

government. Dr. Frank Gill has joined the National Audubon team and is currently assisting with the development of BirdSource, a database network. It is a collaborative effort with Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology and their director, John Fitzpatrick. BirdSource is a massive database and, when operational, will be able to accept and collate all birding data from any online user, nationwide. The first use of BirdSource is scheduled for the 1997 Christmas Bird Count. This will prove to be an invaluable tool for tracking bird populations and providing up-to-the-minute data on species in trouble.

Education. *Audubon Adventures* has been our only classroom product for many years. A new education team is in place, looking at how to revise and update *Audubon Adventures* from the feedback received from teachers and the chapters. Also under development are programs targeted for middle and high school students using television and interactive computer technology.

Nature Centers. National Audubon has gotten away from nature centers over the past twenty years. Now centers such as Corkscrew Swamp in Florida and Aullwood Farm in Ohio are receiving funds to update their facilities and improve trails for public access and use. John Flicker announced National Audubon's newest acquisition: Jane Sheehan generously donated one thousand acres of property with eight miles of environmentally sensitive coastline on the Chesapeake Bay near St. Michael's. There is a house on the property which could be used as an educational facility or provide housing for overnight/weekly programs like the ones currently given on Hog Island, Maine or in Greenwich, Connecticut. Along with the property came an eight million dollar endowment to maintain her gift for generations to come.

Until next month, I would like to wish all our members of the Jewish faith a very Happy New Year. And to everyone, a terrific fall migration!

AUDUBON ADVENTURES, TAKE TWO

As mentioned in last month's *Skimmer*, the deadline for full-year enrollment in National Audubon's *Audubon Adventures* program for children in grades 3 through 6 is October 11th. In attempting to recycle an article that has appeared in previous years' *Skimmers*, your editor misquoted the total cost of a classroom subscription (which includes 32 copies of the bimonthly newspaper and a Leader's Guide for each issue); SSAS is actually charged \$35 and will pay partial or full costs for interested classes, troops, etc. This year's featured topics are wetlands, migration, nature in our neighborhoods, and amphibians. Please call our Education Chairperson, Suzanne Lancer, at 536-6574 between 7 and 9 P.M. for sample copies and further information.



BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 A.M. except for Pelham Bay; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. The Jones Beach toll season has been extended through October 12th this year (arrive before 8 A.M. to get in free). Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

- Sept. 28 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Oct. 5 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Oct. 12 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Oct. 19 & 26 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 2 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Nov. 9 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Nov. 16 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Nov. 23 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 30 Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Dec. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Dec. 14 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Dec. 21 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)

BIRDSEED SALE REMINDER

On Sunday, **October 26th**, from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. at Tackapausha Museum in Seaford, SSAS will have the first of our two annual birdseed sales. The order form for 17 birdseed packages appeared in last month's *Skimmer*; if you would like a copy, please call Michael Sperling at 541-0805 after 7:45 P.M. There will be some extra seed available on the sale day, but we recommend that you preorder (by October 14th) because the seed companies no longer allow organizations to return unsold seed and there will be limited amounts available (we will not deposit your check until after you pick up the seed).



HELP IS NEEDED to take orders, sell bird feeders, and carry seed around the parking lot. Tackapausha is located on Washington Avenue, just north of Merrick Road (on Sunrise Highway, Washington is three blocks/lights east of the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway).

CONNETQUOT WALK SATURDAY, MAYBE

In our last issue, we announced that SSAS will be visiting Connetquot River State Park Preserve in Oakdale at 9:30 A.M. this (last?) Saturday (September 27th; *Skimmer* scheduled mailing date was the 22nd). Since then, nocturnal encephalitis-carrying mosquitoes at Connetquot have resulted in much news coverage and its temporary closing. If the park is open, we will be there; for information/directions call Connetquot at 581-1005 or Michael Sperling at 541-0805 (after 7:45 P.M.).

CONSERVATION REPORT

Betty Barowsky

Every June for the past 500–600 million years or so, horseshoe crabs have walked up the beach to mate and lay their eggs. And every June for the past 50 million years, shorebirds migrating up the coast from South and Central America have stopped along the way to eat the eggs and fuel the last leg of their northern journey.

