

dinner point (all-you-can-eat Chinese cuisine at the Super Buffet on Merrick Road in Rockville Centre). This is the twelfth year that SSAS has participated in the National Audubon Society's Birdathon; participants collect pledges per species seen (or pledges for a flat amount) and the proceeds are split 50/50 with NAS. For further info, please call Jim Remsen, Jr. at 764-5168 after 8 P.M.

Here's Jim's list of the 158 bird species that were identified by SSAS Birdathoners last May (species that weren't part of 1997's total of 149 are italicized):

Common Loon, Red-throated Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, *Cattle Egret*, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, *Yellow-crowned Night Heron*, Glossy Ibis, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Brant, Mallard, American Black Duck, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Wood Duck, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser,

Red-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Northern Harrier, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel, *Common Bobwhite*, Ring-necked Pheasant, Clapper Rail, American

Coot, American Oystercatcher, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, *Piping Plover*, Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet,

Spotted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Short-billed Dowitcher, Red Knot, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Sanderling, Least Sandpiper, *Western Sandpiper*, Dunlin, *American Woodcock* (pictured), Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Laughing Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Forster's Tern, Common Tern, Least Tern, *Black Skimmer*,

Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Monk Parakeet, *Yellow-billed Cuckoo*, Black-billed Cuckoo, *Whip-poor-will*, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, *Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker,

Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, *Least Flycatcher*, *Olive-sided Flycatcher*, *Eastern Pewee*, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow,

Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, Wood Thrush, *Swainson's Thrush*, *Gray-cheeked Thrush*, Veery,

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, *Golden-crowned Kinglet*, *Cedar Waxwing*, European Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Solitary Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo,

Black-and-white Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, *Tennessee Warbler*, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green




Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, *Cerulean Warbler*, *Bay-breasted Warbler*, Blackpoll Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, *Louisiana Waterthrush*, *Kentucky Warbler*, *Connecticut Warbler*, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, *Hooded Warbler*, Canada Warbler, American Redstart,

House Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, Northern Oriole, *Rusty Blackbird*, Boat-tailed Grackle, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *Purple Finch*, Indigo Bunting, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, *Northern Junco*, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

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.*

SSAS Post Office Statement — *South Shore Skimmer is published monthly from September through December and February through May by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.*



Explore the coast
with the
**AMERICAN
LITTORAL SOCIETY**

ASSATEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND (May 20-23). Visit Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge and Assateague National Seashore in Virginia. See nesting Bald Eagle and Osprey, wild horses, river otter, etc. Cost: \$260 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, 3 evening programs and star watch, marsh boat tour, Safari bus tour, and all-you-can-eat seafood buffet.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET BOAT CRUISE (Sat., June 5th). Enjoy a calm cruise aboard the "Dorothy B VIII" during peak bird nesting season. See Peregrine Falcon, egrets, herons, ibis, oystercatcher, terns, skimmers, and lots of shorebirds. Learn about the history & ecology of the refuge. Cost: \$35.

MONTAUK (June 11-13). An extended weekend of natural history fun & ecology. Cost: \$250 includes 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 guided nature hikes, 2 evening programs, and LIRR pickup. Activities include hikes to "Walking Dunes," Montauk Bluffs, beaches, lighthouse, Accobonac Harbor (optional canoeing), seining, birding, etc.

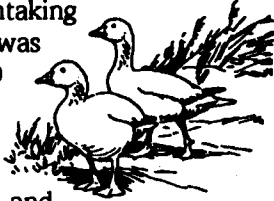
CAPE ANN WHALE WATCH (Aug. 19-22). A fee of \$340 includes 3 nights at oceanfront resort in Gloucester; 1/2 day Whale Boat (humpback & minke whales); sunset cruise in Essex River marshes (wine & cheese); canoeing on quiet, scenic Ipswich River; Sat. night lobster dinner; guided hikes.

For information and free field trip brochure,
call/write Don Riepe, (718) 634-6467,
28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693

CONSERVATION REPORT

Bethy Borowsky

The moral of this story is that if you change the environment, you will upset the balance of nature, although you may be surprised about what actually happens. Maybe you've noticed that the Snow Goose population has increased over the last few years. Personally, I was delighted with that: they are beautiful birds — all white with wings lined with a bit of black — and seeing them fly overhead in large flocks is truly a breathtaking sight. What I failed to recognize was that maybe there might be TOO many of them. Well, it turns out that there might be. The Arctic tundra near Hudson Bay in Canada, where the geese nest and hatch their young, is being destroyed by the birds. Dr. Robert Rockwell, of the City College of New York, has been studying snow geese in Hudson Bay for many years, and a recent article in *Folio*, the newsletter of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, reports his most recent observations. He noticed that the tundra is literally being torn up by the birds.



