



The BIRD CALL

Newsletter of the Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.

Winter 2011

Big Sit! 2010

By Scott Mellis

Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon members and friends participated in this year's "Big Sit!," a global birding event organized by *Birdwatcher's Digest* and the New Haven Bird Club. Big Sit! participants try to identify as many species as possible from within a 17-foot diameter circle over a 24-hour period (the second Sunday of October annually). Ours was a "semi-Big Sit!"—sunrise to sunset on a deck overlooking Sheldrake Lake.

Dawn broke with mist rising from the water. Canada Geese and Mallards were apparent. Feeders were wild with American Goldfinches in drab plumage. A Belted Kingfisher rattled and a Red-tailed Hawk flew by. There was a sense of more birds, but *where?* The sun rose into our eyes. We were sightless, disoriented, desperate.

To the rescue came Doug Bloom along with Rosemary Parandelis. The sun climbed higher in the sky and, suddenly, Doug expanded our list by more than 30 species. Highlights over land included five species of Warbler, and Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Ruddy Duck, and Northern Shoveler were seen on the water. Finches exploded to cover from the feeders as a Kestrel soared above. Orlando Hidalgo and David Kauffman arrived and helped further build the day's list. The Kingfisher returned, posing on a rock to show off a fish he caught in his bill. Our last bird had Bob Breda and I flipping feverishly through Sibley: "Yes ... no ... yes ... that's *it!*" A Herring Gull!

All in all, a good time was had on a lovely day. Many thanks go to Richard Montemarano and Bob Breda for superb logistical support. Our tally was 46 species... rather satisfying for a "semi" effort from a 17-foot circle. With almost 12 months to prepare, think of what we might accomplish next year.



Scott Mellis is a BRSS member and birds from his home overlooking Sheldrake Lake.