

There are few dry eyes when it comes time to leave. But it doesn't end there. This experience is designed to stay with these camp "graduates" and illuminate the course of their lives for a very long time to come. Dates: August 1-11, 1993 or August 14-24, 1993.

Ecology Workshop in Connecticut. A Pileated Woodpecker may be your alarm clock as its drumming breaks the silence of the New England forest. This is one of nearly 100 avian species you could see during your stay here — though you'll do much more than identify birds. Our purpose is to learn how birds and all other species are tied together in an intricate web of life.

You'll take leisurely hikes on our beautiful 485-acre nature sanctuary in Greenwich, through magnificent deciduous and hemlock forests, across lush meadows, alongside (and sometimes *in*) life-filled lakes, ponds, and streams. And you'll explore beach, intertidal, and marine ecosystems on Long Island Sound. Lecture and lab work supplement field studies, while optional classes might include nature photography and microcomputer use. There's also ample time for stargazing, book browsing, meadow lounging, and camp camaraderie.

Many educators come to improve their professional skills in sessions that emphasize practical teaching techniques for school classes, youth groups, and local Audubon chapter education programs. These workshops offer total immersion in the major natural habitats and ecosystems of New England. Modern facilities include a library, auditorium, and double-occupancy rooms furnished with private baths. Dates: July 4-10, 11-17, 18-24, or 25-31; August 1-7 or 8-14, 1993.

BIRD SEED SAVINGS DAY REMINDER

Our second and last Bird Seed Savings Day is Super Bowl Sunday, January 31, 1993, from 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM at Tackapausha Museum, located on Washington Avenue in Seaford (between Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway). Although the deadline for preorders has passed, extras of all types of seed will be available on the day of the sale. Help is needed to take orders and to aid in unloading seed. If you wish to volunteer, call Paul Butkereit at 623-0843 late evenings.

Seed - Feeders
Houses - Baths
Books - Gifts

(518) 694-2180



"NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE"

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Located between McDonald's & Dunkin' Donuts

CONSERVATION REPORT Fighting Olympus — NIMBY or Aquifer Protection

Annie F. McIntyre

Olympus has struck a deal through the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) to move its operations from two sites in Nassau County to one corporate headquarters on 53.7 acres within the Huntington/Dix Hills Special Groundwater Protection Area (SGPA).

An SGPA is an area, designated by the state, which is considered vital to groundwater recharge within a Sole Source Aquifer Area (meaning the residents rely on their aquifer as their sole source of potable water). Long Island is a sole source aquifer area. Nine areas on L.I. have been designated as SGPA's. These areas are mandated by Article 55 of NY State Law to restrict development to ensure nondegradation of the aquifer.

The Olympus facility will include almost 500 employees and will encompass administrative offices, research and development, and "light manufacturing." To believe no degradation to the groundwater can be insured is folly.

There are many intricacies to this issue, several of which would make even the disinterested raise an eyebrow. One is that the middleman — the developer who will build this building — has a 99 year lease on the property, with an option to buy the land in 10 years. Not only is this privatizing protected state lands, but the price the developer will pay is approximately \$134,000 per acre. This is over \$500,000 per acre less than Swissair paid when it moved to Pinelawn Rd. in Melville. Swissair had to pay the market commercial price.

Neither the developer, Parr, nor Olympus will pay any sales, mortgage, transfer, or NY State gains tax. Olympus will pay modified real estate taxes, 10% the first year, 20% the second, etc. (Wouldn't we all like a break like that?)

Coupled with this is the fact that there is an almost 30% vacancy of already available office space along the commercially zoned Rt. 110 corridor.

Here's some food for thought: I imagine that one reason for us all living here on L.I. is its natural beauty and varied habitats. Town zoning laws help to maintain that. This land was zoned 2-acre residential by the town of Huntington. The UDC has overridden Huntington's code (the town is suing). If the UDC can come in and override 2-acre zoning within an SGPA, will any place on Long Island truly be protected from its reach?

Please don't believe *Newsday* — this is not a NIMBY issue. We all depend on our aquifers for fresh water and our town zoning codes for protecting our towns. Please write or call Governor Cuomo. Tell him that the UDC action is wrong! Write to Governor Mario M. Cuomo, Executive Chambers, Albany, NY 12224, or call (518) 474-8390 or (212) 417-2100 (his NYC office).

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marion Yavarkovsky

Start your New Year with a resolution to become acquainted with the benefits your membership in SSAS offers to you. Come to meetings, bird walks, and special events. You will meet a wonderful group of people who share your interest and commitment to the natural world.

[For information on joining the South Shore Audubon Society, please call our Membership Chairperson, Marion Yavarkovsky, at 379-2090. The best time to call is after 4 PM, Monday through Friday.]

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT SANCTUARY

134 Cove Road
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-3200

Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bird Sanctuary is owned by the National Audubon Society and operated by the Community and three local Audubon chapters, including South Shore Audubon. The following programs are open to the public. Space is limited and registration is required. All program fees are required at the time of registration.