Snow Geese, like Canada Geese, eat grass. Under normal circumstances, they clip the grass off above the soil. But in recent years the tundra has looked "pockmarked" because the birds have literally ripped the grasses up by their roots, because there is not enough food for them all. And soil is being eroded.

Dr. Rockwell reports that "the goose population is growing at a staggering rate of 5% or more a year; a healthy rate is 1 or 2% a year. So where in 1972 there were about 1.5 million geese, today there are 10 million." The explanation? Many Snow Geese overwintered in the Texas and Louisiana coastal marshes along the Gulf of Mexico. Over the years, these areas have been drained to permit additional agriculture and development. But, rather than this killing off the species, the geese moved to other areas, where there was more food.

They moved to areas of Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and eastern Oklahoma where rice is grown. The birds thrived on that rice. They also were able to eat soybeans, rapeseed, millet, and corn on other, nearby farms. This effectively increased the goose's winter habitat from about a half a mile to a 100 mile stretch west of New Orleans. According to Dr. Rockwell, "the new environment was so rich that the birds' natural survival rate of 70% shot up to 90%."

Thus, more birds. This poses a dilemma. What do we do about this? Even restoring the natural wetlands of the birds' historical habitat will not make them move back there: they're not about to lose their taste for rice and corn. The first thing to do is to inform people about this: it's essentially too much of a good thing. Another recommendation may be to control the goose's population explosion by lifting hunting restrictions. While this is

never a happy option, unless we can devise another plan soon, it may make sense to go ahead with it. Something needs to be done to protect the tundra.

Final note for the summer: Wishing you all a happy, healthy summer, with lots of time to get out and enjoy Long Island's environment. And if there are any local conservation issues that concern you — give us a call.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jackie Richichi

SSAS welcomes this month's new members. We hope that you'll become active members of our very active chapter — join us at a meeting, weekly bird walk, or special event.

[To receive an application for membership in National Audubon Society and SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Jackie Richichi, at 691-1855, or send e-mail to Jacee13@aol.com. Introductory membership is \$20; \$15 for students and senior citizens.]

Amityville	John Rothe
Baldwin	Catherine Cigna, Karen Schulberg
Bellmore	Thomas Collings, Lillian Ostrager
Bethpage	Mr. Robert Cirino
East Meadow	Mr. Donald H. Eiermann, ? Rapoport
Elmont	Edgar W. Sanderleaf
Farmingdale	Mr. Jack Goor, Alfred Li Causi
Floral Park	Michael Deieso, M. Rabinzoloski
Franklin Square	Annette & Robert Pehnke, Mr. Frank Riccobono
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Massapequa	Patrick Gilbride, Mary Koetzner
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Point Lookout	John Auleta
Valley Stream	Ms. Joyce S. Mc Kéon
West Hempstead	Melvin Boone, Mrs. Jean Brendel, Mr. Ted DeMuth
Woodmere	Carol Basner, Fred Martinez



AHOY SSAS! A BOAT TRIP IS PLANNED!

Doreen Remsen

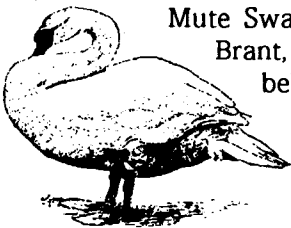
Avast, mates! You say you're tired of being a "landlubber" birder? Well, bring your sea legs and a bagged lunch down to the Freeport Boat Basin Sunday morning, **August 15th**, and shove off with your fellow crew mates aboard *The Spray* as we sail the "high seas" of the Jones Beach and Tobay channels to enjoy the thousands of shorebirds that will be gathering to prepare for their fall migration.

The Spray holds 49 passengers, so reservations are a must. The cost is \$20 per person, and a portion of the proceeds will go toward South Shore Audubon's many programs. If we should fill the boat, there will be a waiting list in the event of any cancellations. In the event of severe weather, the trip will be postponed a week; drizzle or overcast will not cancel our sail.

