PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Doreen Remsen

As I walk along the winding paths of Brookside Preserve on a crisp autumn morning, I wonder what it would be like if there were no wild oasis to come to on a morning such as this. Not to be able to leave behind the rows of stores and buildings, the steady pounding of traffic in exchange for oaks and maples tinged in reds, yellows, and browns, clustered and scattered in riotous disarray, their leaves rustling as the wind makes conflicting ripples in the gently flowing waters of Millburn Creek, would be a loss too great to imagine. There is something magical in the crunching of leaves underfoot as you walk in the shadows of trees older than oneself; it is a defining moment and a mystery that all of us experience and share as we journey through the seasons of our lives.

As I stand alongside the shore of Hempstead Lake in the warm autumn afternoon sun and watch the first line of Black Ducks and mergansers arrive for their winter sojourn amid the honking of geese and the swirl of leaves loosened by the very same wind that carried them here, I wonder what it would be like if there were no ponds or lakes where life in its simplest forms can grow and prosper, and in its turn give life and prosperity to those who come to feed and drink. Not to be able to see the reflections of autumn in the water’s depths and the sparkle of the sun on its surface would be a tragedy worthy of Shakespeare. Water and life are nature’s expression of eternity, an expression that binds us all.

Autumn is a time for reflection and a season of renewed invigoration. And even though the seasons change, one thing that never changes is the dedication and generosity of South Shore Auduboners. The 1998 Greening of Long Island appeal was one of our most successful to date. We received a total of 101 responses from 37 communities in our membership area, with a total of $2275 in donations. I want to thank all of you for your spirit of stewardship, and I will let you know the who and the where the trees will be planted when the board reaches that decision later this year.

NEXT MEETING

Tom Tomala

DATE: Tuesday, November 10, 1998
TIME: 8:00 P.M.
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
        144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)
SPEAKER: Hank Meier
TOPIC: The Grass-blade Jungle

Hank Meier has been a wildlife photographer for over 25 years, with special emphasis on the micro world of insects and spiders. He has won many awards, including first place at the Photographic Federation of Long Island’s prestigious annual photo contest, and his work has been published several times in Petersen’s Photographic magazine.

Tonight’s slide show will take us up-close and personal with many common and uncommon insects and spiders that populate our gardens, parks, and nature preserves. It reveals the ingenuity that characterizes insect and spider life, explaining the relationships of these creatures to their different environments in a manner that provides a better understanding of these animals in a miniature and populous world. Emphasis is on mating habits, life stages, predator/prey relationships, and defense mechanisms.

Join us!

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS

The green, wet places we love will continue to be there for generations to come if all of us remain watchful and caring. I urge all of you to remember to vote on November 3rd. Have a fabulous fall!

NASSAU COUNTY POLLUTION HOTLINE 739-6666
AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201
CONSERVATION REPORT
Summer Day Camp for Low-Income Youngsters
Betsy Borowsky

This was the first year that we were able to offer a week of day camp at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay to youngsters of low-income families who live in our area. We have many people to thank for their contribution to this effort. First, thanks to all the dedicated professionals at the Franklin School in Hempstead: the principal, Mr. John Moore, Ms. Yvonne Brown, Ms. Fran Edmonds, and all the teachers (whom names I don’t know), who worked so hard to select scholarship candidates and to explain the idea of the scholarship to the children’s parents. They all spent a great deal of time on this, just to offer something special to their students. Thanks also go to Maureen Rube and Chris Schmitt of SSAS, who accompanied the children on the bus and at the camp; an adult chaperone was one of the requirements for the donation of Old Navy’s bus. And very special thanks to the Old Navy Company, who donated their full-sized school bus for so few of us! Transportation was absolutely critical because of the distance of TRS from the Franklin School, and because most parents had no car and/or had to work during the day.

The only disappointment was in not being able to send more children to the camp this year, although we had planned to. There were many challenges. First, we had a fairly small pool of eligible children. We insisted that only children who were truly needy should be offered the scholarship. Next, it was often difficult to contact the parents of the candidates who had been selected by their teachers. Many families just don’t have telephones. But even those with telephones were difficult to reach, because parents and guardians were working during the day, when school staff tried to reach them.

