

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOL. 7, NO. 8

APRIL 1977

NEXT MEETING:

TUESDAY, APRIL 12TH
8:15 P.M., FREEPORT LIBRARY

GUEST SPEAKER:

Mr. Adrian Dignan

PROGRAM:

"Birds, Bugs and Flowers"



SSAS member, Adrian Dignan, will present an entertaining and colorful slide show on the birds, flowers, insects and nature scenes of LI. So, if you would like to know more about the "nature habitat" in your backyard, please mark your calendar -- TUESDAY, APRIL 12TH, 8:15 P.M., FREEPORT LIBRARY. Don't miss it!

SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIP

The Board of Directors of South Shore Audubon is once again offering its annual scholarship to the Audubon Workshop in Maine. This is the third year we have offered this workshop which is scheduled for the last two weeks in July. Anyone interested in conservation and ecology, which includes all of nature, should not miss the opportunity to be considered for this scholarship. If you are a birder, wildflower enthusiast, or just a nature lover, please write explaining how this workshop could help you further spread the ecological theme. Anyone 18 years or older as of June 1977 is eligible. Please write today to: (Deadline April 20th)

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

P. O. BOX 31
FREEPORT, NEW YORK 11520

CANOE TRIP - JUNE 5TH

This is a 4-5 hour canoe trip down (up?) the Carman's River, L.I., N.Y. on June 5th. Cost - \$5/person. Three people per canoe. Maximum of 36 persons can be accommodated on a first come, first served basis. The trip will involve some portage (carrying) of the canoes over very short distances. For reservations call: Francis Cooper - 485-8173.



..·CONSERVATION NEWS·..

Due to a suit filed by Nassau and Suffolk counties, the National Resources Defense Council, and other private groups, a U.S. District Court has voided \$1.3 billion in oil and gas leases on the Mid Atlantic Continental Shelf. The major reason cited was a failure to consider the environmental impact of pipeline routes from shore to the drilling sites. Also cited was the lack of heed paid to the National Environmental Policy Act. This decision could affect future leases, especially those scheduled this June for areas off New England. The U.S. Geological Survey has also revised its estimates on the amount of gas and oil on the Mid Atlantic Shelf sharply downward.

President Carter's proposed budget seems to address some energy problems squarely. The following proposals have alleviated the fears of some environmentalists. The President is asking for a \$304 million cut in spending along the lines of nuclear research. Almost 2/3 of this amount will be cut from breeder reactor programs. On the other hand, the President has requested increased funds for energy conservation and solar energy programs. The budget is also seeking an additional 11 million dollars for the EPA, an amount that could establish some 600 new jobs. The President is also seeking to establish a new Department of Energy. This new agency would consolidate and replace the functions of the Federal Energy Administration, Energy Research and Development Administration, Federal Power Commission, and 50 other existing agencies. The only snag so far is whether Congress is ready to instigate such a change or just allow the existing bureaucracy to carry on.

One of the things National Audubon tries hardest to do is to enlist its general membership to write their elected officials on issues relevant to our environment. Along these lines vast quantities of facts and opinions are made available to us by National for our use. The following guidelines can act as a rule of thumb in writing your representatives. These general points to remember about writing to Congress are just plain common sense, but often elude somebody who is emotionally aroused by an issue. 1. Try to write as early as possible. 2. Try to type the letter and be sure to include your return address on both the letter and the envelope. 3. As briefly as possible state the reason you are writing, identify the subject clearly, and include all bill numbers if possible. 4. State what you want your congressman to do and why you want him to do it. Make sure you are accurate in your facts and reasonable in your request. If you can offer an alternative course of action by all means do so. 5. Ask your representative to state his position so you can inform other members of the community. 6. Attempt to thank your representative for actions he has taken in the past that you agree with and strive to follow your present letter with a thank you if action is taken along the lines you were striving for. 7. Never threaten. 8. Address the letter properly and hand sign it at the end.

It is also helpful to direct your letters to the most responsive party. Your local representative is a prime target, while congressmen from neighboring or faraway districts are likely to be unreceptive. A letter addressed to the chairman of a particular committee is apt to be worthwhile. Senators, due to their national image, will usually reply regardless of your residence. If time is short, use a telegram. Western Union offers a public opinion telegram to elected officials at \$2 for 15 words. To reach Western Union in our area call toll free 800 257-2211.



