



## SSAS TO VISIT QUOGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Ann Marie Pazzino

An early spring nature walk has been scheduled for **Saturday, April 6** at 10 A.M. at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. We will have a guided walk on the main trail, which is a broad, well-maintained trail that passes through many habitats: oak woods, a sphagnum bog, pine barrens, a grassy field, and a maple swamp. Winding around the eleven acre Old Ice Pond, the trail includes a bridge that allows hikers to cross over the water at the northern end. If time permits, we will also walk down to the Fairy Dell salt marsh described below.

Quogue Wildlife Refuge, located just north of the junction of Old Main and Old Country Roads in Quogue (just east of Westhampton), is a cooperatively managed 305-acre natural resource area encompassing the headwaters of the Quantuck Creek drainage basin.

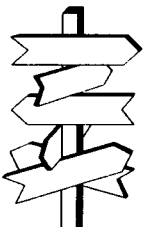
The refuge is unique in that the land is owned by three principal landowners and is managed by a fourth partner through long-term lease agreements. Three parcels of approximately 100 acres each are owned by the Southampton Township Wildfowl Association (STWA), the Village of Quogue, and the Town of Southampton. All three parcels are managed under 99-year leases by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The refuge includes the Charles Banks Belt Nature Center and the Distressed Wildlife Complex, as well as an extensive set of trails for use by the public.

*Fairy Dell Boardwalk* (0.6 miles). Constructed in 1984, this wooden boardwalk grants access into the Fairy Dell salt marsh. Overlook points allow groups to look out upon Quantuck Creek, where waterfowl and other estuary creatures congregate. Fairy Dell was a freshwater wetland until a 1938 hurricane changed the tide patterns in the area and allowed salt water into Quantuck Creek. To this day, the creek is a salt water tidal estuary.

The refuge's web site ([www.dec.state.ny.us/website/reg1/quogue.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/reg1/quogue.html)), the source for much of the information in this article, can be visited for more details.

*Directions.* Travel east on Rt. 27 (Sunrise Highway) to Exit 64 South. Go south on Route 104 for 2 miles. Turn right onto Old Country Road and go 7/10 of a mile (if you cross the railroad tracks, you have gone too far). The entrance is on the right.

*Registration.* The cost of this walk is \$3 per person and will be collected upon arrival at the refuge. Bathrooms are available at the main entrance. No eating is permitted along any of the trails, but feel free to bring lunch or a snack if you wish, which can be eaten in your car. The trip is limited to 30 people. To confirm your spot to this special place, please call me at (516) 579-3353 and leave your name and phone number on my answering machine. In case of bad weather, the trip will be canceled. There is no rain date.



## SEARCHING FOR THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Elliott Kulner

*Editor's note:* The following is a letter to the editor that Elliott wrote for the general public. Please write to Bernadette Castro, Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Albany, NY 12238 if you agree with SSAS's position.

It appears that Ms. Castro, our state's Commissioner of Parks, is determined to make "Holiday Lights at West End" a permanent entertainment feature at Jones Beach. The monies taken in by SFX, Inc. and the commission that accrues to the state are just too much for Ms. Castro to refuse. Our park receives very little of the money earned.

West End and its environs is one of the crucial places that our wildlife have left to live out the daily needs of their lives. This year, there was a Hammond's Flycatcher (a Pacific Coast bird) on our beach. Those that had the happy experience of seeing it had to spend one moment wondering and pondering the miracle of it all; this creature 3000 miles from home, yet home in our backyard by the sea. One day, a Peregrine Falcon swept out of the sky at its average speed of 200 MPH and took the flycatcher for a much-needed meal. It is the daily cycle of Life played out by all of us, living together on the face of our home, Earth.

We have to ask ourselves a couple of questions.

Is it necessary or environmentally correct to set up two miles of lighted crystal beads for our amusement at the expense of Snowy Owls, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Horned Lark, Eastern Meadowlark (pictured), Sharp-shinned Hawk —just to name a few?

Are we so bored, so completely depleted, that we've lost the thrill of buying a Christmas Tree and decorating it with pinecones placed among traditional ornaments, with our families, friends, and neighbors?



The Christmas Tree dates back to German pagan times. These tribes would celebrate the depths of Winter with a holiday of lights at the Winter solstice. The Christian British saw it and made it an integral part of Christmas.

If we lose one bird to the crystal impostor, it is one bird too many and diminishes the very essence of Christmas, the coming of new life and hope for the world. Ms. Castro is intent on turning Jones Beach into an amusement park. Robert Moses, to his credit, did not see our precious natural resource as a penny arcade. It was a jewel, to be enjoyed for its natural beauty; a place of escape and stretching from the bustle and congestion of city life.