The next challenge was explaining the idea of the scholarship program to parents. Most parents had never heard of us, or TRS, and knew very little about the environment. After that, as per requirements of TRS, parents and/or guardians had to complete a medical form and permission slip. And this is where some families dropped out! I suspect that some of the letters failed to reach parents, because some of the families moved.

Finally, at the start of camp, we had three children. Then one of them broke his leg just before camp began! The second attended two of the four days. (Look: not everybody enjoys the outdoors.) But our third little girl attended the whole week and loved it. And, by the way, everybody loved HER. We consider this a very good beginning, but we are anxious to expand the program to include many more children. So what do we do next year? First of all, we welcome suggestions. If you have any ideas, and/or would like to work with us on any aspect of the scholarship program, please call me at 764-3596. Second, we will continue to work with staff and students of the Franklin School — word of mouth is very important, and kids have a very good time at TRS.

But we need to do more, too. First, we need to educate the parents; perhaps we can offer a program at a PTA meeting. Second, we need to educate the children — both about the environment and about TRS. Perhaps we can arrange some field trips to the Sanctuary. And third, we need to get more schools involved, just to increase our pool of candidates. We learned a lot this year. We may have to work harder on it than on some other SSAS activities, but I do believe it will be the foundation of our deepest legacy.

FINISHED

BIRDSEED SALE REMINDER

SSAS’s birdseed sale is/was Sunday, October 25th, starting at 9:30 A.M. Eastern Standard Time in Tackapausha Museum’s parking lot (off Washington Avenue in Seaord, just north of Merrick Road). Preorders were strongly encouraged, but there will be some extra seed available (first come, first serve) and help is greatly appreciated anytime up to 2:30 P.M. in our all-volunteer sale. Next sale is January 31st; there’ll be an order form in the next Skimmer.

Explore the coast
with the
AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

ASSATEAGUE FALL WEEKEND (Nov. 5–8). Cost: $245 covers three nights at Refuge Motor Inn, guided hikes at Chincoteague Refuge, Assateague beaches. See Bald Eagles, Peregrines, Snow Geese, Brown and maybe White Pelicans, wild ponies, river otter, red fox, and Sika deer. HOLIDAY PARTY (Sat., Dec. 5th). For $35, you get a guided walk at Fort Tilden/Breezy Point, beer & wine, dinner, a FLAMENCO DANCE performance, plus a chance to participate in the "Ugly Auction" and bring home a treasure. NEW YEAR’S DAY BEACHWALK (Jan. 1). Meet at West End 2 parking lot (blue bldg.) in Jones Beach at 11 A.M. for a brisk celebratory walk led by naturalist Jeff Gottlieb. Perhaps you’ll see a Snowy Owl or Harlequin Duck. FREE. MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Jan. 8–10). Visit Montauk during quiet yet peak winter birthing time. See loons, scoters, eiders, oldsquaw, and other waterfowl species around the Lighthouse point. Visit harbor seal haulout sites. Cost: $250 includes 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening slide programs, and star watch. Free pickup at LIRR station in Montauk.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Ripee, (718) 634-6667, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693
**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

*Jackie Richichi*

You’ve just become a member of one of National Audubon’s largest and most active all-volunteer chapters. We hope you’ll join us at one of our friendly Sunday morning bird walks or at a Freeport meeting on the second Tuesday of every month through May. Walks and meetings are free and all are welcome!

To receive an application for membership in National Audubon Society and SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Jackie Richichi, at 826-1187, or send e-mail to Jacee13@aol.com. Introductory membership is $20; $15 for students and senior citizens.

