



# THE MARSH WREN

## BRADDOCK BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

### IN THIS ISSUE...

#### A SPECIAL DEDICATION TO THE MEMORY OF OUR "GENTLE GIANT"

**B**raddock Bay Bird Observatory and the world of conservation lost a dear friend and supporter to lung cancer in December 2006. Rob van der Stricht, the "Gentle Giant," was a member of the BBBO Board of Directors, a scribe and trained bander, the organization's Mr. Fix-it, and our all-around go-to guy. He left quite a legacy at the Observatory and beyond—serving as Chair of The Nature Conservancy's Central and Western New York chapter among his many efforts on behalf of conservation.

At BBBO, Rob was instrumental in the recent acquisition of the house for banders and researchers. From helping to raise funds and working with lawyers to fixing the bathroom sink, Rob was always there. He was a unique individual with a rare combination of talents and the willingness to dedicate time to the causes and organizations that he held close to his heart.

BBBO—the organization and the people—miss Rob dearly. We will not soon forget the contributions he made to our Observatory and our lives.



# BBBO LOSES A BANDER AND A FRIEND

## REMEMBERING ROB VAN DER STRICHT

My fondest memories of Rob come in flashes, like in a home movie: Rob sealing the outside banding tables in an instant after Betsy mentioned the need; long quiet talks about the difficulties of having a lung disease (me asthma, him cancer); receiving flowers from him at a board meeting after a long spell of intense email exchanges over some contentious matters; watching him gently band birds with his big fingers; the vulnerability in his eyes when he told me the oncologist had found a lump in his neck; his quick smile and intelligent wit and very, very big heart. - *Linda Boutwell*

Rob was easy, that is easy to be around, and he was there by our sides, ready to help. He generously gave his talents and his hand to many tasks whether it be in supporting the organization, recording routine migration data, or wielding paintbrush and hammer on maintenance projects. We miss him. I miss him. - *Pat Lovallo*

When I was in a stew because I needed to find a bunch of strong backs to move the fridge from the banding lab to the back of the boathouse, he said "I can do that" and he did... entirely by himself! ♣ When I was trying to get a committee together to put the sealer on the outside tables, he said "I can do that." He was back from the hardware store in 30 minutes with the sealer, and he had the job completed in 30 minutes more. ♣ Rob loved the gardens of our new house. He wrote me one day "...by the front door, don't miss the startling iris combo – buttercup yellow and dark blue/purple" ♣ Chickadees all but disappeared in those giant hands of his...but he was so gentle as he banded them. However, when one slipped out of his grip and sassed Rob from the overhead light, I heard some of the saltiest language ever to grace the banding lab walls! - *Betsy Brooks*

One memory I have of Rob is how hard he worked at getting the new house in shape. He was so very interested in the grounds and gardens around the house. - *Donna Hilborn*

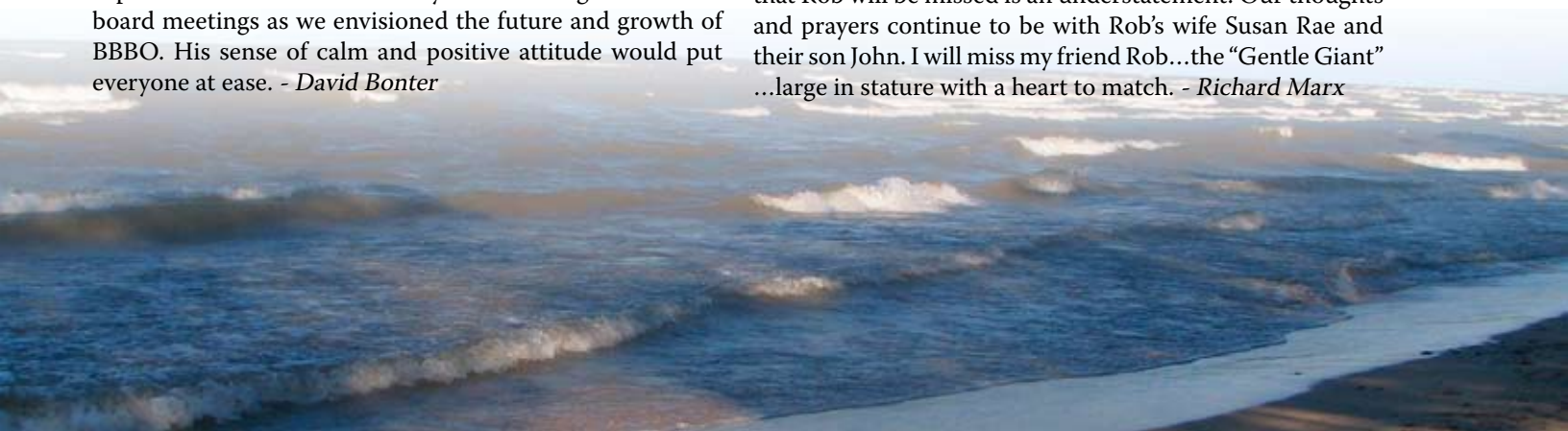
Chita and I have for several years used our walk-behind brush hog to mow the paths and net lanes at our banding station. It is sometimes hard to start. One time, when I had been pulling my guts out trying to start the machine, Rob came along, grabbed the starter rope, and with one effortless pull got it going. We will miss him very much. - *Robert McKinney*