I would remind you, one and all, that the Three Wise Men followed a Star to the Manger. They would be hopelessly lost in the crystal jungle of Ms. Castro's West End arcade.

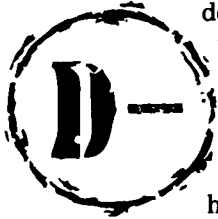


**2001 PRESIDENTIAL REPORT CARD**

The League of Conservation Voters gave President George W. Bush, for his first year in office, the following grades for his environmental actions:

- Presidential Appointments: ..... D
- President's Budget: ..... D+
- Presidential Initiatives: ..... F
- Energy and Climate Change: ..... F
- Public Lands and Land Management: ..... F
- Pollution and Public Health: ..... D
- Wildlife Conservation: ..... F
- International Issues: ..... F
- OVERALL GRADE: ..... D-

According to the League's 34-page report card (available at [www.lcv.org](http://www.lcv.org)): "President George W. Bush in his first year in office has actively pursued an anti-environmental agenda. From selecting industry lobbyists to regulate their former employers, to retreating on regulations designed to protect public health and the environment, to eliminating protections of our public lands, President Bush continues to roll back environmental protections... In its first year in office, the Bush administration has largely taken an unfortunate and aggressive anti-environmental approach to public policy. While upholding some positive environmental and public health protections developed under the last administration, for every step forward, this administration has taken multiple steps backward. From opening public lands to oil and gas exploration, to reneging on his campaign promise to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, to rolling back rules to protect public lands from toxic mining waste, this administration has allowed short-term political concerns to outweigh America's long-term interest in environmental protection."



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**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 since the last *Skimmer* are:

- Baldwin ..... Mary Patterson, Carol M. Schulz
- Bayside ..... William Ryan
- Bellmore ..... P. Kushner, Ronald Motkin, Steven Ronan
- Bethpage ..... L. Christensen, Patti Pizzanelli
- East Meadow ..... Nancy Mergo, Bob Sanders
- Elmont ..... Mrs. Caroline Pederson
- Farmingdale ..... Dorothy Conboy
- Floral Park ..... Christine DeFilippo, Ms. Kara Matthews
- Franklin Square ..... Lynne Hammel
- Freeport ..... Mary Kanandspy
- Glen Oaks ..... Diana M. Puglisi
- Hempstead ..... James Flood III, Joyce Wildermuth
- Levittown ..... John Duggan
- Long Beach ..... Jeffrey & Lonnie Garber, Paula Lane, Marilyn Swiss, Lily Yee
- Lynbrook ..... Margaret Mullaney
- Massapequa ..... Doug & Donna Aloise, Russell L. Barth
- Merrick ..... Evelyn Langer, Betty Rich
- Oceanside ..... Marian A. Howkins, Alice Lavelle, Libby Mandel
- Old Bethpage ..... Joseph Mehlman
- Rockville Centre ..... Marianne Calabrese, Craig Fishkin, Archard & Joan Shapiro
- Seaford ..... Peter Miller
- Stewart Manor ..... D. Keough
- Valley Stream ..... James Kelty, Mr. Henry Krooss, Arthur Olson, Valerie J. Rizzuto, Jennifer Zurlo
- Woodmere ..... Fred Meyrich



**ANOTHER SSAS WALK IN CENTRAL PARK**

SSAS's third annual early May visit to migrant-filled Central Park, to be led once again by NYC Park Ranger Bob DeCandido, is scheduled for **Saturday, May 4**. Details will be in the next *Skimmer*.

**LAST CHANCE TO JOIN A DUCK SURVEY**

Joe Grupp continues to seek volunteers who are interested in spending a half day or full day viewing and learning about our waterfowl at some or all of the 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park that his team surveys each winter. If you're interested, please call him at 481-4208. The last surveys this season will take place on **February 23** and **March 23**, rain or shine.

## HOW OUR POLITICIANS VOTED

Michael Sperling

The League of Conservation Voters' web site, [www.lcv.org](http://www.lcv.org), contains weekly briefs on Congressional votes of interest to environmentalists. LCV's summaries (excerpted below) are linked to the web pages of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives that contain how everyone voted on each amendment, the final bill, etc. Space permitting, the *Skimmer* will let you know how SSAS's two members of the House and two U.S. Senators voted on important legislation, accompanied by summaries of the votes of their peers.

