



## ***NEWS from the DUNES***

### **Black Pond Wildlife Management Area: ADA Compliant and a Birders Paradise**

By 2007 Dune Steward Michael T. Slattery

Black Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Henderson is a great place for birdwatchers, nature lovers, vacationers, seasonal and local residents, and is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. A nearly half-mile raised boardwalk suitable for people with all types of disabilities was added here in 2001.

Managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and interpreted in the summer months by Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Stewards, this 526-acre site is part of the Eastern Lake Ontario Marshes Bird Conservation Area. From the observation platforms of the ADA-compliant trail, complete with side rails and benches are spectacular views of Black Pond and Lake Ontario. The Nature Conservancy's checklist of the Birds of the Eastern Lake Ontario Shoreline lists 281 species of birds that can be seen in the forest, marsh, pond, dune and lake habitats.

The rich variety of habitats at Black Pond WMA offers a unique opportunity to view a wide range of flora and fauna, especially birds! The Red Cedar uplands at the WMA entrance are home to many of the more common songbirds. The ADA-compliant trail starts in a flooded Silver Maple woodland where the quiet observer may catch a glimpse of breeding birds such as the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Pileated Woodpecker, Scarlet Tanager, and Wood Thrush. Warblers, sparrows, and flycatchers can also be spotted here.

The trail continues along the marsh to the observation platform overlooking Black Pond where wetland birds such as Osprey, American Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Blue-winged Teal, and Wood Duck can be seen. The ADA-compliant boardwalk affords an unequalled view of the sand dunes and cottonwoods.

Song Sparrows, Great Crested Flycatchers, and Northern Orioles will no doubt greet you as you make your way to the last observation platform overlooking Lake Ontario, the beach, and bird sanctuary. Here is where you find gulls, terns, and the lucky observer may see Bald Eagles, Tundra Swans, or the Black Tern, an endangered species in New York State.

This unique area, including the bird sanctuary at the El Dorado Nature Preserve, hosts a long list of shorebirds during migration, including various species of plovers, sandpipers, and yellowlegs. The area is home to two breeding shorebirds, the Spotted Sandpiper and Killdeer. Northern New York Land Steward Chris Lajewski of The Nature Conservancy says, "The El Dorado bird sanctuary provides a vital stopover for fall migrating shorebirds traveling thousands of miles from the Arctic to South America."



*The boardwalk at Black Pond Wildlife Management Area looking north toward El Dorado Nature Preserve. Photo: Mary Penney, NY Sea Grant*

### **Observe Special Land Use Regulations to Protect Natural Areas**

These bird conservation areas and sanctuaries play a vital role in conservation by leaving needed habitat undeveloped and by the enforcement of special land use regulations. The regulations include staying on the trails, and not collecting or disturbing plants, birds, or wildlife. Additional regulations for the bird sanctuary include no motor vehicles, bicycles, hunting, fishing or trapping, and restricted access from May 15 to September 30.

The State of New York offers many ADA-compliant sites for observing nature, camping, fishing, and picnicking in the local area. These sites can be located on the NYS DEC and State Parks websites and include sites along Lake Ontario and the Salmon River.

During July 2007 a tour of Black Pond/El Dorado Dune was led by Steward Mike Slattery, on bird life and conservation in the Eastern Lake Ontario Marsh Bird Conservation Areas and other ADA-compliant facilities in the area.

For more information about the Steward Program please contact New York Sea Grant, 315-312-3042; or visit us on the web at [www.nysgextension.org](http://www.nysgextension.org).

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The Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Steward & Salmon River Steward Program is managed by New York Sea Grant in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Parks, and The Nature Conservancy.