Paul Butkereit, Conservation

SSAS now has an insignia decal, showing a Skimmer in flight, to display on the rear-view window of your car or any other appropriate place. The cost is 50¢ and they are available at all meetings.

We are pleased to present another excellent article by the foremost Long Island naturalist, Mr. Roy Latham.

The Fringed Gentian on Eastern Long Island

The Gentian family, *Gentianaceae*, consists of several genera of over 700 species throughout the world, with less than 100 species in the genus *Gentiana*. The fringed gentian, *Gentiana crinita*, is the only species noted in this letter.

I first discovered it in September 1920, on the wet, sandy west shore of Oyster Pond, Montauk—large, handsome plants with a maximum height of 3 feet in full bloom. A year later, in September 1921, a magnificent colony of fringed gentians was located at Northwest, in a wet clearing surrounded by low woods. This clearing of 1/2 acre was a thrilling sight. It was a solid block of fringed gentians in full bloom, with an average height of 30 inches. Such a display of wildflowers does not make one wonder why some people consider the fringed gentian the most beautiful of wildflowers.

The fringed gentian is an annual and the seeds are scattered far by the late fall and winter winds. New colonies are established with few or no traces of the former flowering conditions. The colony at Northwest was a perfect example of this, for a year later in September 1922, a careful search of the entire 1/2 acre produced only one stunted gentian plant 6 inches high with one dwarfed blossom. A renewed colony could not be located in that wide region with many clearings so suitable for this gentian.

The fringed gentian is, or was, scattered from Sag Harbor eastward, in fair size stands of several plants, in moist pastures near the shore to Montauk. The largest and most showy plants were on the shores of Oyster Pond at Montauk.

This gentian is a late flowering species. I never looked for it west of the Sag Harbor range. The disappearance of the fringed gentian from a site is well known and recognized in the manual of botany. The complete vanishing of such a prolific blooming species in a single season is most disappointing to a person expecting to find it in the same place the following year, with the result that none exists there at all.

Roy Latham, Orient, Long Island



Faking a Marsh to Save a Lake

Bio-filter...a fancy word for something nature's been doing all along. Now several L.I. towns are putting nature's marsh-filtration water treatment process to work in restoring vitality and cleaner waters to L.I.'s largest freshwater lake, Lake Ronkonkoma in Suffolk County.

The unique project will use a series of 10 ecological re-charge basins fashioned out of sand mounds and channels, instead of traditional cement or tank-type construction. The bio-filter then is created by establishing indigenous marsh plants both inside the channelized recharge area and outside, which serves two purposes. The plants blend the basin aesthetically into the surrounding environment, and they also function as the purifiers. This will be the first time this innovative concept has been used on a lakewide scale.

A major part of the problem which often forced the closings of both private and public beaches on Ronkonkoma is the direct flushing of surface water runoff into the lake. The treatment ponds will trap any materials in the runoff contaminated with coliform organisms, heavy metals and nutrients. This will be accomplished by physical sedimentation, enhanced by the slow movement of water through the heavily planted pond, followed by biological decomposition of this material and subsequent uptake of the dissolved nutrients and heavy metals by the plants.

Under grant conditions specified by the EPA, the project sponsors are first to construct three recharge ponds and prove that they work as predicted, before continuing with the remaining seven ponds. The only non-sand structure will be a surge tank at the end of each pond which will aid in the removal of suspended solids when design capacity is exceeded during exceptionally severe storms and to maintain a water level suitable for plant growth within the pond.

This project, recently approved by EPA, is one of several programs being tackled statewide under the Federal Clean Lake Restoration Program.

(The above is from the January 1977 New York State Environment Newsletter)

The following is Part 2 in a series of articles by Al Lemke on his recent trip to South Africa.

Olifants - Hippos, Hoopoes and Hamerkops

Situated on a high bluff overlooking the river of the same name, Olifants offers a panoramic view of the rolling Kruger bushveld. From our rondavel at the edge of the escarpment we could watch the animals come to slake their thirst. A sand bank was almost covered with basking hippopotami.

Although lacking the brilliant aloes that so charmed us at Letaba, this camp also boasted a substantial variety of birds - among others the lovely crested barbet, black eyed bulbuls, yellow eyed canaries, Cape sparrows (very similar to our house sparrows) and a pair of delightful African hoopoes at their nest in the hollow of a tree.

