MUCKRACE MUSINGS

Volume 8, September 2006

The Report on the Tenth Annual Muckrace

The tenth year brought the top number of participants, birds seen, and money raised! Over 80 birders participated in the tenth annual Montezuma Muckrace, held Friday and Saturday, September 8-9, in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Seneca Falls, NY. The 21 teams from throughout New York, as well as Connecticut, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Vermont, tallied a record 188 species during the 24-hour event.

The Muckrace, organized by Audubon New York and Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, raises money for bird conservation within the MWC. This year the fund-raising goal is $10,000 and is to be used for a project to study habitat characteristics of the Cerulean Warbler. Not until the team pledges are tallied will there be a final total raised for the event, but at the writing of this article it is at about $6,000.

2006 Statistics

Date:	*8-9 September*
# teams entered:	*21*
# species seen:	*188 (broke record)*
# species for winning team:	*146 (broke record)*
Amount money raised:	*$6,000 plus*
Project supported:	*Cerulean Warbler*
Winning team:	*No strings attached (CLO)*
Winning youth team:	*Downy Chicks (Cayuga Bird Club)*
Most memorable team bird:	*Cape May Warbler, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, Barred Owl, juv Stilt Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Eastern Screech Owl*
# species seen only in 2006	*2*
# hours birded:	*3 ¼-24 hours*
# warbler species recorded:	*26*

Deadline for donations and pledges is October 6, 2006.

Checks should be made out to Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex and mailed to Jillian Liner, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road. Ithaca NY 14850

In contrast to last year, there was a minimal night flight, so competitors that stayed up all night were frustrated by the lack of flight calls. However, the winning team, the Cornell Laboratory's "No Strings Attached," managed to find 146 species, another Muckrace record. The second-place team, the Cornell Birding Club's "Texas Hots," recorded 133 species, and the third-place team, Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex's "Friends That Tick Birds," found 128 species.

The youth category was won again by the Cayuga Bird Club's Downy Chicks with 73 species. The second youth team, the Wild Birds Unlimited "Hummers," consisting of nine-year-old Geoffrey Twardokus and 15-year old Cornell junior Christian Burns, came in with 52 species.

Once again, the mosquito population at Howland Island occasioned the most comments from participants, the most notable being that of the Eaton Birding Society's Bobolinks: "Thank God we made it out alive."

Team Standings 2006

1. No Strings Attached (competitive, CLO) – 146
2. Texas Hots (competitive, Cornell Students Birding Club) – 133
3. Friends That Tick Birds (competitive, FMWC) – 128
4. Wind Birders (competitive, self sponsored) – 126
5. Gallinagos (competitive, Green Heron Graphics) – 121
6. C Fries (competitive, Cornell Student Birding Club) – 119
7. ASCR Merlins (competitive, Audubon Society of the Capital Region) – 111
8. Plucky Mucksters (competitive, Rock Stream Studios) – 107
9. Tanagers (recreational, Chemung Valley Audubon) – 105
10. OAS Kestrels (recreational, Onondaga Audubon) – 104
11. Buffleheads (competitive, Minetor & Co.) – 103
12. Craniacs (competitive, NYSDEC) – 98
13. Real White Rumps (competitive, NYSOA) – 95
14. No rEgrets (competitive, Audubon NY) – 91
15. Montezuma Migrants (recreational, self sponsored) – 90
16. Mudhens (competitive Cayuga Bird Club) – 90
17. Bobolinks (recreational, Eaton Birding Society) – 82
18. Downy Chicks (youth, Cayuga Bird Club) – 73
19. Mottled Mucks (competitive, self sponsored) – 70
20. Hummers (youth, Wild Birds Unlimited) – 52
21. Humming Bobolinks (recreational, self sponsored) – 22

Team Highlights

Seeing an Osprey and Bald Eagle
An incredible warbler flock, and Shawn learning how to drive!
Sunrise
It took forever to get an owl to respond, but once they did, they wouldn't stop calling (all three species!)
Three Peregrine Falcons flying together
Being shown a snipe by the president of FOMWC
Taking to the field at 5:30AM, running into a team that started at 10:00PM and finding out that we were only 3 species behind!
A Peregrine Falcon snagging a shorebird at Knox-Marcellus Marsh
Watching a Great Blue Heron swallow a LARGE bullhead
The mid-day GC Kinglet, RB Nuthatch, Palm Warbler and Pine Warbler
Seeing all of the Purple Martins swirling to roost in the marsh

And, a BIG THANK YOU!