I was so impressed with Rob's depth of knowledge and experience—he seemed to always have the right answer at board meetings as we envisioned the future and growth of BBBO. His sense of calm and positive attitude would put everyone at ease. - *David Bonter*

Rob was a truly wonderful human being and I will miss him dearly. In the short time that I was fortunate to spend with Rob, I learned much from him about generosity, humbleness, and kindheartedness. He was soft spoken and unassuming yet he had vision and a strong will to leave the world a better place through local action and commitment. He was always eager to work hard to help others and he took real initiative when it came to new projects at BBBO. In just a few years of involvement, Rob left lasting changes on BBBO that will positively affect the volunteers, staff, and students for years to come. Rob wasn't shy about rolling up his sleeves to lend a hand no matter what the task. I always enjoyed slow days of banding with Rob when we had a chance to talk about other interests of ours. Rob truly cared about the people around him and he was a man of great integrity who I will always admire and look up to. I hope that I can make Rob proud by sharing and caring as much as he did. I will remember Rob as a thoughtful, hard working, and compassionate friend, and I will never hear the phrase "Gentle Giant" without thinking fondly of him. - *Mark Deutschlander*

"Chickadees all but disappeared in those giant hands of his...but he was so gentle as he banded them."

Rob was one of those unique individuals that if we are fortunate enough to know them, touch our lives in a way that leaves a lasting imprint. Despite the struggles in his own life, he truly cared about others and more importantly, let you know it. Rob was an extremely generous person; generous with his time...generous financially to organizations that he was committed to. Rob's association with BBBO was relatively short however his presence and accomplishments will be felt for a very, very long time. One characteristic that I enjoyed about Rob was his spontaneity. I remember a last minute road trip that we took in January 2006 to view a Northern Hawk Owl...a visit to Island Cottage Woods (the first for Rob) to experience Spring migration and observe numerous species of warblers... and another visit to Island Cottage Woods when Rob, June Summers and I did some "gardening" by pulling invasive garlic mustard plants...I also think back to Rob's excitement during our acquisition of the BBBO house. To say that Rob will be missed is an understatement. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Rob's wife Susan Rae and their son John. I will miss my friend Rob...the "Gentle Giant" ...large in stature with a heart to match. - *Richard Marx*





# BBBO UPDATES

## Rob van der Stricht trail

BBBO is dedicating a new nature trail at Braddock Bay to the memory of Rob van der Stricht. The trail will meander through eight acres of land recently acquired by the Genesee Land Trust in cooperation with BBBO. The property is located adjacent to the BBBO memorial garden and is bounded by Manitou Beach Road, Braddock Avenue, and the field where BBBO operates mist nets. Although the area is currently a grassy field, it will soon be transformed into an oasis for birds and birders alike—full of viburnums, dogwoods, and other fruiting shrubs.

Rob was dedicated to the preservation of wildlife and natural habitats. He contributed tirelessly to conservation through his work at BBBO and as Chair of the Central and Western New York Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. We imagine that Rob would have greatly enjoyed wandering along the trail, and we hope that you will as well.