This is not a small event. Millions of crabs and birds are involved, and tons of eggs. But this ancient relationship has been seriously disrupted in recent years because commercial fishermen discovered that they can use crushed crabs for chum. The fishermen have taken so many crabs (800,000 from Delaware Bay in 1996) that their numbers are seriously depleted, and when the birds fly by there are not enough eggs for them to eat. And the result is that the number of shorebirds has decreased significantly in the last few years. Horseshoe crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*) are found along the northwestern Atlantic seaboard and in the Gulf of Mexico, and reach a length of about 25 inches. I know you've all seen them; the front of the animal is shaped like a plow, which allows it to push through the sand while protecting the legs and other structures on its undersides. It has a long thin tail which it uses to right itself if it gets turned upside down. Horseshoe crabs are scavengers and feed on just about anything they encounter on the bottom, including dead organisms and algae. While they may not be the most beautiful creatures in the sea, they are entirely harmless.



Two years ago a few of us were very lucky and were on the shore in Cape May in June, at high tide, at night, at the time of the full moon. This is the combination of environmental factors that stimulates the crabs to move up the shore and to mate. The shallow water was roiled by the activities of the crabs; males are about two-thirds the size of females and must attach to the back of the female with special claws to be able to fertilize the eggs as the female lays them (fertilization is external). There is considerable turmoil as the more numerous males fight each other to gain access to a receptive female. Once pairing is established, the female scoops out depressions in the sand and deposits 200 to 300 large eggs. The male extrudes sperm over the eggs as the female lays them in the sand. Then the female covers the eggs with sand. If all goes well, the male then releases the female and each returns to deeper waters. The next day, the ebbing tide reveals a carpet of eggs on the surface. The eggs are about 1/16th of an inch in diameter and many have been uncovered by the waves. But even the ones that remain covered can be eaten by the shorebirds which probe the sand with their long bills. When we went to the shore the next day, we were just about deafened by the cries of the

Laughing Gulls who were feeding. There were thousands of them. There were also thousands of Semipalmated Sandpipers and hundreds of Red Knots, and most of the other sandpipers and peeps were well represented too. Just this month, Governor Whitman of New Jersey has called for a halt to the indiscriminate harvesting of horseshoe crabs for chumming. Naturally we support this strongly and hope that similar action will be forthcoming from the governors of all the states along the Atlantic coast. Horseshoe crabs are a very old and very resilient species. All we have to do is lay off taking too many of them for a few years and their numbers will undoubtedly recover. Hopefully this will be accompanied by the recovery of the shorebirds as well.

The following *Audubon-News* item was taken from Greenwire, an environmental news information service: While maintaining an emergency state ban on horseshoe crabbing, the New Jersey Supreme Court on 9/4 said it would rule on whether Gov. Christine Todd Whitman overstepped her bounds in issuing the ban in the Delaware Bay. No date has been set for a full court hearing.

Whitman first ordered a 60-day emergency ban on horseshoe crabbing in May and later extended the order through 9/30. A state appeals court last month struck down the ban, saying it required approval by NJ legislators, but the state high court sustained the order. Meanwhile, the state Marine Fisheries Council last week met to discuss a permanent ban on using trawlers to fish for horseshoe crabs and to limit hand catches of the species to 16 days a year.

Living Oceans Program. National Audubon's self-supported Scully Science Center (550 South Bay Ave., Islip, NY 11751; 859-3032) is the home of their Living Oceans program; write or call for a quarterly newsletter and a few action alerts about our oceans (a horseshoe crab alert was mailed out in July).

Audubon-News. If you have access to e-mail, you can receive timely press releases, action alerts, and other news items (three since May on horseshoe crabs) by sending a message to listserv@list.audubon.org (leave the subject line blank; in the body of your message type "SUB audubon-news" to subscribe).

Armchair Activist Program. If you'd like to receive a free monthly mailing with background info from National Audubon about a critical national or statewide issue and a sample letter for you to send to a politician or two, please call SSAS's Mary Jane Russell at 766-7397.

NOVEMBER MEETING POSTPONED A WEEK

South Shore Audubon normally meets from 8 to about 10 P.M. on the second Tuesday of every month from September through May at the Freeport Memorial Library. Because of Veterans' Day, a library holiday, this year's November meeting has been scheduled for the third Tuesday, the 18th. Please mark your calendars.

FIRE ISLAND RAPTOR BANDING & BIRDING

On the morning of Saturday, **October 18th**, SSAS will visit Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary's banding station and do some birding at the western end of Fire Island National Seashore. Each fall, TRS staff band and track Sharp-shinned Hawks, Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, and other raptors.