A five mile drive from camp brought us to a low bridge crossing the Olifants River, Kruger's largest, and a close-up view of the stream and its wildlife. The animals are accustomed to cars, and as long as one does not get out they come quite near. Some 30 feet away a lone hippo was contentedly feeding in the stream, which meanders its way eastward through the park into Mozambique to eventually empty into the Indian Ocean.

On the edge of the bridge a wire tailed swallow, with glossy violet-blue back and chestnut cap, was resting between bouts of chasing insects. A few feet away sat an African pied wagtail, his black and white plumage brilliant in the sun. And, to cap a climax, a hamerkop, an all brown bird with a large crest which, coupled with its large bill, gives the appearance of a hammer shape, whence the name. After watching the water for a time, he hopped into the shallows at the river's edge, shuffling one foot in the mud to stir up its food-tiny shrimps, crustacea, insects, worms, etc.

Driving back to camp we encountered an old friend from our previous visits, the lilac breasted roller, one of the region's most colorful birds - lilac, yellow, green and blue. Another common resident was the magpie shrike, with a tail almost three times as long as his body.

Our three-day visit ended all too soon, and we headed to our last camp in Kruger, Skukuza.

Al Lemke



Our membership of 1,100 is steadily climbing, making us one of Audubon's largest chapters. Increased participation and interest in the environment, wildlife that abounds all around us, and important concepts concerning man's role in his shared habitat are all instrumental. The following is a list of new members to our chapter - the largest list ever received by South Shore Audubon from National Audubon. Welcome and enjoy!

Mr. Charles P. Beach
L. Beletsky
R. & G. Bernstein
T. Bineares
Mrs. H.F. Bullwinkle
Mrs. E. Eskart
Mr. A. J. Eckert
Mr. Harold Fait
Rhona Fiedler
Mr. David Grover
Mr. Jerry Gruppo
Thomas Halpern
Diane Hoffman
Mr. S. Horowitz
Mr. H.P. Jennerjahn
Mr. John J. Gammill

Mrs. Daniel Kass
Mrs. Walter Keating
Mr. & Mrs. S. Kern
Diana Knop
Mr. Harry Koslow
C. Martinez
Herbert C. Mayer MD
Mr. Peter Mingovits
B. Builder
Mr. James Muller
Mr. Ed Murphy
Mr. V. Rizzuto
Mr. Jim Rozakis
Mr. Harry W. Rudman
Mr. & Mrs. P. Schottke
J.A. Demaro

Mrs. Ruth Schwartz
Stephen Sciacca
Anthony R. Sokolowski
Ira L. Sorokin
Mr. & Mrs. John A. Warring
A.M. Williams
Mr. & Mrs. William Zuendt
Virginia Farmer
Mrs. Willis Reese
Mrs. Zita Auerbach
Mrs. G. DeBiagi
Mr. Joseph W. Farrell
Ms. Pricilla Felia
Chris Flynn
Mr. Edward Fuller
Mr. & Mrs. Paul R. Gale