Please join us for an Open House on Sunday, May 20 at the banding station beginning at 9 a.m. with the van der Stricht trail dedication at noon.

## Ready to “Spring” into action!

The net lanes are cleared; the nets and banding lab will be set up in a work session on April 12 (rain date April 13), and the Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station should operate daily until early June. Ryan Kayhart will be back as our Research Assistant, Karen Velas (graduate of the spring 2006 Bander Training Class) will be our Field Assistant, and over 40 volunteers will help with banding, removing birds from the nets, scribing, and education. Our Bander Training Class has a waiting list. Rachel Muheim and Mark Deutschlander will be back to conduct research on orientation cues of migrating birds. Visitors are welcome anytime from dawn until noon.

*Left: The Lake Ontario shoreline near Braddock Bay. Rob van der Stricht's dedication and commitment helped preserve habitats for birds along the lakeshore. Above: Photo of Highbush Cranberry, a food source for migrating songbirds. Right: BBBO Board member and bander Cindy Marino shows off a newly-banded American Woodcock, fall 2006. Photos by Ryan Kayhart.*

## BBBO research published

BBBO is proud to announce two recent scientific publications that featured data collected by the Observatory. The January 2007 edition of *The Auk*, published by the American Ornithologists' Union, featured an article examining how quickly birds gained weight while staying at Braddock Bay during their migratory journey. A second article, published in the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* in December 2006, used data from the Observatory's Hamlin Beach banding station to test new methods for quantify the length of time birds stay at a site during migration.

Bonter, D.N., T.M. Donovan, and E.W. Brooks. 2007. Daily mass changes in landbirds during migration stopover on the south shore of Lake Ontario. *Auk* 124:122-133.

Morris, S.R. et al. 2006. Utility of open population models: Limitations imposed by parameter estimability in the study of migratory stopover. *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 118:513-526.

Both articles will be available at the banding station this spring.



# THE SEASON AT BRADDOCK BAY

## AUTUMN BANDING 2006

The twenty-first consecutive year of autumn banding at the Kaiser-Manitou Beach Banding Station began on 8 July and ended on 10 November 2006. Banding was carried out for at least six hours beginning at dawn every day between 28 August and 18 October, weather permitting. Banding was also conducted on 10 days prior to and six days after the intensive banding period, for a total of 10,315 net hours over 68 days (one 12 meter net open for one hour = 1 net hour). There were **4,516 birds banded** of **90 species**, down from 6,470 birds of 92 species in autumn 2005 (see table on page 6). Five male and eight female Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were released unbanded (last date, 11 September); because we now have a bander permitted to band hummingbirds, we were able to band two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds—a new species for the cumulative autumn list that now stands at 124 species. The season's overall capture rate was 43.8 birds/100 net hours (a decrease from 52.3 birds/100 net hours in 2005).



The busiest day of banding was 29 September when 337 birds of 28 species were captured. Other days with 200+ birds banded were 25 September (293), 26 September (241), and 30 September (200). By comparison, there were eight days when 200 or more birds were banded during fall migration in 2005. The greatest species diversity occurred on 25 September when 34 species were banded.

There were 674 previously banded birds that were recaptured during autumn 2006. Of these, 38 returned from an earlier season. Of particular interest were a Song Sparrow and Magnolia Warbler

that were each in their ninth year, an American Redstart in its eighth year, and a Northern Cardinal in its sixth year.

An interesting recovery of a bird banded at Braddock Bay involved a hatch-year White-throated Sparrow. The bird was banded at BBBO on 18 October and was found dead approximately 500 miles south of Braddock Bay near Evington, Virginia on 14 November.

The final two weeks of the intensive banding period were marred by bad weather including wind, rain, and cold. In fact, our nets were snow-covered on the morning of 13 October! Many late-season migrants may have been missed during this period.

Record-high numbers of eight species were banded: American Woodcock (2), Traill's Flycatcher (33), Philadelphia Vireo (36), Carolina Wren (7), Brown Thrasher (4), Chestnut-sided Warbler (27), Northern Waterthrush (29), and Indigo Bunting (4). On the negative side, European Starling was missing after being banded in 10 of the last 15 years, and Chipping Sparrow was missed after being banded in 13 of the past 15 years.