After learning how and why these birds are netted, weighed, measured (at wing, bill, tail, and leg), aged, sexed, and banded, we will take turns hiding in the banding station while the rest of our group goes birding near the lighthouse. Bill Hollweg has been recruited to lead us on the bird walks; Dolores Rogers once again is responsible for our arrangements with TRS.

We will assemble at 9:30 A.M. in the northeast corner of Robert Moses State Park's lot #5, which is the easternmost parking lot (take Southern State Parkway Exit 40 south to the end and turn left/east at the traffic circle; there is a parking fee). If there's drizzle, we're on; if there's steady rain, go back to sleep. If the wind is out of the northwest, we should see plenty of migrants.

The Fire Island Raptor Enumerators. Upon entering Fire Island National Seashore, we'll pass members of F.I.R.E., the all-volunteer organization that has been counting migrating raptors from September 10th through November 10th since 1984. Your editor recently found the following information on their web page (<http://www.pipeline.com/~merlin/firehw.htm>); by the way, South Shore Audubon has been on the Internet (<http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ny/southshore/>) for about a year.

In 1996, F.I.R.E. recorded 238 Osprey, a Bald Eagle, 80 Northern Harriers, 267 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 16 Cooper's Hawks, a Northern Goshawk, a Red-tailed Hawk, 969 American Kestrels, 1102 Merlins, and 160 Peregrine Falcons.

Coordinator Drew Panko (dpanko@pipeline.com) had the following comments about those numbers (the web page includes averages for the last 13 years): The Sharp-shinned Hawks (pictured) have been declining steadily, but this year was abysmal (68% below average). There is minor cause for hope, since the early numbers (the young of the year) were the lowest, with some improvement later. I interpret this to mean a very poor breeding year but a better than expected number of adults. The Osprey numbers started off strong and then declined, which means a high population level but a poor breeding season (adults migrate before immatures). The American Kestrel and Northern Harrier situation is like the Sharp-shinned, a very poor breeding season but higher population level for adults. Merlin numbers started out strong but declined to below normal, which I interpret as a good breeding season but a low breeding population. Peregrine numbers started out very



strong and ended up somewhat above average. Since adults migrate before immatures, this suggests high population levels but only a mediocre production of young.

There is some reason for hope. Ian Newton found an inverse relationship between young of the year production and overwintering survival. So, perhaps we have hit bottom in 1996 for Sharp-shins, American Kestrels, and Northern Harriers, and 1997 will show some improvement.

BIRDING AT THE HOFFMAN CENTER

Mike Higginson

Last May 24th, the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary had a bird walk at the Hoffman Center, a piece of property on Route 25A in East Norwich. The property is still closed to the general public, but TRS has been tasked to survey the property for nesting and migratory birds. The Brewster family built a mansion on the land in 1914 and the site had gone through a number of owners until it was recently purchased by the Hoffman Foundation to serve as an environmental conference center and nature preserve. A large portion of the property will be transformed into a wildlife sanctuary with the addition of manmade ponds and woodland trails. There are a number of different habitats on the grounds, thus making it possible to attract many different species of birds. We saw that firsthand when we birded the area during spring migration.

Steve Gomez, an educator at TRS, was our guide for the morning. He had a difficult time tearing us away from the parking lot as Yellow Warblers played tag in the bushes and Cape May Warblers sang from the canopy. The first part of the walk, through a forested area with a high canopy, had us searching for Blue-winged Warblers which were singing all around us, Brown Thrasher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Baltimore Orioles, and Red-eyed Vireo (pictured). We turned off the paved trail and proceeded on a dirt track that turned into tick city, but we kept seeing birds. Eastern Pewee, Common Yellowthroat, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, a calling Tufted Titmouse, Barn Swallow, and Red-winged Blackbird were present. We left the forest and ventured into a grassland area with a few short bushes. We scared an American Kestrel off its perch, spotted American Goldfinch, and found Orchard Orioles on the trees at the edge of the grassland. We finally got good looks at the elusive Blue-winged Warbler, saw both Song and Field Sparrows, and found a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in a dried out pond. A Red-tailed Hawk sailed overhead for a flying visit. We reentered the forest and heard Hooded and Magnolia Warblers and saw Canada and Blackpoll Warblers, as well as Scarlet Tanager, American Redstart, Eastern Towhee, and Common Flicker. The area has great potential, especially with the addition of a few watering holes. This will be a great addition to a natural Long Island.



