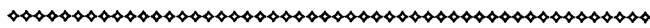


We Need Your Help; Please Volunteer. We are looking for talented people who have a skill or craft that can be shared with other people. We are trying to set up workshops at Tackapausha. If you have a skill or craft, let me know and we will work to set up a workshop. Call me for details.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wendy Murbach

One of the wonderful perks that you get from an Audubon membership is the chance to be a part of your local Audubon Chapter, South Shore Audubon Society.

You are automatically a valued member of this active and friendly chapter, so please come out to the next meeting at the Freeport Library from 8–10 P.M. on the second Tuesday of the month to hear what you can do to help preserve your local environment's health and viability, to hear about local issues that you can help to solve, and to see an interesting program.

Whether you are a beginning birder or someone with a large life list, you will enjoy our weekly Sunday bird walks led by Elliott Kutner, birder extraordinaire. Check out the special events that are mentioned in this *Skimmer*. Attend them yourself, and bring your family and friends too.

You are warmly invited to be an active participant in this vibrant all-volunteer organization comprised of persons who, like you, care about the earth we live on, about our local environment, and about the creatures that live alongside us.

Our new members this month are:

- Glen Oaks Mrs. Robin Lugo
- Levittown Robert A. McGlinchey
- Lynbrook Kathy Kobishyn
- Massapequa Alan King
- Merrick Winifred Gwaltney
- Rockville Centre Mr. Arthur Goldstein
- Seaford Mr. & Mrs. M. R. Severino
- Wantagh Janet Hanson, Stephen Hoffman
- West Hempstead Anne Matzner



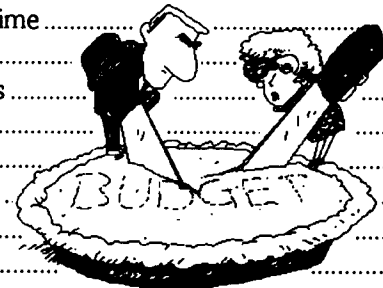
SSAS Mission Statement—*The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.*


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.*



BUDGET 2000–2001

Brookside Preserve	2000
Camp Scholarships	2000
College Scholarships	1500
Conferences/Council Meetings	1500
Conservation	600
Donations	1000
Drinking Water Letter	500
Education	500
Festivals	500
Insurance	900
Library Custodians	300
Library Donations	800
Library Overtime	500
Membership	400
Miscellaneous	1000
Office Space	450
Publicity	200
Refreshments	400
Secretary	150
Skimmer	6500
Speakers	1000
T.R. Sanctuary Camp Scholarships	5000
Total	\$27,700





*Explore the coast
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JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE (Sat., Oct. 14, 4–7 P.M.). Learn about history & ecology of Jamaica Bay Refuge aboard the 96' *Dorothy B VIII*. Peak raptor & waterfowl migration time. See Snow Geese, Oystercatcher, Peregrine Falcon, Sharp-shinned & Cooper's Hawks. Cost: \$35 includes wine, cheese, snacks. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe.

NEW YORK AQUARIUM (Nov. 4). Join us for a 2-1/2 hour "Behind-the-Scenes" tour and see beluga whales, walrus, penguins, sea otters, sharks, local & tropical fish. Visit "Discovery Cove" and "Sea Cliff" exhibits. Cost: \$15 (Kids \$10). Call Don.

ASSATEAGUE FALL WEEKEND (Nov. 8–12). Visit Chincoteague Refuge and see wild ponies, Bald Eagle, Sika deer, Tundra Swan, Snow Geese, gannets, etc. Cost: \$275 covers 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, guides, Saturday seafood dinner, marsh boat tour, Safari back dune tour, evening slide program & star watch.

COSTA RICA (January 16–28, 2001). Visit Monteverde Cloud Forest, Carara Coastal Rainforest, Ocotol Beach Resort, Tabacon Hot Springs & Spa (Arenal Volcano), and more. Call Don for info.

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

JAMAICA BAY BIKEWAY UPDATE

Michael Spelling

In May, an Environmental Assessment Design Approval Document was issued by Gateway National Recreation Area regarding the proposed Cross Bay Boulevard segment of the Rockaway Gateway "Greenway." Veteran *Skimmer* readers have already seen several articles about this ongoing attempt to turn several acres of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge into bicycle-friendly pavement.