Saturday, February 6th (2 PM to 4 PM) – Oyster Bay Waterfowl Walk. Meet at the Sanctuary to learn the fundamentals of duck identification. We will view slides and specimens at the Sanctuary and then visit great duck spots of Oyster Bay. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

Tuesday, February 16th (7 PM to 9 PM) – Owl Prowl at TRS. We will learn about the natural history of owls and meet our live owls and specimens. Afterwards we will walk the trails and attempt to call in some of the wild owls that live here. TRS members \$5, nonmembers \$7.

Friday, February 19th (1 PM to 3 PM, children) – World of Birds. This program consists of games, a bird walk, live birds, crafts, and costumes to teach children about the tools and types of birds they may encounter. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 AM except Pelham Bay Park; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

Jan. 31	Pelham Bay Park <i>for Owls</i> (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 AM)
Feb. 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Feb. 14	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Feb. 21	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Feb. 28	Hempstead Lake State Park (Pen. Blvd.)
Mar. 7	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner

BIRD WALK REPORT

Betty Borowsky

The November 29th SSAS Bird Walk was at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. There is always a great variety of birds at Jamaica Bay, especially waterfowl, and we were not disappointed today. In particular, we encountered several large flocks of migratory birds.

The group began the walk at the Ranger Station and made its way slowly around the gravel path that circles West Pond. There were the usual species; among others, Scaups, Buffleheads, Pintails, Ruddy Ducks, and several Black-crowned Night Herons were spotted. At the Turtle Path we turned off the main road to bring us closer to the salt marsh. This path is closed in the spring and summer, to prevent disturbing the birds during the nesting season. As we approached the edge of the marsh, we came very close to a flock of about forty Snow Geese that were resting in the Bay. Snow Geese regularly stop over at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on their migrations between Canada and South America. All the birds were white except for one, which had slaty blue plumage. White and blue-phase Snow Geese can freely interbreed, but ornithologists report that individuals prefer to mate with other individuals of the same color.

After some heated discussion and much adjustment of the spotting scopes, it was decided that the grebes we saw in the Bay were Horned Grebes. Grebes have some of the most unusual habits I have ever heard about. Their courtship display is flashy, energetic, and downright silly looking. They carry their newly hatched young on their backs. And they eat feathers.

One theory about why they eat feathers comes from Ehrlich, Dobkin, and Wheye's *The Birder's Handbook*. These authors suggest that the feathers protect the birds' digestive systems from damage from the bones of the fish they eat. Birds' gizzards serve to grind hard foods into small sizes suitable for digestion or for safe passage through their digestive systems. But grebes' gizzards are relatively small for their sizes. Whatever the feathers are for, they must be important, since they are found in the stomachs of birds that are only a few days old and because sometimes they occupy half of the adults' stomachs.

Farther along we saw an unusually large number of Northern Shovelers (shown at right) in the freshwater pond. This duck is considered a "dabbling" because it does not submerge its entire body when feeding, as do the diving ducks. Shovelers spend a good portion of their feeding time swimming slowly in circles with their bills in the water. The bills are broad and have fine comblike structures along their edges. When feeding, they are oriented so they can skim the surface of the water, permitting them to strain plankton and debris from the surface of the water. Shovelers also eat invertebrates, including snails and insects which are in the mud along the edge of the water. Feeding by straining microscopic food particles from the water has evolved in

many groups. Some other animals who feed this way are Blue Whales, Sunfish, and Nurse Sharks.

As we approached the woodlands area, we came upon another large flock of birds; this time they were Cedar Waxwings. These birds are also migratory, wintering as far south as Panama. Their name comes from a red waxy exudate that older adults secrete from their primary feathers. We could see that some of the birds had these red spots.

None of the birds we saw today are rare at this time of the year at Jamaica Bay, so our enjoyment came from the opportunity to observe several species closely. The pleasures of bird-watching are cumulative; each time we go, we observe the birds differently. Maybe they're breeding, or maybe they're in their winter plumage. And each time we learn a little more about them. The interesting thing is that the more we learn, the more pleasure there is in watching them. Maybe you can figure out why.



1992 NYS ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Michael Sperling

In the last *Skimmer*, I started reprinting descriptions of the bills that the Albany-based nonprofit and nonpartisan Environmental Planning Lobby used to individually rate our State Senators and Assemblymen last year. All six bills covered so far were given three trees; all six passed the Assembly, but only one passed the State Senate (call me if you'd like copies of old *Skimmers*).

EPL weighs bills based on their potential impact on New York's environment. Each bill that EPL took a position on in 1992 received one of six ratings:

3 Trees. Proposed legislation would be of significant assistance and benefit to help resolve a pressing problem facing New York's environment.