GARDEN CITY BIRD SANCTUARY EVENTS

Rob & Suzie Alvey

Wildlife Art Exhibit & Sale. Here's your chance to support the Garden City Bird Sanctuary and add fine art to your home! The Garden City Public Library (60 Seventh St.) will be having an exhibit of wildlife art throughout October. The display cases will be used for showing bird nest boxes, nests, and information on the Garden City Bird Sanctuary. The gallery will have a multimedia exhibit of paintings and photographs of Long Island wildflowers, birds, and trees. Many local artists are participating and a percentage of sales will be donated to SSAS for the Garden City Bird Sanctuary, a five-acre sump located along Tanners Pond Road north of Stewart Avenue. You are invited to join the artists for a reception on *Saturday, October 4th* from 3 to 5 P.M.

Garden City Annual Homecoming Street Fair. On Saturday, October 18th, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., the Bird Sanctuary will have a major display and raffle during the street fair, with framed Audubon prints from the NY Historical Society and birdhouses by Henry Becker as prizes, and "Sump-thing's Happening" Garden City Bird Sanctuary coffee mugs for sale. Volunteers are needed to help "man the tables" and hand out brochures.

Call the Alveys at 326-1720 to volunteer or for more information about GCBS.



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SUNKEN FOREST FIRE ISLAND HIKE (Saturday, Oct. 18) Hike the mile-long boardwalk through the holly forest during peak fall raptor migration. Enjoy pristine beach and dunes. Bring lunch & binoculars. Cost: \$15 includes round-trip ferry and guided hike.

CAPE MAY WEEKEND (Oct. 23-26) Spend 3 nights at the Atlas Motel on the beach. Cost: \$260 also includes Sat. night dinner, box lunches Fri. & Sat., 1/2 day whale watch boat, wetlands cruise boat trip, hawk watching, bird banding demo, seining, beach walks, butterfly walk, evening lecturers & star watch. For info & reservations, call Don.

ASSATEAGUE FALL WEEKEND (Nov. 6-9) Explore beaches and wetlands of Assateague National Seashore and Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge. See falcons, waterfowl, eagles, sika elk, river otter, red fox, Delmarva fox squirrels, and wild ponies. Cost: \$235 includes three nights at Refuge Motor Inn, safari bus tour, guides, and an "All-you-can-eat" seafood buffet on Saturday night.

For a complete listing of all local and national field trips, contact: Don Riepe
28 West 9th Road
Broad Channel, NY 11693
(718) 634-6467

SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON TO ADOPT TACKAPAUSHA MUSEUM & PRESERVE

Doreen Remsen

On Saturday, November 1st, SSAS will adopt Tackapausha under Nassau County's Adopt-a-Park program. This initiative was begun by Carole Adams, our former president, and Carole Ryder, the museum's curator and preserve manager. A steering committee of board members was formed after reviewing the initial proposal drafted by Nancy Frame, our talented treasurer, to discuss issues and work out the details of the adoption. Tackapausha has been the site of our birdseed sales and children's holiday party for many years (see the birdseed article for directions). Under the Adopt-a-Park program, Tackapausha will provide SSAS with a home base for our history/archives and a place to conduct additional educational programs throughout the year. South Shore can provide Carole Ryder with additional volunteers to assist with meet/greet duties, redesigning the exhibit halls, and other environmental activities. It is an exciting partnership and one that will benefit the citizens of Nassau County tremendously!

So mark your calendars! The dedication and sign-placing ceremony are set for **Saturday, November 1st**, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Volunteers Please Note: To all of you who signed up at our September general meeting as "Adoption Day" volunteers, thank you! We will be having an organizational meeting on **Wednesday, October 15th** at 7:30 P.M. in Tackapausha Museum to discuss activities and festivities to be hosted by South Shore at the celebration. If you are unable to attend this meeting, you can still assist with Adoption Day. And if you are interested in signing on, see me on the bird walks or give me a call at 472-6830. Thanks to all!

About Tackapausha (taken from the Nassau County Tackapausha trail guide). In 1938, Nassau County acquired the 65-acre tract of land originally called "Arrasquaugh" by the Indians. Later, 15 acres were added and the name Tackapausha adopted in memory of the sachem of the Massapequa Indians who made the historic sale of land now comprising the Town of Hempstead. Today, Tackapausha Preserve is a wildlife sanctuary devoted to nature recreation and education.