The public comment period for the above document took place during the summer, when most birding and environmental groups, including SSAS, are inactive and don't publish newsletters. The SSAS board voted to op-



pose Gateway's proposed action and the alternative options provided in the document except for the no-action one. On August 3, New York City Audubon Society hosted a meeting with representatives from Great South Bay Audubon Society, Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester, North Shore Audubon Society, SSAS, and our state field

office. We unanimously agreed to support the no-action option and to oppose the others; there was considerable discussion about whether to accept a less-damaging compromise not included in the document, but there was no consensus on that. We agreed that a full environmental impact review is needed, and that the proposed federal and state funding sources are inappropriate and may be challenged in court if necessary.

The options proposed in the document, with numbers corrected via a June 11 errata sheet, are as follows.

Alternative 1998: Replace the existing 5-foot wide sidewalk with a sinuous 12-foot wide pathway 9,092 feet long, back and forth across the refuge's boundary. Total width would be 16 feet, including two 2-foot shoulders. The space between the pathway and the curb would be revegetated as a buffer and screen from the street. The on-street bike lane would be retained. Net loss of 3.0 acres of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge shrub-thicket habitat.

Alternative 2000 (Proposed Action): Replace the existing 5-foot wide sidewalk that's 5 feet west of Cross Bay Boulevard's curb with a 10-foot wide pathway 8,831 feet long, beginning 9 feet from the back of the curb. Total width would be 12 feet, including two 1-foot shoulders, and would intrude 10 feet into JBWR (the refuge begins at the edge of the existing NYC-owned sidewalk). The space between the pathway and the curb would be revegetated as a buffer and screen from the street. The on-street bike lane would be retained. Net loss of 2.02 acres of habitat.

Alternative 2000, Option b: Same as above, but beginning 7 feet from the back of the curb. Net loss of 1.62 acres of habitat.

Alternative 2000, Option c: Same as above, but beginning 5 feet from the back of the curb. Net loss of 1.22 acres.

No Action. No alterations to existing layout; retain on-street bike lane. Remote possibility New York City may reconstruct sidewalks (on both sides of Cross Bay Boulevard) as part of maintenance program. No immediate plans for renovation or improvement. No loss of habitat.

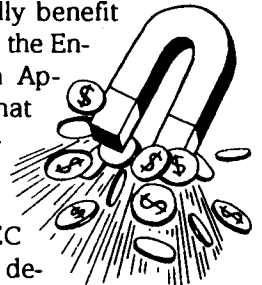
The \$1,250,000 to be spent for this proposed destruction of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge habitat would come from the federal ISTE program (75%) and from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Jamaica Bay Damages Account (25%).

ISTEA (pronounced "iced tea" and recently renewed as TEA-21) is the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, passed by Congress in order to support alternatives to commuting by automobile. ISTE funds are supposed to be used to principally benefit commuters, not recreational users; the Environmental Assessment Design Approval Document acknowledges that the "Greenway" would be recreational.

The Jamaica Bay Damages Account is the result of a NYSDEC lawsuit against Exxon; the consent decree requires that its funds be spent for "restoring, replacing, or acquiring of the equivalent of any natural resources determined to have been injured, destroyed, or lost as a result of the release of hazardous substances from the landfills."

When Gateway National Recreation Area was created by Congress in 1972 and absorbed the NYC-owned JBWR, Congress declared that "the Secretary (of Interior) shall administer and protect the islands and waters within the Jamaica Bay Unit with the primary aim of preserving the natural resources, fish, and wildlife located therein and shall permit no development or use of this area that is incompatible with this purpose."

As this *Skimmer* goes to press, the staff at Gateway NRA is analyzing the public comments received regarding the May 2000 Environmental Assessment Design Approval Document. One of those comments is on SSAS letterhead and covers all the points mentioned above. We'll keep you posted. Next time you're at JBWR, take a look at the area closest to Cross Bay Boulevard; your money could be spent to pave it.