*H.R. 2646 (Farm Security Act)*. According to the Environmental Working Group, 84% (\$60.2 billion) of the agricultural subsidies paid between 1996 and 2000 went to less than 25% of the nation's two million farmers. Under



the current commodity payment system, operators who produce the most receive the largest share of the federal payments. The result has been an increase in large corporate operations at the expense of family farmers and the environment. H.R. 2646 would dedicate \$170 billion over ten years to rural development

projects, annual subsidies to farmers, conservation programs, and farm price supports.

Unfortunately, this Farm Bill would only exacerbate current trends that favor large corporate farms. In addition, the conservation title of H.R. 2646 is riddled with proposals to roll back proven conservation programs that have helped private landowners improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, and preserve working agricultural lands.

A diverse coalition of family farm, conservation, sportsmen's groups, and members of Congress from both parties rallied behind an amendment that would have allocated \$1.9 billion to conservation programs for which every farmer, rancher, and private forest owner is eligible, no matter what they grow, where they grow it, or the size of their farm. The amendment failed 226-200 and the House subsequently passed H.R. 2646 by a vote of 291-120.

On the amendment, Republicans voted 161-54 opposed, Democrats 145-64 in favor, and Independents split 1-1. NY's Republicans voted 11-0 in favor (surprise!), with one not voting; NY's Democrats voted 19-0 in favor.

On the final bill, Republicans voted 151-58 in favor, Democrats 139-61 in favor, and Independents split 1-1. NY's Republicans voted 6-5 in favor, with one not voting; NY's Democrats voted 10-9 in favor. Republican Peter King voted no and Democrat Carolyn McCarthy voted aye.

OUR E-LIST [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas\\_list](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list)

## BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kulner

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

- Feb. 24 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Mar. 3 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Mar. 10 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Mar. 17 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Mar. 24 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Mar. 31 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Apr. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Apr. 14 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Apr. 21 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Apr. 28 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)

### SSAS NEEDS HICKS HELPERS

The Horticultural Fair at Hicks Nurseries' Spring Flower & Garden Show is a free indoor gathering of plant and gardening clubs, societies, schools, and organizations who share a common interest in plants, gardening, wildlife, and the environment. The annual event at Hicks (100 Jericho Turnpike in Westbury) is attended by thousands of Nassau County residents and is an excellent opportunity to greet the public, share information about our chapter and its goals, and recruit new members for Audubon while enjoying the beautiful display gardens. This year there will be a Victorian Garden, a French Country Garden, a Fairy Garden, a Children's Liberty Garden, a Neon Garden, and a Pond Garden (details at [www.hicksnurseries.com](http://www.hicksnurseries.com)).

South Shore Audubon has accepted Hicks' invitation to once again have a table at this event. We will be there on Saturday and Sunday, **March 16th and 17th**, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. We need volunteers throughout the weekend. If you can do a half day on Saturday, an afternoon on Sunday, or just an hour or two, it will be greatly appreciated! There will be sign-up sheets at our next general meeting, or you can contact SSAS's Therese Lucas (221-8654 or [TKLWingsII@aol.com](mailto:TKLWingsII@aol.com)) and let her know which dates and times you can be there.

Seed - Feeders (516) 694-2180  
Houses - Baths  
Books - Gifts



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Michele DeCaprio, Youth Representative .....	707-7698
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Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve .....	546-8841
Marge Jaeger, Fund-raising .....	536-9166
Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips .....	486-7667
Therese Lucas, Environmental Festivals .....	221-8654
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Wendy Murbach, Membership .....	546-6303
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Christine Schmitt, Education .....	887-7713
Michael Sperling, <i>Skimmer</i> Editor .....	541-0805
Jonathan Staller, Hospitality Chairperson .....	482-7963

**BECOME A MEMBER OF SSAS  
Think Globally, but Join Locally!**

*Option 1.* You can help SSAS survive NAS's major dues share cutbacks by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS (we get a first-year bonus for recruiting you). If you'd like to become a member of National Audubon and your all-volunteer local chapter, please mail the following form and your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to us at South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031. The special rate for the first year is \$20 per household; \$15 for students and seniors. Gift memberships help too; we will ask that non-local recipients be assigned to their own local chapter if you prefer.

*Option 2.* You can subscribe to the *Skimmer* for a year by sending \$10 payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** to us at the address above.

*Renewing?* Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS.



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ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

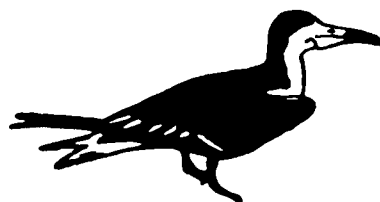
E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

*Chapter Code R15 7XCH (South Shore Audubon Society)*



**South Shore Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 31  
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