2 Trees. Proposed legislation would provide substantial benefit to New York's environment.

1 Tree. Proposed legislation would be beneficial to some aspect of New York's environment.

1 Stack. Proposed legislation would be detrimental to the cause of environmental protection in New York.

2 Stacks. Proposed legislation would do substantial harm to New York's environment.

3 Stacks. Proposed legislation would likely result in major or lasting harm to New York's environment.

We now resume our 1992 recap, with the hope that, even though the November elections largely maintained the same cast of characters (featuring one Long Island Republican as the all-powerful Senate Majority Leader and another as the all-important Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman), maybe the State Senate will have a change of heart in 1993. The more letters we send to our legislators, the more likely it is that they'll listen to us.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Act (LPPA) ▲▲▲. Lead poisoning is the number one environmental health threat for young children. The federal Centers for Disease Control last year recognized that even very low levels of lead can have serious, often irreparable effects on a child's neurological system, ability to learn, motor coordination, and overall development. This bill provides for a comprehensive prevention program to be administered by the State Department of Health which includes universal lead screening for all young children and pregnant women, community outreach, a training and certification program for lead abatement workers, and an Advisory Council to create a strategic plan for the eradication of lead as a health threat. A11670-C (Eve) passed the Assembly. The original version of this bill (S8559) was sponsored in the Senate by Senator Dale Volker. A weaker version of this bill was passed by both houses and was signed into law by the Governor.

Renewable Energy ▲▲▲. This bill requires electric or gas utilities to provide financial assistance to residential and agricultural customers who install solar, wind, biogas, fuel cell, or geothermal equipment. The measure would help lessen New York's dependence on foreign fuel sources and increase reliance on environmentally sound, renewable energy resources. A11697 (Tonko) passed the Assembly but did not have a Senate sponsor.

Pesticide Use Reduction ▲▲. Overwhelming public concern about the wide use and abuse of pesticides has prompted other states such as New Jersey, New Hampshire, and California to adopt strong pesticide legislation. In New York, however, information on pesticide sale and use is insufficient at best, and the state has not yet taken an aggressive role in reducing unnecessary pesticide use. This bill would require state and local agencies to establish pesticide reduction policies and implement less toxic, least impact pest management strategies. An annual report documenting the statewide sale and use of pesticides is also called for. A1793 (Hinchey) passed the Assembly but was not sponsored in the Senate.

Road Salt Storage ▲▲. Road salt may seem innocuous, but its use has become a serious environmental problem in New York State. Improper storage and application of road salt leads to drinking water contamination and the destruc-

tion of trees, plants, and wildlife habitats. This bill establishes much needed regulations for the proper storage and handling of road salt, and creates a task force to investigate environmentally sound road deicing techniques for New York State. A2285-A (Hinchey) / S1335-A (Johnson) passed the Assembly but was held in the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee.

Adolescent Tobacco-Use Prevention Act ▲▲. Vending machines, free tobacco samples, and persuasive advertising are effective lures for adolescents to get hooked on tobacco. With many more health-conscious adults quitting the habit, and many tobacco users dying from its effects, the tobacco industry has increasingly been targeting young people as a new market for this dangerous product. This bill would insure that New York State enforces existing law that bans the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products to minors by prohibiting unrestricted access to tobacco products. A3900-D (Grannis) passed the Assembly but was not sponsored in the Senate. A weaker version of this bill passed both houses and was signed into law by the Governor. Because of time constraints, EPL was unable to include the weaker bill in the Voters' Guide.

Anti-SLAPP Suits ▲▲. Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP suits) are all too often used against vocal civic and environmental activists by their industry or government opponents. Their purpose: to intimidate the public, tie up citizens' money and time defending themselves in court battles, and squelch the public participation of would-be activists. This bill safeguards the rights of citizens to participate fully in the democratic process by allowing the courts to dismiss SLAPP suits quickly and require that the plaintiff pay for any legal fees or damages incurred by the citizen. A4299 (Bianchi) / S5441 (Marchi) passed both houses and was signed by the Governor.

Groundwater Protection ▲▲. This bill restores a key provision in the Environmental Conservation Law that was unintentionally deleted during an amendment process in 1961. The missing provision specifically prohibits any pollution of both surface and groundwaters. Without action to restore the provision, polluters will continue to slip through this loophole by merely claiming that their contamination of groundwater due to chemical spills or leaking toxic dump sites was not a "direct discharge." A4788 (Hinchey) passed the Assembly but had no Senate sponsor.

Health Monitoring at Superfund Sites ▲▲. This bill specifies a step-by-step health monitoring program to be undertaken by the state Department of Health (DOH) at inactive hazardous waste sites. The measure also allows the state to recover all costs of health monitoring from the parties responsible for the hazardous materials at the site. This bill would help DOH establish comprehensive health assessments for people exposed to toxic substances in their community. A4944 (Gottfried) passed the Assembly but did not have a Senate sponsor.

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