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CONSERVATION EDUCATION REPORT

Betty Borowsky

This summer, South Shore Audubon Society conducted its day camp scholarship program for disadvantaged youngsters for the third year in a row. The chapter funds one week of day camp at National Audubon's Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay for children from our catchment area. This year, we worked with the Rockville Centre School District to send children from the Rockville Centre/South Hempstead/Lakeview area (last year we sent children from the Baldwin School District, and the year before that from the Roosevelt and Hempstead School Districts).

This was probably the most successful year we've had. Experience from previous years helped us avoid some logistical problems, we had more chaperons, and the school district administrators were especially helpful. Before I go any further, let me thank the people who helped us this year.

✦ First and foremost: we gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the Old Navy Company, which donated a bus and driver to take us to and from TR Sanctuary.



Without this assistance, we could not conduct this program. I especially thank Vicky Seeley, who arranged for the bus, and our very patient bus drivers. The bus stopped at five different stops before going to the Sanctuary, and a few times we had to come back to a particular stop to pick up a child who was late. These wonderful drivers were willing to accommodate anything we needed done, as long as it was safe.

✦ We thank Dr. William H. Johnson, School Superintendent of the Rockville Centre School District, for approving of and facilitating our working in the district.

✦ A special thank you to Ms. Trudy Lubitz, Secretary to the Superintendent, who worked with the social workers and teachers at the five elementary schools in the district and with the Middle School to identify eligible children.

✦ We thank Director Marilyn England and the staff and counselors at the Sanctuary, especially Assistant Director Jay Teyan, who accommodated our needs as the list of campers grew and shrank as we approached the week of the camp.

✦ Thank you to SSAS's Chris Schmitt, Maureen Rube, and Alice Blaustein, our chaperons, who accompanied the children on the bus, tried very hard to make sure that they were all picked up, and made sure the children were safe and comfortable.

✦ And last, but not least, thank you all for your support. I know you would be as gratified as Chris, Maureen, Alice, and I were to see how much the children enjoyed their camping experience.

Now let me tell you some of the things that happened during the week of camp. When the children get to the

camp on the first day, you can see how tentative they are. Not fearful, so much as realizing that they are in a VERY unfamiliar environment and trying to figure out what it's all about. Their expressions are very clearly: "Good Lord; what IS this place?" (I actually have videos of this.) Near the beginning of the first day, you hear: "How many days will we be going?" And, especially in the beginning, the older ones are concerned about getting their clothes dirty, and perhaps are feeling that some of the activities are undignified for persons of their mature age (some were 13 years old).

But by the end of the first day, most of the children understand that while this is certainly a *different* experience, it is great fun, and most of them really get into it (I've got that on tape too). Two comments from that first day were: "When are we going to the beach?" and "I can't wait to see what we're going to do tomorrow." And my VERY favorite, when we were walking back to the bus: "We went FISHING today!" You need to understand that they didn't actually *catch* anything. But some of these kids have never done any of the things associated with fishing: preparing the bait, the hook, the rod; learning where you might have some luck; watching the water to see what happens. Stuff most middle-class kids take for granted.

What do the children do when they get there? There might be running games, a version of "tag" in which some of the children are poachers, some are game wardens, and some are the animals at risk; there might be a presentation about "the animal of the day." Maybe a giant millipede, or lizard, or vulture is brought out and the counselor tells everyone about it. There might be a trip to the beach to collect shells or other things that have washed up on the shore and to learn about animals and plants that live there (meanwhile getting wet and sandy).

This year I noticed that the Sanctuary counselors had developed conservation/environmental themes for their activities and games. And this was fun too. My favorite comment from one counselor, addressing a younger group who were decorated with face paint and paper head-dresses, was: "OK — Nissequogues line up on the left, Shinnecocks on the right!"

I begin working on this along about January. First I identify a community in our area with a relatively large number of low-income families. (I try to work with only one community a year, just because transportation becomes so difficult when pickup sites are far from each other.) Then I get in contact with the superintendent of the school district that serves that community. I need her or his authority to reach the teachers, who will ultimately select eligible children. Then the superintendent has to set the administrative wheels in motion that will authorize teachers to do these selections. I frequently work with many persons during this period: administrative assis-



tants, social workers, and so forth. Principals and social workers at the elementary schools must participate, and then the principals have to get in touch with the teachers, who identify the children for us. Our criteria for eligible children are: 1) that they really are in financial need, 2) that they are likely to enjoy and appreciate the experience, and 3) that they be entering the third through sixth grades. So far, this has worked out well, although in reality I believe we have not reached the MOST needy families (there are real barriers to this which I will discuss in a later article).