Many people beyond the Planning Committee, teams, and team sponsors, contribute to making the Muckrace a success. For that, we want to say thank you to the following groups and individuals:

- **Wild Birds Unlimited of Johnson City & Ithaca** for being our top sponsor with their very generous donation
- **Leupold & Stevens** optics company for 4 pairs of binoculars and a number of hats
- **Eagle Optics** for 4 pairs of binoculars and a number of baseball caps
- **Nikon** for six backpacks
- **Nice n Easy** for supplying pizza to all the participants and volunteers
- **Ken Rosenberg** for doing an incredible job emceeing the awards ceremony
- Audubon New York for printing and mailing costs and providing prizes
- Nucor Steel, Avinet (Dryden), and Ithaca Dispatch for their cash donations
- Byrne Dairy for yummy ice cream sandwiches
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology for a number of prizes
- Ducks Unlimited for a beautiful print
- Friends Lodge for prizes
- Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex for beverages and snacks
- Gimme! Coffee for some powerful, tasty coffee
- Greenstar Cooperative for fresh fruit
- Montezuma Winery for a case of wine
- WomanMade Products for the tshirt screening
- Fred Bertram for the tshirt artwork and our new Muckrace logo
- The Gillette's for opening their property to participants
- Jessica Morgan, Jane Graves, and Margaret McKinney for cookies and treats
- Laura, John, and Danika Van Niel, David and Grace Strong, and Tim Noga for helping with the awards ceremony

Montezuma Muckrace 2006 Checklist

_x__Snow Goose
_x__Canada Goose
_x__Mute Swan
_x__Wood Duck
_x__Gadwall
_x__Eurasian Wigeon *
_x__American Wigeon
_x__American Black Duck
_x__Mallard
_x__Blue-winged Teal
_x__Northern Shoveler
_x__Northern Pintail
_x__Green-winged Teal
___Canvasback
_x__Redhead
_x__Ring-necked Duck
___Greater Scaup
_x__Lesser Scaup
___Common Goldeneye
_x__Hooded Merganser
___Common Merganser
_x__Red-breasted Merganser *
_x__Ruddy Duck

_x__Ring-necked Pheasant
_x__Ruffed Grouse
_x__Wild Turkey

___Common Loon
_x__Pied-billed Grebe
___American White Pelican
_x__Double-crested Cormorant

_x__American Bittern
_x__Least Bittern
_x__Great Blue Heron
_x__Great Egret
_x__Green Heron
_x__Black-cr. Night-Heron
___Glossy Ibis
_x__Turkey Vulture

_x__Osprey
_x__Bald Eagle
_x__Northern Harrier
_x__Sharp-shinned Hawk
_x__Cooper's Hawk
___Northern Goshawk
___Red-shouldered Hawk
_x__Broad-winged Hawk *
_x__Red-tailed Hawk
_x__American Kestrel
_x__Merlin *
_x__Peregrine Falcon

_x__Virginia Rail
_x__Sora
_x__Common Moorhen
_x__American Coot
_x__Sandhill Crane*

_x__Black-bellied Plover
_x__American Golden-Plover
_x__Semipalmated Plover
_x__Killdeer
_x__Spotted Sandpiper
_x__Solitary Sandpiper
_x__Greater Yellowlegs
___Willet
_x__Lesser Yellowlegs
_x__Upland Sandpiper*
_x__Hudsonian Godwit *
___Ruddy Turnstone
_x__Sanderling*
_x__Semipalmated Sandpiper
___Western Sandpiper
_x__Least Sandpiper
_x__White-rumped Sandpiper
_x__Baird's Sandpiper
_x__Pectoral Sandpiper
_x__Dunlin*
_x__Stilt Sandpiper
___Buff-breasted Sandpiper
_x__Short-billed Dowitcher
_x__Long-billed Dowitcher
_x__Wilson's Snipe
_x__American Woodcock
_x__Wilson's Phalarope*

___Bonaparte's Gull
_x__Ring-billed Gull
_x__Herring Gull
_x__Lesser Black-backed Gull
_x__Great Black-backed Gull
_x__Caspian Tern
___Black Tern
___Common Tern

_x__Rock Pigeon
_x__Mourning Dove
_x__Black-billed Cuckoo
_x__Yellow-billed Cuckoo
_x__Eastern Screech-Owl
_x__Great Horned Owl
_x__Barred Owl
___Long-eared Owl

_x__Common Nighthawk
___Whip-poor-will
_x__Chimney Swift
_x__Ruby-throated Hummingbird
_x__Belted Kingfisher

___Red-headed Woodpecker
_x__Red-bellied Woodpecker
_x__Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*
_x__Downy Woodpecker
_x__Hairy Woodpecker
_x__Northern Flicker
_x__Pileated Woodpecker

___Olive-sided Flycatcher
_x__Eastern Wood-Pewee
_x__Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
_x__Alder Flycatcher
___Willow Flycatcher
_x__Least Flycatcher
_x__Eastern Phoebe
_x__Great Crested Flycatcher
_x__Eastern Kingbird

_x__Yellow-throated Vireo
_x__Blue-headed Vireo
_x__Warbling Vireo
_x__Philadelphia Vireo
_x__Red-eyed Vireo

_x__Blue Jay
_x__American Crow
_x__Horned Lark
_x__Purple Martin
_x__Tree Swallow
_x__Northern Rough-winged Swallow
_x__Bank Swallow
_x__Cliff Swallow
_x__Barn Swallow