### Research

Dr. Rachel Muheim of Virginia Tech and Dr. Mark Deutschlander of Hobart & William Smith Colleges conducted research on the cues that birds use to orient during migration. Their research focused on White-throated Sparrows and will continue during spring 2007.

Dr. Kristi Hannam and Laura Janik of SUNY Geneseo took blood samples from some thrushes and catbirds for their research on immunocompetence of migrating birds.

Dr. Stefan Hames and Jim Lowe of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology installed electronic recording devices in our field to record nocturnal flight calls of migrating birds during the autumn season. Their acoustic data will be compared with banding data from Braddock Bay to evaluate the effectiveness of the two sampling methods.

### Education

Ten students successfully completed the autumn Bander Training Course. They were: Stephanie Alford, Candice Besley, Sonny Bleicher, Aaron Fields, Eduardo Muller, Derek Osswald, Isabelle Richard,

# TOP 10 SPECIES BANDED DURING AUTUMN 2006

WITH NUMBERS CAPTURED DURING PREVIOUS 10 AUTUMN SEASONS

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
White-throated Sparrow	299	715	526	898	1183	1379	867	1569	1146	1516	<b>674</b>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	271	193	193	757	492	538	330	221	702	722	<b>619</b>
Golden-crowned Kinglet	100	165	294	556	814	358	312	193	473	502	<b>458</b>
Magnolia Warbler	66	57	127	276	265	341	214	220	188	170	<b>270</b>
American Goldfinch	77	30	74	48	33	31	106	30	61	288	<b>245</b>
Hermit Thrush	117	178	96	261	216	178	238	414	307	450	<b>171</b>
Gray Catbird	35	75	86	135	83	128	160	163	102	175	<b>138</b>
Swainson's Thrush	25	65	40	167	119	147	94	150	159	165	<b>123</b>
Common Yellowthroat	41	51	53	104	76	157	144	150	107	125	<b>119</b>
Red-eyed Vireo	40	31	42	142	62	103	65	77	89	109	<b>109</b>

Alois Romanowski, Richard Shearman, and Mandi Waringa.

We welcomed students from Dr. Sara Morris's Field Biology class at Canisius College; Dr. Mark Deutschlander's first-year seminar ("Bird Obsessions") from Hobart & William Smith Colleges; Dr. Kristi Hannam's Animal Behavior Lab from SUNY Geneseo; and Dr. Rick Shearman's Environment and Society class at RIT.

Pat Lovallo represented BBBO at the Fall Fun Day sponsored by the Girl Scout's Stoney Hill Service Team at Braddock Bay Park. We enjoyed visits from Cathy Muller's Girl Scout troop, members of the Hill and Dale Garden Club of Fairport, and students from the Christian Calvary School in Farmington. In addition, many individuals visited the banding station on an informal basis.

## Appreciation

Eagle Scout candidates Jared Bennett and Matthew Humnicky of Boy Scout Troop #278 of St. Mark's Church in Greece completed building a kiosk for our Memorial Garden area, and a work table for the banding lab as well as spreading much-needed gravel on our trails.

Thanks to Tom Muller, Jim Gillette, and Bob and Chita McKinney for mowing the paths and the field; and to Doug Smith for his assistance with building management. Appreciation to the following individuals who helped scribe, tended net lanes, or assisted with other aspects of our educational or banding operation: Blair Brown, Nancy Chevalier, Jennifer Cumbo, Andy Garland, Marilyn Guenther, Gary Herbert, Donna Hilborn, Kathleen Holt, Jim Keefer, Peggy Keller, Susan Kieren, Marian Klik, John Lehr, Chita McKinney, Shirley Meston, Jane Miller, Harold Mills, Dan Niven, Justine Parada, Jesse Roberts, Lee Schofield, Jeanne Skelly, Carol Southby, Greta Stephany, Ruth Stork, Dee Weber, and Scott and Teresa Wolcott.

A special thanks to Bill Kaiser and The Genesee Land Trust for permission to band on their land.

