

# BAXTER'S BACKCOUNTRY BUGLE



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## IT'S FOR THE BIRDS!

Birding. It's the new buzz word for bird watching. Not only do birders have a new word, they also have commandeered a new-found respect. It's hip to bird. Yes that's right. Birding is in. Birding can be as simple as looking out the window into your yard or can involve a hike through the countryside. You need your field guide, your binoculars, your notebook. Soon you be impressing others by using words like alticial or pishing.

Binoculars are key to spotting the best birds. Magnification is not as important as the field of vision. Look for binoculars that are a magnification of 7 to 10 with a lens objective of 42 or 50. This allows in more light and will allow you to sweep a larger area – important since the birds fly away just when you get them in your sights. BCO sells the Celestron Outland 10x42 waterproof binocular in addition to many others.

If you are venturing beyond your backyard, clothing is also important. Wear layers – this will enable you to add or take off a layer as the temperature changes. Lightweight, breathable fabrics are great. Ex-Officio, Patagonia and the North Face all have clothing that works just great for your birding adventures. Some items are also have SPF and insect repellent right in the fabric like Buzz Off by Ex Officio. If SPF and repellent aren't built in, then add some sun block, and a hat with a good brim to shade your face and neck.

Insect repellent is also essential when birding. Deet is very effective at repelling ticks, mosquitoes, black flies and gnats. There are also some herbal repellents available as well. We recommend Porter's Bug Barrier for an effective herbal protection. Many people use an herbal on their bodies and deet on clothing, hats and shoes. The right preparation keeps bugs and ticks at bay.

Footwear is also important. Several styles of hiking boots have Gortex liners which are very handy on wet trails or in marshy areas favored by many birds. If you don't have Gortex boots, give your boots a quick spray with Tectron, a waterproofing treatment. Wear wool socks by either Smartwool or Wigwam. Wool protects your feet even when wet and are effective not only in winter but summer as well.

Enjoy perusing our book department and reading about bird behavior. "Down and Dirty Birding" is very informative but humorous as well. It's by Joey Slinger and he says funny things like "birding is fun

but stay away from people who think it's better than sex." The National Audubon Society offers a field guide to birds with beautiful, detailed photographs. It's organized visually by color and shape for quick reference.

## I LOVE NY HIKE!

For a change of pace, explore the Appalachian Trail on the New York State side. This hike starts at the AT railroad crossing on Rt. 22 in Pawling and continues to the Telephone Pioneers Shelter, a distance of 3.1 miles each way. If you don't want to hike the whole way to the shelter, the first mile and a half to the top of Corbin Hill is very pretty. The trail crosses through a meadow and then a marsh which is part of The Great Swamp and is home to 9 rare plants and animals. The trail then continues through a lovely upland wooded area to Corbin Hill at height of 760 feet. The path is smooth and the elevation gain is very gentle. At the top of Corbin Hill, the trail levels out – follow posts through the field. The trail also passes the Dover Oak, a huge white Oak tree near West Dover Rd. Once you cross the road, the shelter is only a short distance. Return the way you came. The trailhead is near the large pullout area on Rt. 22. Walk to the trail crossing at the railroad platform. Be careful crossing the tracks!

## Breast Cancer Awareness & Fundraiser

Join the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, **Backcountry Outfitters**, Eastern Mountain Sports, and the Appalachian Mountain Club on Thursday, July 27 from 10am -2pm at the Kent Common Park as they welcome Appalachian Trail through-hikers Chad Anderson and Daane DeBoer to Connecticut. They are hiking the 2160 mile long Appalachian Trail in honor of Anderson's mother and her fight against breast cancer. Tagged Hike 4 the Cure, they hope to raise awareness of breast cancer and money for the CT Affiliate of the Komen Foundation.

Food will be available for purchase with all proceeds benefiting the CT Affiliate of Komen. There will be special giveaways to the first 100 attendees who wear pink as well as door prizes and demonstrations of camping gear. Local rock band, **Just Be Giraffe** will be performing. Information will also be available on local trails and hikes, Appalachian Mountain Club membership and breast cancer awareness.

The event is open to the public and wearing pink is encouraged. For more information or directions, call Backcountry Outfitters in Kent at 860-927-3377 or 888-549-3377.

