one-on-one educational program headed up by Carol Markham, a conservationist and long-time friend of the BTG.

And it just got better! Act now and you can get up to \$300 worth of native plants funded by a 2023 County 2% Bed Tax grant. The CWC is offering homeowners the opportunity to be involved in a cost-share program within Chautauqua County that will support and guide grant recipients to create watershed-friendly, pollinator-happy habitat in their yards! This includes lake/streamside buffer gardens, rain gardens, and foundation plantings, all designed to help protect water quality in our local creeks and waterways. This cost-share program includes a reimbursable grant of \$300 that will be offered to the first 25 applicants to submit an entry into the program. Note: the form says that the deadline has passed but we have it on good authority that it has not.

And don't think that just because you don't have lakefront property that you aren't part of the watershed. The Chautauqua Lake Watershed is huge—about 180 square miles, so even if you're in the cheap seats with no view of the water, you're likely in the watershed.

Contact Carol Markham at 716.664.2166 x1005 or carol@chautauquawatershed.org or click below for more information, but act fast!

[Learn More and Book Your Consultation Here](#)

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FRANCESCA RAPPOLE NIGHT GARDEN



Top: Winecups (*Callirhoe involucrata*) and Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) in the garden. Below: Betsy Burgeson at the Night Garden rededication last Friday—25 years to the day after the garden was dedicated the first time.

[Click here to learn more about the Francesca Rappole Night Garden.](#)



CATCH UP WITH THE BTG



Above: Week 5 Lake Walk with Vincent Moriarty & Mike Kelly from the The Jefferson Project.



Above: BTG Historian Janine Obee leads a tour through the Shipman Garden at Miller Cottage.