Amityville .......... Ms. Susan Burke
Baldwin.......... Lawrence Clegg, Mrs. Charles F. Myers, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Stephan
Belmont. .......... Ms. Betty Betts, Ms. Janet Buddine, Lori Caifa, Scott Jones, Barbara M. Kross, J. L. Romm
Bethpage .......... Mrs. Helen Pospisil
East Meadow .... Mr. Harold Cohen
Elmont .......... Mr. Charles Rowan
Farmingdale ... Victoria E. Love; Gilbert L. Parachini, Sr.; Mr. Raymond R. Thomas
Floral Park ...... Jack Terrana
Franklin Square ... Ruth Rosenbaum
Freeport .......... Lori Glick, Philip Haas, N. McKenna
Garden City .... Ms. Marion E. Cassese, Frank & Cheryl Fischetti, Mrs. J. R. Miller, Mrs. Robert Myron, Patricia M. Odel, Edward Siems, Mr. & Mrs. James B. Sulli, Gloria Weinrich
Glen Oaks .... Dr. M. Kalepu
Hempstead ...... Ollie L. Roebuck
Hewlett .... Daniel Goldstein
Hicksville ...... Pearl J. Curran, Lucille Marshhauser, Ms. Virginia Perry, Milton Thrush
Levittown .... Mr. R. Hesdorfer; Mr. Joseph Shay, Jr.
Long Beach .... Anne Gilbert, Ms. Carol Lapidus
Lynbrook ...... Meg Viola
Malverne ...... Shirley Brodwin, Mrs. Sharyn S. James
Massapequa .... Pamela J. Brady, Mr. Richard F. Heinina, Mr. Edward Kaercher, Carol C. Kaufmann, William Keyser
Massapequa Park ... Sheldon L. Gottlieb, Ms. Phyllis J. Oehler, Ms. Alice Scheferston, Karen Torgersen
Merrick .......... Mrs. Kenneth Lowe, Mr. Paul Prince
Mineola .......... Kevin A. Jones
Oceanside ...... Linda Horowitz, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Hunn, Lloyd Miller, Ms. June Mullowney, Ruth Sills
Plainview .... Mr. & Mrs. Percy Evans, W. Piechuch, Lenora Solomon
Point Lookout .. R. Dimin
Rockville Centre Sue Ennis, Edmund Fried
Uniondale .... Mr. Robert Pomponyo
Valley Stream ... Jimmy G. Pecoraro
West Hempstead ... Mr. Robert M. Decker, Louise Liverpool, Mr. Robert G. Martino
Woodmere .... Mr. Asher J. Mathathias

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**LEGISLATIVE CONTACT PERSON WANTED**

South Shore Audubon’s Board of Directors is looking for someone who would like to attend (or already attends) the Nassau County Legislature’s meetings in Mineola and would be willing to keep us informed about what they’re up to environment-wise. Most of the 19 meetings in 1998 were scheduled for Mondays at 10:30 A.M., but 3 were scheduled for 6:30 P.M., 2 for Thursday, and 2 for Friday. According to a tentative schedule in this year’s League of Women Voters of Nassau County’s “They Represent You” booklet, meetings are scheduled for October 23rd, October 29th (at 6:30), November 16th, and December 14th. To volunteer, please call Doreen Renssen at 472-6830.

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**BINOCULARS AND FIELD GUIDES FOR SALE**

For many years, South Shore Audubon has been selling the complete line of Bausch & Lomb / Bushnell binoculars and spotting scopes at competitive prices. Joe Lancer (536-6574, 7 to 9 P.M., or ask at meetings and bird walks) keeps a supply of National Audubon Society Natureview binoculars (printed) and can order other items. A very familiar bird feeding catalog describes these binoculars as follows (and sells them for $169.95; we sell them for $110): “Focus in on feeders and trees to get a better, more interesting view of your backyard visitors. Binoculars can truly add to the pleasure of backyard wildlife watching. And these are a great choice. Natureview has been selected as the official binoculars of the National Audubon Society. Exceptional clarity with 8 x 42 magnification and a 341’ field of view. Comes complete with vinyl carrying case and neck strap.”

In addition to the binoculars, Joe has copies of the *Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Eastern Region* ($15, filled with color photos; list price is $16.95).
**BROOKSIDE PRESERVE CLEANUP TIME!**

SSAS's annual Brookside Preserve cleanup will take place on **Sunday, November 15th**, starting at 1 P.M. Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County and managed (and rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. With help from a state grant, we have published a trail guide and an educational freshwater wetland guide, and continue to add plantings for wildlife, have committee meetings, etc.

The Preserve is located on the Freeport-Baldwin border; park at the main entrance on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway (turn north at the traffic light that's just east of Freeport High School). Bring gloves, rakes, bags, and/or friends (young and old).