Along about May, when I am getting frustrated by all the problems I have trying to reach parents, and then getting them to send in their medical forms, I decide this is the very last year I'm going to do this. But then I meet the children, and see how sharp they are, and see how much fun they have. And I get all fired up and enthusiastic again, and start planning for next year. If you would like to participate in this program and, especially, if you have some suggestions for increasing the number of children we reach, please call me at 764-3596 or stop and talk to me at one of our meetings. These are very, very nice kids. We need to reach more of them.



BIRD WALKS
Elliott Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 A.M. except for Pelham Bay; no walk if it rains. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

- Sept. 24 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Oct. 1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Oct. 8 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Oct. 15** Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Oct. 22 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Oct. 29 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 5 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Nov. 12 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Nov. 19 Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Nov. 26 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Dec. 3 Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first lot south of Southern State Parkway, south end of lot)
- Dec. 10 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Dec. 17 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Dec. 24 Season's Greetings — No Walk
- Dec. 31 Happy New Year — No Walk

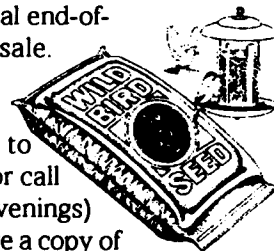
**Traffic Advisory: We've recently learned that due to the Discover Long Island Bike Tour, the Meadowbrook and Loop Parkways will be closed till noon on October 15. Use the Wantagh Parkway to get to Zach's Bay and celebrate the end of NYS Parks' toll season.

FALL BIRD FESTIVAL REMINDER

SSAS's second annual Fall Bird Festival is/was **Saturday, September 23**. There are/were 9 A.M. field trips at Oceanside's Marine Nature Study Area, Brookside Preserve, Tackapausha, Jones Beach West End 2, and Massapequa Preserve; a photography workshop at 9 A.M. at Cow Meadow Preserve; and programs and arts & crafts at Tackapausha Museum till 4 P.M. Scheduled programs include an SSAS slide program at 10 A.M., "Understanding Your Bird Guides" with Scott Oglesby at 11, Tom Torma's "Enjoying Birds of LI" slide show at noon, Elliott Kutner's "A Walk on the Tide Line" film at 1, and TR Sanctuary's live birds of prey at 2. The usual Tackapausha admission will be charged, \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. Need more info or directions? See last month's *Skimmer* or call Tom Torma at 378-4723.

BIRDSEED SALE REMINDER

On **Sunday, October 29**, from 9:30 A.M. until 2:30 P.M., SSAS will be in Tackapausha's parking lot (on Washington Avenue in Seaford) for our annual end-of-daylight-saving-time birdseed sale. Preorders are recommended & appreciated, and are due October 11, so please send e-mail to mssperling@compuserve.com or call Michael Sperling at 541-0805 (evenings) for an order form if you don't have a copy of last month's *Skimmer*.



We will be selling black oil and striped sunflower, mixed seeds, cracked corn, sunflower chips (no shells), peanut hearts, safflower, niger (thistle), and self-hanging and non-self-hanging suet cakes. Help will be needed and much appreciated on the sale date; no purchase required to volunteer!

BECOME A MEMBER OF SSAS

If you'd like to become a member of National Audubon and your all-volunteer local chapter (that's us), please mail the following form and your check payable to us to South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031. The special rate for the first year is \$20; \$15 for students and seniors.

✂*****

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

✂*****

HELP INVENTORY OPEN SPACES

Michael Goldsmith

How would you like to help inventory the few remaining open spaces in Nassau County? Your efforts might lead to the preservation of that land.

The Nassau County Legislature and the Nassau County Planning Commission are in the process of developing an open space plan for the county.

As phase one of the project, the firm Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc., has been commissioned to draft up an inventory of all the open spaces in the county. While they have done an excellent job and have been very receptive to the input of civic and environmental organizations like SSAS, there are still some fairly sizable vacant or undeveloped properties (720 to be precise) that have not been adequately inventoried.