_x__Black-capped Chickadee
_x__Tufted Titmouse
_x__Red-breasted Nuthatch*
_x__White-breasted Nuthatch
_x__Brown Creeper

_x__Carolina Wren
_x__House Wren
_x__Winter Wren
___Sedge Wren
_x__Marsh Wren
_x__Golden-crowned Kinglet
_x__Ruby-crowned Kinglet
_x__Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

_x__Eastern Bluebird
_x__Veery
_x__Gray-cheeked Thrush*
_x__Swainson's Thrush
_x__Hermit Thrush
_x__Wood Thrush
_x__American Robin

_x__Gray Catbird
___Northern Mockingbird
_x__Brown Thrasher*
_x__European Starling
_x__American Pipit
_x__Cedar Waxwing

_x__Blue-winged Warbler
___Golden-winged Warbler
_x__Tennessee Warbler
_x__Orange-crowned Warbler
_x__Nashville Warbler
_x__Northern Parula
_x__Yellow Warbler
_x__Chestnut-sided Warbler
_x__Magnolia Warbler
_x__Cape May Warbler*
_x__Black-throated Blue Warbler
_x__Yellow-rumped Warbler
_x__Black-throated Green Warbler
_x__Blackburnian Warbler
_x__Pine Warbler*
___Prairie Warbler
_x__Palm Warbler
_x__Bay-breasted Warbler
_x__Blackpoll Warbler
_x__Cerulean Warbler*
_x__Black-and-white Warbler
_x__American Redstart
_x__Ovenbird
_x__Northern Waterthrush
___Mourning Warbler
_x__Common Yellowthroat
_x__Hooded Warbler*
_x__Wilson's Warbler
_x__Canada Warbler
___Yellow-breasted Chat

_x__Scarlet Tanager
_x__Eastern Towhee
_x__Chipping Sparrow
_x__Field Sparrow
_x__Vesper Sparrow
_x__Savannah Sparrow
___Grasshopper Sparrow
___Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
___Fox Sparrow
_x__Song Sparrow
_x__Lincoln's Sparrow
_x__Swamp Sparrow
_x__White-throated Sparrow
___Dark-eyed Junco
_x__Northern Cardinal
_x__Rose-breasted Grosbeak
_x__Indigo Bunting
_x__Dickcissel*
_x__Bobolink
_x__Red-winged Blackbird
_x__Eastern Meadowlark
_x__Rusty Blackbird*
_x__Common Grackle
_x__Brown-headed Cowbird
___Orchard Oriole
_x__Baltimore Oriole
___Purple Finch
_x__House Finch
_x__American Goldfinch
_x__House Sparrow

Total: 188

NEW _X_Red-necked Phalarope
_x_ __No. Saw-whet Owl*

* indicates species seen by only one team

Lowlights of the Day 2006

Sounds of mosquitoes bouncing off the windshield like rain
Missing "easy" birds
Not seeing many birds at Towpath Road
Mosquitoes at MAC
Mosquitoes at Howland
Lack of shorebird habitat at May's Point and Benning's Marsh
Weather
Mosquitoes
The thrush-free hours from 0400-0600
Realizing that we weren't going to see any warblers
No song sparrows
Missing a snow goose with a broken wing
Getting stuck in mud
The warbler flocks were frustrating

Muckrace 2007
Mark your calendar!

Thanks to everyone who competed in the tenth annual Muckrace! Montezuma Muckrace #11 will be held on

Friday-Saturday September 7-8th, 2007

Audubon New York and Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex will once again be coordinating this all day birding event.

See you next year!
The Planning Committee

News and Updates

- For the curious: species identified by nocturnal flight calls were Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Veery, Wood Thrush, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. All but one of these species were recorded during the day as well.
- 2006 raised more money than any other Muckrace. This was primarily a result of teams seeking pledges and donations. Although this has been the intent of the Muckrace from the start, this was the first year that so many teams contributed. Many teams brought in over $200 and a number have raised more than $400. Proof that birders can "make it happen!" Prizes will be awarded in October to the team that raises the most money.
- Clay-colored Sparrow was seen by a single individual so not included in species count.
- We were fortunate this year that NYSDEC opened Howland Island to vehicles, which allowed greater access to the island and a refuge from the mosquitoes. We have received such positive feedback on this that we plan to do it again next year. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of camping on the island.
- As mentioned during the awards ceremony, the Planning Committee is sad to report that Cathie Sandell will be stepping down from the committee. Continuing members of the committee include Jane Graves, Jillian Liner, Jessica Morgan, and Chris Wood.
- The Muckrace Planning Committee will be reviewing the status of the Trumpeter Swan and determining if it should be counted on the Muckrace. Stay tuned!
- Please submit suggestions for next year's Emcee to the Planning Committee (jliner@audubon.org).

THANK YOU AGAIN TO ALL WHO MAKE THE MUCKRACE SUCH A SUCCESS!
LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU NEXT YEAR!