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**THE SSAS FREEPORT LIBRARY BOOK LIST**

For many years, South Shore Audubon Society has been making donations to the Freeport Memorial Library as a way of thanking them for hosting our general and board meetings, and as a way of ensuring that many nature books will be available to Nassau County’s library users. If you see an old Audubon egret or a new SSAS logo in a Freeport book, that book was purchased with our donation money. SSAS board member George Popkin recently requested a list of these books; there’s been 61 since 1991, covering such topics as birds (38 books at Dewey decimal 598), African wildlife, glaciers, Audubon, insects, Hawaii, flowers, trees, evolution, amphibians, non-native species, fishes, coral reefs, rainforests, field research, and climate. Twenty-one books are oversize; 15 are in the children’s library. Check ‘em out!

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**NEW YORK VERSUS BRAZIL**

Editor’s note: The Population Reference Bureau, in collaboration with National Audubon’s Population & Habitat Campaign and the Population Coalition of local Leagues of Women Voters, has just published a series of 24 four-page *Us in the World* fact sheets “comparatively matching a state with a developing country facing similar demographic, environmental, and socioeconomic challenges. Maps, graphs, and data bring home the differences and similarities and illustrate that no town, state, or country is isolated from these common problems. Descriptions of efforts in both locations show how these challenges are being met.” NAS’s Population & Habitat Campaign publishes a free bimonthly newsletter, *Population & Habitat Update* (quoted above); it’s available from them at 3109 28th St., Boulder, CO 80301; (303) 442-2600; population@audubon.org; and http://www.earthnet.net/~popnet. For a free copy of the New York versus Brazil profile that is partially reprinted below, or others, write/call Teresa Matthews in Boulder or send e-mail to TMatthews@audubon.org.

For a generation, ranchers, farmers, and miners have been bulldozing, hacking, and burning the world’s largest tropical rainforest in the Brazilian Amazon. As in 19th-century NY, developers and colonists in Brazil have stripped and settled the forests with government support. Until recently, colonists to Amazonia received encouragement in the form of tax and other incentives and government-financed roads. New York is working to preserve its remaining temperate forests from development, and Brazil, too, has now ended most incentives that encouraged the rainforest’s development. But with an area as large as California already cleared and burned, and with a growing population and limited resources, Brazil may do just what NY did: clear forests for short-term gain and ignore long-term sustainability.

Forests are just one of NY and Brazil’s many common features. Their huge, diverse economies have strong agricultural bases and modern industries, as well as financial sectors and stock exchanges in cities clustered on or near their coasts. Both are heavily urbanized; the megacities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are among 11 Brazilian cities with populations exceeding 1 million. Both are dynamic, racially mixed societies. Brazil’s population is 8% black and 42% black-white mixed.

These similarities sometimes obscure obvious differences. After a generation of industrial development, Brazil is still gripped by poverty and inequality. Only one-third of children enter secondary school, and 18% of adult Brazilians are illiterate. New Yorkers consume on average nine times as much energy as Brazilians, and NY, with an average annual per capita income eight times that of Brazil’s, has vastly more resources at hand to manage and restore its natural resources. New York’s population is nearly stable; Brazil’s growth has been rapid but is slowing: Women now bear an average 2.5 children, down from 6.5 in 1960.

Metropolitan São Paulo and New York City, with their large populations, place enormous demands on energy and water resources. Emissions standards for industry (from shoes to automobiles and aircraft) have helped curb pollution in São Paulo, but with the number of cars growing and public transportation already overcrowded, further improvements will be difficult. New York City, like most of the rest of the state, draws much of its energy from hydroelectric power; only 25% of the entire state uses the highest-emissions fuel, coal.

Demographic and Health Trends for NY

- Growing just 1% since 1990, NY fell to the third most populous state in 1994, behind California and Texas. Although forecasts project nearly 20 million New Yorkers by 2025, Florida is expected to have overtaken NY for third place by then.
After California, New York receives the largest number of immigrants. In 1996 the greatest numbers came from the Dominican Republic, China, Ukraine, and Jamaica.