"What we are looking for," said Bridget Duggin of Frederick P. Clark, "is a field analysis of these vacant or undeveloped properties, particularly those near significant resources or trails or parks. The next step is to use the evaluation process to rank the properties. Those with higher ranking are to be targeted for acquisition. The properties will be acquired through a bond act, federal programs, or conservation easements."

Since July, David Künstler and I have been assisting in the project. Bridget has provided us with several maps showing the properties to be examined, as well as their tax map numbers. The smallest are 2 acres and so far the largest has been over 30 acres. She gave us some field data sheets to complete, as well as some film to photograph the properties. I have no scientific background and leave the identification of flora and fauna to David. As an attorney, my main contribution to the cause has been to visit the County Clerk's office and print up the appropriate tax maps to assist us in locating the properties, as they do not come with addresses.

So far, David and I have trespassed on some very spectacular land. In Cove Neck, we explored some quality Appalachian oak-hickory and oak-tulip forest. One property ended in a steep slope, which we climbed down to a beach. Another property was behind an abandoned old mansion and after walking through about an acre of English ivy, we came upon a mature chestnut-oak forest, where we saw a Red-eyed Vireo and a hawk.

On a solo expedition, David explored a 36-acre property on Muttontown Road near the Muttontown Preserve. He said he saw a pond that might have been a breeding ground for frogs and other herps.

David is a walking field guide and I have learned quite a bit from exploring these properties with him. However, if you are just an amateur like me, you still can complete the field data sheets.



There are properties all over the county that need to be inventoried. So if you or anyone else you know likes to go hiking on unfamiliar land and want to help in this worthwhile project, you can call Bridget Duggin at Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc., at 516-364-4544 or 914-967-6540. If you need any help figuring out the location of the properties, feel free to give me a call (my number is on the back of the *Skimmer*) and I will be happy to help you out at the County Clerk's office.

THE GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC

Mike Andersen

After two and a half days of promising scouting, all our preparation and anticipation led up to the moment the clock struck twelve on the 15th morning of April 2000. Standing next to my teammates Jessie Barry of NY, Evan Obercian of NJ, and Scott Yanco of MA, I waited for the first sound to ring through the night. We had all been chosen to compete in the Great Texas Birding Classic, a birdathon created to raise money for habitat preservation and conservation along the Texas Coastal Birding Trail. We were selected to the Leica/ABA Tropicbirds, a youth birding team cosponsored by Leica Sport Optics and the American Birding Association. We competed on the final day of this three-day competition in the Upper Coast Section. All money raised by our team benefited ABA's education and youth birding programs.

Acting as our guides, teachers, and friends were two exceptional birders from Cape May, NJ, Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis. Both were key to our success during our stay in Texas. Their tireless scouting efforts as well as Michael's ability to drive countless miles at odd hours of the night were crucial to our big day. On the day of the Classic, however, none of their skills could be put to use; thus all the identifications were up to us.

Amidst the monotonous drone of mosquitoes and frogs came the first avian sound of the night. Emanating from the marsh was the poodle-like barking of Black-necked Stilts. Ten anxiety-filled minutes after midnight, we finally tallied a bird. Shortly after, we had heard many of our hoped-for night birds at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge.

Throughout the remainder of the nocturnal morning, we added few to our list. However, upon sunrise we were in the Piney Woods of extreme East Texas, hoping for many specialty breeding birds of such habitat. Soon enough, we heard Bachman's Sparrow and Brown-headed Nuthatch, and shared in the sighting of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers with five other teams at their nest site. A wave of migrants, including 40 Orchard Orioles plus many southern breeding warblers, added to our list nicely.

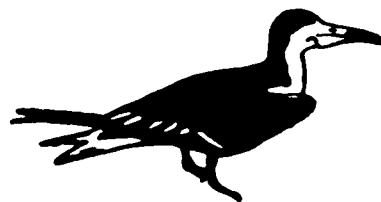
At precisely 11:00 A.M., the clouds broke and the temperature soared. Not long after, the hawks began to fly. Kettles of Broad-winged Hawks with a few Mississippi Kites were quickly tallied before we left for the Beaumont area.

2000-2001 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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P.O. Box 31
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