Our fall Research Assistant was Ryan Kayhart. Banding was conducted by licensed banders David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Mark Deutschlander, Kelly Dockery, Jon Dombrowski, Erin Karnatz, Ryan Kayhart, Coby Klein, Cindy Marino, Robert McKinney, David Semple, John Waud, and Martha Zettel. Banding assistants were Linda Boutwell, Virginia Duffy, Pat Lovallo, David Mathiason, Rachel Muheim, Doug Smith, Rob van der Stricht, Leanna Twohig, Karen Velas, and Barb Wagner.

- Betsy Brooks ♦

*Left: A male Hooded Warbler banded at BBBO, autumn migration, 2006. Previous page: Dr. Rachel Muheim of Virginia Tech University clears a spot in the field to conduct studies on orientation in White-throated Sparrows. Photos by Ryan Kayhart.*





*American Woodcock banded at BBBO, autumn migration, 2006. Photo by Ryan Kayhart.*

Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Tennessee Warbler	3
American Woodcock	2	Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	Nashville Warbler	34
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	Northern Parula	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5	Yellow Warbler	31
Downy Woodpecker	16	Chestnut-sided Warbler	27
Hairy Woodpecker	1	Magnolia Warbler	270
Yellow-shafted Flicker	7	Cape May Warbler	2
Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	Black-throated Blue Warbler	82
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	22	Yellow-rumped Warbler	44
Acadian Flycatcher	1	Black-throated Green Warbler	11
Trail's Flycatcher*	33	Blackburnian Warbler	3
Least Flycatcher	30	Western Palm Warbler	3
Eastern Phoebe	13	Bay-breasted Warbler	8
Great Crested Flycatcher	1	Blackpoll Warbler	65
White-eyed Vireo	1	Black-and-white Warbler	12
Blue-headed Vireo	9	American Redstart	52
Warbling Vireo	15	Ovenbird	18
Philadelphia Vireo	36	Northern Waterthrush	29
Red-eyed Vireo	109	Connecticut Warbler	3
Blue Jay	3	Mourning Warbler	6
Black-capped Chickadee	96	Common Yellowthroat	119
Tufted Titmouse	3	Hooded Warbler	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Wilson's Warbler	54
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	Canada Warbler	6
Brown Creeper	100	Scarlet Tanager	3
Carolina Wren	7	Eastern Towhee	1
House Wren	16	American Tree Sparrow	17
Winter Wren	73	Field Sparrow	9
Golden-crowned Kinglet	458	Fox Sparrow	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	619	Song Sparrow	74
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4	Lincoln's Sparrow	17
Veery	17	Swamp Sparrow	42
Gray-cheeked Thrush	91	White-throated Sparrow	674
Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush	58	White-crowned Sparrow	35
Bicknell's Thrush	1	Dark-eyed Junco	90
Swainson's Thrush	123	Northern Cardinal	15
Hermit Thrush	171	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5
Wood Thrush	8	Indigo Bunting	4
American Robin	8	Red-winged Blackbird	1
Gray Catbird	138	Rusty Blackbird	2
Brown Thrasher	4	Baltimore Oriole	3
Cedar Waxwing	69	Purple Finch	1
Blue-winged Warbler	5	House Finch	1
Brewster's Warbler	1	American Goldfinch	245

# BBBO ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2006

## Income

Memberships & Contribution	\$6,507
Merchandise Sales	\$1,626
Bander Training Courses	\$3,060
Interest on Investments	\$270
Educational Programs	\$292
Capital Campaign Fund	\$92,860
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$104,615</i>

BBBO relies on thousands of volunteer hours and the generous support of our members and volunteers to make our research, education, and conservation efforts possible. We invite anyone with an interest in birds or conservation to become involved. BBBO is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization. Donations to the Observatory are tax-deductible.

## Expenses

Merchandise for sale	\$1,894
Personnel	\$3,500
Equipment - mist nets etc.	\$339
Banding station expenses	\$1,471
Printing and Mailings	\$1,177
Education & Training	\$63
Administrative & web site	\$942
House expenses	\$1,340
House purchase & improvements	\$104,434
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$115,160</i>

### January to December 2006

Total Income	\$104,615
Total Expenses	\$115,160
Starting Balance	\$31,804
Ending Balance	\$21,259
Remaining Mortgage Commitment:	\$20,771

BBBO wishes to thank **Frontier** for providing free high-speed Internet service.