CONGRATULATIONS, STEVE GOLDBERG

Doreen Remsen

Steve Goldberg, the South Shore member and program co-chairperson whose photography we have enjoyed at various meetings (and whose Garden City namesake is welcomed as a new member this month), had an article, "Birding in Trinidad & Tobago," published in the current issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest* (Sept./Oct. 1997). Way to go, Steve!

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 Society. 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, September 27th (5 to 7 P.M., adults) — Hoffman Center Botany and Insect Walk. Instead of just focusing on birds, we'll look at the plants and insects of this diverse habitat. Meet at the Hoffman Center on Route 25A, one driveway west of Martin Viette Nurseries. TRS members free, nonmembers \$5.

Weekend of October 10–12 — Fall Birding Weekend. A wonderful weekend spent at Caumsett State Park, with visits to TRS, Shu Swamp, Hoffman Center, and Fire Island. We will bird-watch and band songbirds and hawks while learning about birds. Cost of \$250 includes accommodations at the Marshall Field Mansion in Caumsett.

Wednesday, October 15th (7 to 9 P.M., adults) — Owl Prowl. Fall is one of the best times of the year to hear and see owls. A Sanctuary naturalist will introduce you to our captive owls during an informative talk and then we'll go find the wild ones. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

Friday, October 24th (7 to 9 P.M., ages 3 to 12) — Nocturnal Animal Halloween Celebration. Children can meet live nocturnal animals, take a night hike, decorate a pumpkin, and play games with our naturalists. A great way to discover nature at night. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

Saturday, October 25th (8 to 9:30 P.M., adults) — Owl Prowl and Night Hike at the Hoffman Center. We will meet at the Hoffman Center and take a nocturnal hike, looking at stars and mammals, calling for owls, and checking out the nocturnal life at this beautiful new preserve. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.



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A NOTE FROM OUR BIRDING/FIELD TRIPS CHAIRPERSON

Elliott Kutner

Dear friends in Audubon,

It began with one card and a single phone call. Each day was punctuated with an ever-growing flood of "Get-Wells" in writing and calls.

Thank you one and all for your expression of good feeling and kind thoughts.

I firmly believe that your chorus of kind thoughts set me on a rapid road to recovery.

Thank you. You make each day a joy to live and tomorrow a day to look forward to.



USED POSTAGE STAMPS APPRECIATED & STILL WANTED

Mike Higgston

I would like to thank all the members of South Shore Audubon Society for their wonderful response to my request for canceled postage stamps. As most of you know, these stamps are sent to England and are sold by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to British stamp collectors. The proceeds are used for various RSPB activities, particularly land acquisition.

I have been deluged by contributions and there isn't a monthly meeting or bird walk where I don't collect an envelope or two. I must give special thanks to a few members who read my request in the *Skimmer* and proceeded to send me their own stamp collections. Dorothy Rupp, Diana Weber, Tina Castelluzzo, Elizabeth Shannon, Dolores Rogers, and Shirley & David Sternberg have been especially generous. I have already sent one package to the RSPB and am readying a second. The program continues and I urge everyone to pass on their used postage stamps to me. Thank you for your continued cheerful support.



And Now a Message From an RSPB Volunteer: On behalf of the Society it is with great pleasure that I write to thank you and the members of the South Shore Audubon Society for your welcome contribution of stamps to our appeal. We can make good use of them in whatever form they are collected. As you may be aware, we are in the fortunate position of being able to sell all stamps that we receive from our members and friends either direct to dealers or at auction. All money raised will be put towards various projects in order to protect wild birds, their habitat, and the countryside in general. Thank you for your continued support for our program which is indeed proving successful.



AUDUBON ACTIONLINE (800) 659-2622

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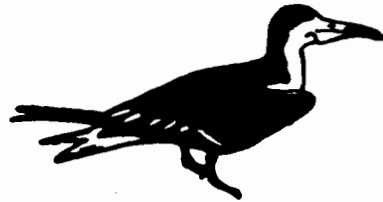


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Jonathan Staller, Vice President & Environmental Festivals Coordinator	822-5957
Nancy Frame, Treasurer	520-9016
Christine Schmitt, Recording Secretary & Hospitality Co-Chairperson	887-7713
Doris Pirodsky, Corresponding Secretary	378-1790
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Bill Hollweg, Director (6/99)	226-2519
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Sandy Brenner, Program Co-Chairperson	249-4919
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Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips Chairperson	486-7667
Joseph Lancer, Binocular / Book Sales (7 to 9 P.M.)	536-6574
Suzanne Lancer, Education Chairperson (7 to 9 P.M.)	536-6574
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A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
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