

### **Wednesday, July 27, 2011 – Bower Park**

This was the final of 8 bird walks that RTWBC participated in for Dutchess Watershed Awareness Month (WAM) 2011.

It was also the first organized trip for RTWBC to Bower Park in Pleasant Valley. Ken and Carol Fredericks scheduled this trip and visited the site prior to the 27<sup>th</sup>. I am providing a brief overview of Bower Park because it is a new birding site for the membership.

The trails at Bower Park are the result of a communal effort among Dutchess Quarry & Supply Company, the Pleasant Valley Town Board and the Pleasant Valley Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC played a crucial role in bringing the Town and Quarry to an agreement. The park is approximately 40 acres – 20 are Town of Pleasant Valley owned and 20 belong to the Quarry. Dutchess Quarry allows people the use of the trails within their portion of Bower Park. If you visit the park, please stop by the kiosk at the trailhead. It provides a trail map and important information concerning the Dutchess Quarry signage along the trails. The several park trails have excellent signs that were provided by a local Girl Scout project. Further information about the trails (including a trail map) and history of the park can be accessed on the Pleasant Valley website at: [pleasantvalley-ny.gov/activities/bower-park.php](http://pleasantvalley-ny.gov/activities/bower-park.php).

For the trip itself-- 14 birders attended the walk. Thanks to several of the participants that are members of the Pleasant Valley CAC for sharing their knowledge of Bower Park with us.

The weather was clear, very sunny and warm (mid 80s) with a beautiful blue sky. We decided to stay on the trails that provided the most shade. Several of the trails have connecting cross trails (through fields) between them that we did not explore because of their full exposure to the sun.

We began the walk on a gravel path that circled some soccer fields and eventually led to the kiosk at the trailhead. There was a nice variety of birds present in the field and along the wooded edges of the path – such as: Barn and Tree Swallows, Phoebes, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Great Crested Flycatchers.

Our estimated numbers of the 41 species observed are as follows: Great Blue Heron (1), Turkey Vulture (1), Red-shouldered Hawk (1), Red-tailed Hawk (1), Mourning Dove (4), Red-bellied Woodpecker (4), Downy Woodpecker (2), Northern Flicker (2), Pileated Woodpecker (3), Eastern Wood-Pewee (1), Eastern Phoebe (4), Great Crested Flycatcher (2), Eastern Kingbird (2), Warbling Vireo (1), Blue Jay (3), American Crow (3), Tree Swallow (1), Barn Swallow (4), Black-capped Chickadee (8), Tufted Titmouse (1), White-breasted Nuthatch (1), Carolina Wren (2), House Wren (2), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1), American Robin (11), Gray Catbird (22), Blue-winged Warbler (1), Yellow Warbler (2), Black-throated Blue Warbler (1), Prairie Warbler (1), American Redstart (2), Common Yellowthroat (5), Eastern Towhee (2), Field Sparrow (9), Song Sparrow (10),

Northern Cardinal (5), Indigo Bunting (5), Common Grackle (1), Brown-headed Cowbird (1), House Finch (3), American Goldfinch (20).

Recommendation: This is a conveniently located park within walking distance of the Pleasant Valley hamlet. It has several well-planned trails that provide good views of the variety of habitats in the park---field, woodland and aquatic (Wappinger Creek & Great Spring Creek). It should prove to be an excellent birding site that our membership will enjoy.

I want to take this opportunity on behalf of Cornell University Cooperative Extension Dutchess County and myself to thank the leaders of RTWBC-WAM trips ---Alan Peterson, Ken and Carol Fredericks, Maury Lacher and Barbara Mansell.

-Frank Margiotta