*Which species is it?*  
Can you guess which species this wing belongs to? What is the bird's age and sex? The answers will appear in the next issue of *The Marsh Wren*.



Did you recognize the Northern Flicker (left) from the last issue of *The Marsh Wren*? Note the yellow shafts on the tail feathers—a feature unique to flickers. The shafts on the primary flight feathers are similarly colored. Flickers in the east tend to have yellow shafts, whereas the feather shafts on western birds are salmon-red. The two races of flickers hybridize and intermediate forms, such as this bird, result.

## Has your membership expired?

If so, this may be your last issue of *The Marsh Wren*. Please check your membership status by finding the expiration date printed on the mailing label below. Memberships expire at the end of the year printed. To join BBBO, please mail a check to:

Braddock Bay Bird Observatory  
PO Box 12876  
Rochester, NY 14612

Membership categories are: Student \$10, Individual \$20, Family \$25, Contributing \$100, Corporate \$250. Thank you for your support!

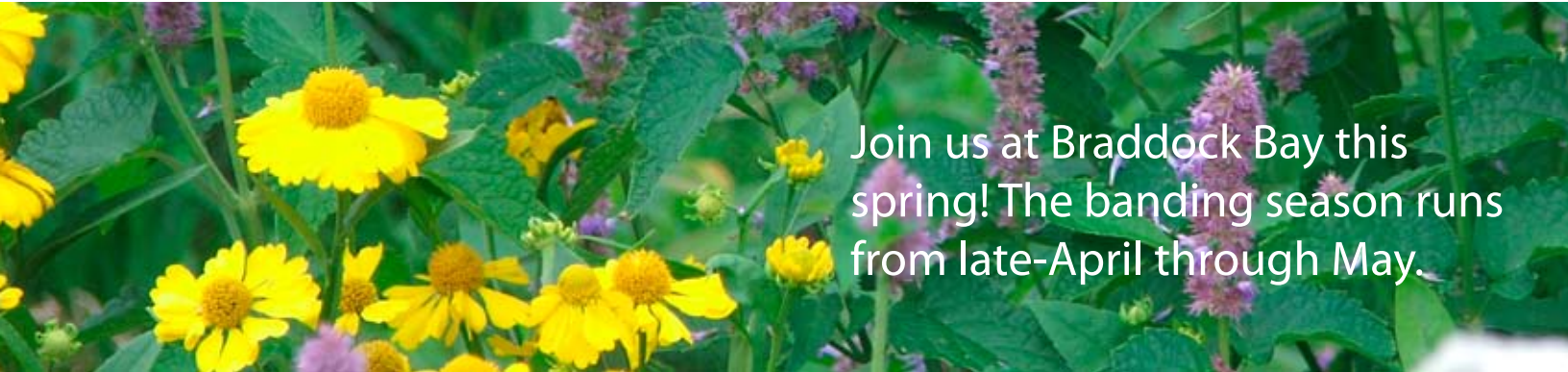
## BRADDOCK BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY

A non-profit (501(c)(3)) organization dedicated to ornithological research, education, and conservation. The organization is operated entirely by volunteers, and financially supported by our members.

### BBBO Officers and Advisers:

*President* Mark Deutschlander; *Vice-President* David Bonter; *Treasurer* Robert McKinney; *Secretary* Linda Boutwell; *Directors* Elizabeth Brooks, Cindy Marino, and Richard Marx; *Development Committee* Richard Marx; *Membership Advisor* Chita McKinney; *Education Committee* Linda Boutwell, Liz Britton-Barry, Patricia Lovallo, and Cindy Marino; *Research Committee* David Bonter, Elizabeth Brooks, Mark Deutschlander, Kristi Hannam, Sara Morris, Chris Norment, and John Waud.

Front page photo of Marsh Wren © Robert Royle, "Brewster's" Warbler by Charlie Eiseman. Flowers at BBBO (below) by Ryan Kayhart. Newsletter editing and design by David Bonter.



Join us at Braddock Bay this spring! The banding season runs from late-April through May.



*The Marsh Wren*  
Braddock Bay Bird Observatory  
PO Box 12876  
Rochester, NY 14612