After its population fell to 7.1 million in 1980, the "Big Apple" added 58,000 people during the 1990s, reaching 7.4 million in 1996. New York City’s suburban counties have grown at a much faster rate than the city.

New York City is home to 41% of the state’s population, down from 53% in 1950.

Much of upstate NY has struggled to adapt to a service-based economy. The Buffalo–Niagara Falls area has lost 14,000 persons during the 1990s, and three upstate counties — Broome, Oneida, and Clinton — have lost at least 5% of their populations since 1990.

**Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues in NY**

Manufacturing plants released 35.1 million pounds of toxic chemicals to the air, waterways, and soil [no year specified; your editor guesses 1996]. This represents a 68% decline from the 94.4 million pounds released in 1988.

Air quality in NY has shown considerable improvement since the 1970s. For example, the level of sulfur dioxide has been reduced to one-fourth of the 1970 level.

The Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Piping Plover, and Chittenango ovate amber snail are among NY’s endangered and threatened animals. The American har’s-tongue fern and Houghton’s goldenrod are endangered and threatened plants.

**Socioeconomic Factors in NY**

The income gap between the wealthiest and the poorest families is greater for NY than any other state. In the mid-1990s, the wealthiest 20% earned an average of $132,390 per year, while the poorest 20% averaged $6,787.

If NY were a country, it would have the world’s 10th largest economy.

In 1995, tourists spent $24.3 billion in NY, visiting such diverse attractions as New York City, the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains, the Finger Lakes region, and the beaches of Long Island.

**Facts for New York (and Brazil)**

- Population, 1997: 18.1 million (160.3 million)
- Projected population, 2025: 19.8 million (212.9 million)
- Annual growth rate: 0.0% (1.1%)
- Doubling time (at current rate): not applicable (63 years)
- Average number of children per woman: 2.0 (2.5)
- Infant deaths per 1000 live births: 7.7 (48)
- Life expectancy: male 71, female 78 (64, 70)
- Persons per square mile: 384 (49)
- Percent urban: 84 (76)
- Endangered/threatened animals: 8 species (240)
- Endangered/threatened plants: 6 species (463)
- Percent of land protected: 10 (3.8)
- Wetlands loss, 1780–1980: 60% (not available)
- Daily water use per capita: 928 gallons (178)
- Water use for domestic purposes: 20% (22%)

**Water use for agriculture:** 0.4% (59%)
**Water use for industry:** 2% (19%)
**Water use for energy production:** 78% (not listed)
**Cropland per capita:** 0.3 acres (1.0)
**Energy use per capita:** 37.1 barrels of oil equiv. (3.9)
**Persons per motor vehicle:** 1.8 (10)
**Adults who are high school graduates:** 82% (not listed)
**Elected officials who are women:** 19% (7% of national legislature)
**Labor force in agriculture:** 1% (25%)
**Labor force in industry:** 14% (25%)
**Labor force in services:** 84% (50%)

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<th>HALLOWEEN FUN FEST REMINDER</th>
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<td>On Saturday, October 31st, from 1 to 3 p.m., SSAS will celebrate Halloween and autumn at Tackapausha Museum on Washington Avenue in Seafood. There’ll be door prizes, contest judging, crafts, refreshments, and animal stories. Volunteers are needed, as are children (preferably dressed as their favorite animals). To volunteer, please call Doreen Remsen at 472-6830. The event is free, but the usual Tackapausha admission will be in effect ($1 for adults and 50¢ for children).</td>
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<td>WILDLIFE POISONING HOTLINE (800) 536-0560</td>
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<td>AUDUBON ACTIONLINE (800) 659-2622</td>
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<td>TAPE-RECORDED UPDATES FROM WASHINGTON, DC</td>
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<td>SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSAS Post Office Statement — South Shore Audubon Society is published monthly from September through December and February through June by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.</td>
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<td>Seed - Feeders</td>
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<td>&quot;NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>621 Fulton St. (Rt. 109), Farmingdale, NY 11735</td>
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<td>Located between McDonald's &amp; Dunkin' Donuts</td>
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SSAS SAYS NO TO PROPOSED BIKEWAY

Michael Goldsmith

On October 6th, the SSAS Board of Directors voted to oppose the NY State Department of Transportation's proposed bicycle path through Bethpage State Park.