Teresa Stoltz, Membership Chairperson

CLEANING OIL-SOAKED WATERFOWL



Frequent oil spill mishaps during the past few months have increased the media's awareness and tragedy of these incidents. 1977 marked its debut with one gross spill after another - both ocean and river habitats were ravaged. Although it has become increasingly apparent that efforts to clean up the waterways and affected coastlines are tedious and largely unsuccessful, the same is not true for the efforts directed toward the saving of recovered birds consumed by the oil. New techniques have substantially enhanced chances for recovery in shortened treatment time. At one time it was necessary to contain affected birds for several months. This time span has been considerably cut to an average confinement of two weeks. Long Island has a remarkable organization devoted to these efforts. The Waterfowl Rescue Team has done much to aid waterfowl that have been contaminated in recent spills. The following guideline is taken from this group's Information Sheet for 1975, and deals with the procedure involved in the de-oiling of waterfowl. Transportation of birds is most safely done by using covered cardboard boxes with air holes. The birds are prepared for treatment by cleaning their nostrils with Q-tips and protecting their eyes with vaseline. Three workers are needed to clean and hold the bird safely while applying the appropriate cleaning agent. Polycomplex A-11, Basic-H, LOC or Shell Sol 70 are often used. If using Shell Sol 70, the following procedure is advised: The head is cleaned while one worker holds the bird gently but firmly and another worker holds the beak closed and head still. A third worker cleans the head by swabbing affected areas with rags dipped in solvent. In order to clean the body, one worker holds the bird firmly, another worker holds the bird's head above the solution, and a third worker aids in dunking the bird in the first pan of the solvent. The feathers are exposed by opening the bird's wings. One important caution: It is very important not to rub against the lie of the feathers! The bird is lifted out of the solution and the above procedure is followed in three more pans filled with solvent. The bird is then blotted dry with rags and blown dry with hairdryers. It is vitally important to keep birds in warm, draft-free environments - above 60 degrees is best. Housed in cages, fed, watered and medicated, the birds are confined and observed. The second day of treatment involves the same cleaning procedures as the day before. Although the de-oiling can be very successful, the percentage of survival is determined by the speed in which the bird is found and treated after being contaminated by the oil. Ingestion of the oil as the bird tries to preen himself decreases chances of full and speedy recovery. The Waterfowl Resue Team advises that individuals who find single birds affected by oil can do an initial treatment using vegetable oil followed by a dusting with corn meal. For more info. on the Waterfowl Rescue Team, call T.R. Sanctuary WA 2-3200.

Joan Butkerei

Dear Folks: As I only received 5 replys to the Bird Feeder Survey this mo., I will print computations for March and April in the May newsletter. Please don't forget to mail your completed Bird Feeder Survey by April 15th.

 BIRD FEEDER SURVEY - Please keep a log of the # of the following birds at your feeders - by the month. The Skimmer deadline is printed on the back of your Bulletin. Please send your computations to our editor, Pat Davis, 7 Myers Avenue, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| MOURNING DOVE | _____ | HOUSE SPARROW | _____ | HOUSE FINCH | _____ |
| DOWNY WOODPECKER | _____ | RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD | _____ | AM. GOLDFINCH | _____ |
| BLUE JAY | _____ | HAIRY WOODPECKER | _____ | TOWHEE | _____ |
| BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE | _____ | COMMON GRACKLE | _____ | SLATE-COLORED JUNCO | _____ |
| TUFTED TITMOUSE | _____ | BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD | _____ | TREE SPARROW | _____ |
| WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH | _____ | CARDINAL | _____ | SONG SPARROW | _____ |
| MOCKINGBIRD | _____ | EVENING GROSBK | _____ | FOX SPARROW | _____ |
| STARLING | _____ | WHITE-THROAT SPARROW | _____ | ROBIN | _____ |

BIRD WALKS 1977

FIELD TRIPS: Starting time - 9:30 A.M.

No walk if it rains, snows, or temperature is 25 degrees or below. SSAS member, Irving Berlin, has suggested that each person on the bird trip carry a knapsack or bag to pick up debris of all types along the walk. That way, we'll be making the sanctuaries more beautiful while enjoying them.

- APR. 3 - West End #2, N.W. corner
- 10 - Zach's Bay, Pkg. Fld. #4
N.E. corner
- 17 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- 24 - West End #2, N.W. corner

- May 1 - Tobay, J.F.K. Sanctuary
- 8 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- 15 - West End #2, N.E. corner
- 22 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- 29 - NO BIRDWALK

June 5 - Canoe Trip - Details Pg. 1
Elliot Kutner, Birding

COMING EVENTS:

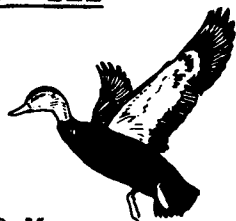
AT THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT SANCTUARY:
Beach Adventure at Sagamore Hill

April 17, 1:30 P.M.

Meet at Old Orchard

Discovering a Spring Woods

May 8, 1:30 P.M.



SSAS REGULAR MEETING:

TUESDAY, APRIL 12TH, 8:15 P.M.

Mr. Adrian Dignan

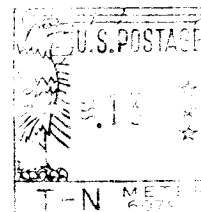
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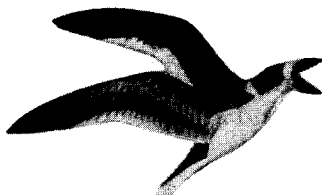
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SSAS SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE APRIL 20TH

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