Departure time is 8 A.M. sharp and we will return by 2 P.M. Take Merrick Road to Guy Lombardo Avenue (one full block east of the Freeport Memorial Library) south to the Freeport Boatmen's Association, 540 Guy Lombardo Avenue; allow a few minutes to find a parking spot in the neighborhood. For information and reservations, call Scott Oglesby at 798-4871; 120 Massapequa Ave. #1, Massapequa, NY 11758-6431. Thank ye, maties! Arhh! Arhh!

What might we see? Mike Andersen e-mailed your editor his list of non-European Starling, non-Rock Dove, non-House Sparrow bird species we saw between Oceanside and Seaford on last year's trip aboard *The Spray* (8/16/98): Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Glossy Ibis,

Mute Swan (pictured), Canada Goose, Brant, Osprey, Clapper Rail, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Sanderling, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Laughing Gull, Common Tern, Least Tern, and Black Skimmer.



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S PROGRAM IN BETHPAGE

While SSAS is taking its traditional summer break, our programs chairperson, Tom Torma, will be presenting a slide program on Long Island's birds to the general public on behalf of our chapter. On **July 15th**, in the Bethpage Public Library (47 Powell Ave.) at 7:30 P.M., Tom will discuss bird identification and the role birds have played in Long Island's history, economy, and environment. He'll also give recommendations on birding equipment. SSAS members, of course, are encouraged to attend.

BIRD TRIVIA #4

Jonathan Staller

Spring migration is here for us, so go out and look for those birds. Meanwhile, on rainy days, maybe these trivia questions will keep you busy. Good luck.

- ① How do birds manage to relax without falling while sleeping clutched to a perch?
- ② How many times does a hummingbird beat its wings per second if a pelican does about 1.5/sec, a pigeon 5-8/sec, and a mockingbird 14/sec?
- ③ How do loons, cormorants, and a few other fish-eating birds hunt for prey?
- ④⑤ What bird is the leading migrant in terms of distance on land? On sea?

- ⑤ Barn Swallow (9,000 miles round-trip).
- ④ Arctic Tern (22,000 miles round-trip).
- fish.
- ③ These birds dive from the surface and swim to catch
- ② 50-75 times per second.
- and muscles in their legs.
- ① They have a built-in lock device, using the tendons

THE NINTH ANNUAL THANK-YOU COLUMN

Michael Spelling

First, thanks to everyone in SSAS who submitted articles and information for this year's *Skimmers*: Betsy, Betty, Diane, Dolores, Doreen, Edward S. Erlich, Elliott, George, Jackie, Jim, Joanne, Joe L., Jonathan, Lorraine Bondi-Goldsmith, Mary Jane, Mike A., Mike G., Mike H., Nancy, Paul, Sue, Tom, and Vince Puglisi (see back page for missing last names). Thanks also to those of you who submitted things yet to appear in a *Skimmer*; I'm holding onto nearly everything for future use or future editors.

Finally, thanks especially to the people who did the behind-the-scenes work: To David Yavarkovsky for donating the dot-matrix printer that he and our dearly missed Marion used and for providing answers whenever I had questions. To Marion's successor, Jackie, for volunteering without having ever attended a chapter event and for managing to provide mailing labels or floppy disks while spending months without a permanent address. To my sister Vicki for providing database & mailing-label expertise and for helping me print labels on her computer every time the need arose. To mom & dad for helping me stick over 16,000 labels on this year's *Skimmers*. To nine-year veterans Jenny Krivanek & Dan Marsh for not moving away and for bringing seven issues to F&B Printers (I dropped off one) while remaining invisible at SSAS events. To Dan & Jenny, Brendan & Christine Kelly, Sue Lancer, George & Sally Popkin, and label-buyer extraordinaire Doreen Remsen for doing the F&B pickups. And to Sal Navasaitis for once again bringing nearly all the mailings to the post office (I did 1 1/2). You've all earned your summer break!

BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER

Mike Higgiston

I usually listen to the New York City Rare Bird Alert every Friday to hear of rarities in our area. It often dictates how I will spend my weekend. But the report for Friday, August 28, 1998 was particularly auspicious. A Broad-billed Sandpiper had been reported at the East Pond of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge the previous day. My first reaction was one of disbelief. I assumed that the reporter had misidentified the bird. After all, this is an Asian bird that is a rare migrant for European birders. There appear to be two distinct populations, one that breeds in Scandinavia and the other in northern Siberia. The Scandinavian birds probably winter in eastern and southern Africa, and the Siberian population winters on the shores of the Indian Ocean from Arabia to Australia. The Scandinavian birds migrate southeast across Europe and are rare west of a line from the western Baltic Sea to Italy. Vagrants are rare in May in eastern England. The bird is also a vagrant to Morocco, New Zealand, and the Aleutians. The Aleutians are usually the place where this sandpiper can be seen by American bird-watchers. So a sighting in New York would be incredible, to say the least.

So there I sat that Friday afternoon, the center of two wildly fluctuating forces. The urge to chase the bird was almost overwhelming but the disbelief I felt was also strong. As if that was all I had to endure; it was also 4 o'clock on Friday afternoon of Labor Day weekend. The half-hour ride to Jamaica Bay was a dream; rush hour drive time reality dictates at least an hour and maybe longer. What to do?

Some kind of family obligation put off any Friday afternoon chase, but with the sunrise I was off to Jamaica Bay to see the sandpiper. It's always a pleasure to come upon a number of birders with spotting scopes zeroed in on the elusive prize. And so it was. Walk up to the congregation and ask if they have the bird. Any one of them is anxious to let you view the rarity through his scope. What a pleasure! What a thrill! I really appreciated views of this very cooperative bird as I knew how incredibly rare it was and how incredibly lucky we were to have it here in New York.

There was additional enjoyment to be had on that Saturday and on the ensuing days. I knew a bird of this rarity would draw birders from all over the country and it wasn't long before I was chatting with a friend from Delaware. But a real treat was to hear that a buddy of mine

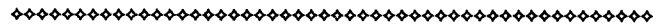
from Olympia, Washington was planning a trip to New York the following Monday to see the sandpiper. I picked him up at the airport and headed to Jamaica Bay immediately. But upon reaching the area that the bird had frequented consistently, we found out that the bird was nowhere to be found. We searched the shoreline of the West Pond at the main site and the adjacent one, but came up wanting. There were a number of other birders there



searching with us. But as daylight segued into twilight, the sandpiper was finally spotted. He was feeding with other shorebirds as he meandered through the vegetation along the shore. This was the third day in a row that I had the privilege to see the sandpiper, but I never tired of watching this bird. It was quite an enjoyable experience. Now if only a Spoonbill Sandpiper would visit (also from Asia)!

Editor's Two Cents: As a certified fair-weather birder who has no life list and has put the Rare Bird Alert number in the *Skimmer* 80 times but called it about twice, I arrived at Jamaica Bay for SSAS's August 30th bird walk clueless as to why there were no spots in the main parking lot. At West Pond, it was remarkable how many spotting scopes were aimed side-by-side at the same spot, and how willing their owners were to share their expensive equipment with strangers. You never know what you'll see on an SSAS walk — try one!

P.S.: A generic sandpiper's pictured; we need clip art!



OUR 28th ANNUAL DINNER

Shirley Kutner and Diane Singer have once again reserved the Banquet Room at Pompei Restaurant & Catering in West Hempstead for SSAS's annual dinner, to be held on **Tuesday, June 8th**, starting with cocktails (open bar, free soda) and hors d'oeuvres at 6:30. Smoking will be prohibited. Pompei is at 401 Hempstead Avenue (take Southern State Parkway Exit 17 north about 1 1/2 miles).

Advance registration is **required** (119 of us were at last year's dinner); please enclose the following form with your \$25/person check payable to *South Shore Audubon Society* and mail them to Diane Singer, 118 Kent Road, Valley Stream, NY 11580-3316.



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

AMOUNT OF CHECK: _____


NUMBER OF PEOPLE: _____

NUMBER OF EACH MENU CHOICE:

 Chicken Francese _____

 Eggplant Rollatini _____

 Filet of Sole Dijon _____

 Roast Beef _____

or, if you prefer:

 Broiled Chicken _____



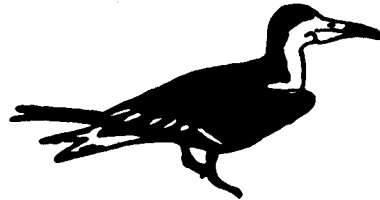
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