The Bethpage bikeway is a portion of a $4 million plan to construct an 8-1/2 mile bikeway roughly paralleling the Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail, linking Bethpage State Park to the Cold Spring Harbor train station. Work is scheduled to commence in mid-1999.

The DOT plans to build the paved bike path because it is required to promote “alternative forms of transportation” to receive federal funding for road projects. The monies for the bikeway come from the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funds, a type of ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, pronounced “iced-tea”) grant, according to DOT spokeswoman Eileen Peters as quoted in the Herald newspapers on September 9th.

“In part, the idea behind CMAQF grants is to promote transportation uses other than driving alone in your vehicle,” Ms. Peters told the Herald.

Richard Schary, a board member with the Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference, believes that in order to construct the trail, the state “would have to tear hillsides apart” to flatten the grade. “The Greenbelt corridor,” according to Mr. Schary, “which is used by hikers, birders, mountain bikers, and joggers, is only 400 feet wide through most of its length. In many spots it is not more than a couple of hundred feet wide. The proposed bike trail is to be 13 to 16 feet wide, with approximately 8-foot shoulders on each side. It would destroy the integrity of the Greenbelt Trail.”

Lorraine Bondi-Goldsmith, an SSAS member serving on the Bethpage Trail Use Committee, believes that the proposed bike trail would do very little to develop “alternate forms of transportation.” “Who commutes from Cold Spring Harbor to Bethpage State Park?,” she asked. “This is clearly a recreational bike trail, of no environmental benefit whatsoever.”

David Kunstler, a wildlife manager who also serves on the BTUC, assessed the environmental cost of the plan in Bethpage State Park: “I estimate that 172,800 square feet, nearly 4 acres, of park forest would have to be destroyed. The path would be cut through several habitats, including oak forest, successional southern hardwood, and shrubland. This would result in an edge effect, detrimental to forest interior birds. It makes no sense to destroy one part of our environment to protect another.”

According to Mr. Schary, many civic and environmental groups are lining up against the proposed bikeway. Mr. Schary has proposed several environment-friendly bikeways, including one along the Meadowbrook Parkway connecting the Nassau “Hub” to Jones Beach and/or Point Lookout, with a side leg to the top of the new Senator Norman Levy Overlook Park on the old Merrick landfill. Mr. Schary has also proposed a Sunrise trail along the Long Island Rail Road corridor from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park. Mr. Schary pointed out that the DOT is scheduled to begin construction along the Freeport LIRR corridor in a few months.

HOW TO STOP SOME TYPES OF JUNK MAIL

As we approach the peak of junk/bulk mail season, here's what you can do to reduce Skimmer delivery time and save some natural resources. The following comes from Littorally Speaking, the newsletter of the American Littoral Society's Northeast Chapter:

If you don't like getting unsolicited "preapproved" credit card offers in the mail, call one of the three major credit bureaus at a toll-free number to have your name excluded from lists sold to credit card marketers: Equifax (800-556-4711), Experian (800-353-0809), or Trans Union (800-680-7293). [Your editor did this a few months ago; you don't even have to speak to a human, and it works! They give you an option as to how long you'd like to be excluded.]

To stop other types of junk mail (i.e., catalogs), write to Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008.

BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kuhner

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

Oct. 25 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Nov. 1 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Nov. 8 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 15 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Nov. 22 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Nov. 29 Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
Dec. 6 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Dec. 13 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Dec. 20 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Dec. 27 Season's Greetings — No Walk
Jan. 3 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Jan. 10 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Jan. 17 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Jan. 24 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Jan. 31 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Feb. 7 Pelham Bay for Owls (9 A.M.)

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070
TROPICBIRD
Tom Tome

From the edge of the cliff I could see the blue-green waters of the Pacific Ocean. A lighthouse at the end of the point only added to the beauty of the location. A pod of dolphins swam by, working its way along the coast — leaping from the sea, and spinning in midair, hence the name Spinner Dolphin. Great Frigatebirds and Red-footed Boobies soared overhead on strong trade winds. But one species caught my attention and my imagination: a white pigeon-sized bird with two long red tail feathers kept flying past the cliffs. They were on their way to and from hunting in the nearby waters. They were the Red-tailed Tropicbirds. The location of this paradise is Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge on the island of Kauai, Hawaii.

The most beautiful bird at the point was the Red-tailed Tropicbird. Its twin red tail feathers are one and a half times the length of the bird’s body, adding to the grace of this incredible bird. They nest at the point on bare rocks in the crevices of the cliffs. They hunt by diving from the air for fish and squid. They range from the Indian and Pacific Oceans to Hawaii, and on occasion to the waters off Baja, California. They lay one egg at a time, splotted yellow or red in color.

Tropicbirds are noisy, making a variety of screeches, screams, rattles, and clicks. At sea they call click-et click-et, giving them another name, the “bos’n bird.” They are members of the Phaethontidae family, named for Phaethon, son of Helios, the sun god in Greek mythology. Phaethon drove his father’s fiery chariot across the sky. Appropriately named, for all three species of tropicbird live in warm sunny tropical waters, even though the White-tailed Tropicbird occasionally can be seen off our Atlantic coast as far north as Nova Scotia.

Kilauea Point is located on the north side of Kauai. In fact, it is the northernmost point of the Hawaiian chain. It is the only Hawaiian refuge open to the public on a regular basis (Monday thru Friday) year round. To find the point, follow the tourist signs from the Kuhio Highway one mile north to the refuge. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Red-footed Boobies nest there. You can also see Laysan Albatross and the Great Frigatebird.

As the tropicbirds kept flying past me, I could not help but attempt to photograph these birds in flight. The key to photographing birds in flight is anticipation. A photographer must concentrate on where the bird will be, not where it is. As the birds continued to use the same flight path, I could anticipate the birds’ location. This allowed me to forecast a spot where I could prefocus my lens. As the bird approached the spot, I would cue my shutter release so the bird was in the focused frame when the shutter actually tripped. A slight delay in the photographer’s reaction time and movement of the shutter allowed the bird to move into the predetermined frame for the picture. If the bird was flying across the field of view, I would use a camera mounted on a gun stock, or a tripod with a ball head, to pan along with the bird. This allows more time to focus.

A photographer can also take a picture of a bird shortly after takeoff. Focus on the area above the bird on the side that the wind is coming from, as birds, like planes, take off into the wind. As the bird lifts off, cue the shutter just before it enters the predetermined focused frame. Again the slight time delay will allow the bird to be in the frame as the shutter opens. Some of the newer autofocus cameras can focus on the moving birds; some can even anticipate a bird’s location and focus. But these cameras and telephoto lenses are very expensive, leaving most of us with the old-fashioned manual technique.

A photographer must also consider shutter speed and aperture settings. Because most bird photography is done with telephoto lenses, we must consider narrow depth of fields characteristic of telephotos. You can shut down the aperture (go to a higher f-stop) to increase the depth of field or the area in focus. The problem with this is it decreases the amount of light entering the camera. If we do not have enough light, we cannot stop the action and the bird will be blurred. So a photographer must compromise, the highest f-stop for focus along with the fastest shutter speed to stop the action. Some blurring can be pleasant, especially on the wings. Remember the larger the bird, the slower the movement, allowing for slower shutter speeds. For more information on bird flight photography, you can read The Audubon Society Guide to Nature Photography.

I did get some nice pictures at Kilauea Point: the tropicbirds, frigates, the coast, and the lighthouse, all located on one of the most beautiful places on Earth, the island of Kauai. I must admit my pictures were not perfect. Someday I must return to improve upon those images.

HAVE A HOLLY, JOLLY HOLIDAY!
Doreen Remsen

Depending on when you receive your copy of the Skimmer (let’s say October 23rd), it will be only 50 DAYS until our annual Holiday Party for Wildlifel I’m asking all South Shore elves to pitch in now and gather pinecones for our bird feeders. Last year we had well over 400 kids and kids-at-heart attend our festivities and our pinecone supply is currently at zero. So in your beach and forest walks this fall, take along a bag and gather any good-size pinecones you may come across. You can give them to me or Jonathan Staller, or drop them off at Tackapausha. Don’t worry...we’ve notified the North Pole that extra peanut butter is a must! Thank you!!
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