



Commemorative plaques were presented to South Shore Audubon Society by Nassau County Parks & Recreation and Museums. They have been placed at each site. The presentation was made by Nassau County Parks Commissioner Doreen Banks and Deputy County Executive Hezekiah Brown. In attendance were Nassau County Legislator David Denenberg, Nassau County Parks Maintenance Supervisor Vinny LaBella, Groundskeeper William Kalberer, Wantagh Park Director Leonard Epstein, Cedar Creek Park Director Dolores Annarella, and, from the back page of the *Skimmer*, George Peters, Alice Blaustein, myself, and Wendy Murbach.

*Editor's note:* Additional funds from our Greening of Long Island fund have been allocated for plantings at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge this fall.

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### OUR POLITICIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Because SSAS is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization, we can't endorse or oppose politicians and there are limits to what we can say about them in the *Skimmer*. Thanks to the Internet, however, abundant information about their misdeeds and good works is now available for free from several prominent environmental organizations. Your editor urges you to:

① Visit [www.lcv.org](http://www.lcv.org), where the League of Conservation Voters' annual *National Environmental Scorecard* reports the votes that resulted in our two U.S. Senators and our two local members of the U.S. House of Representatives achieving scores ranging from 93% pro-environment to 29% pro-environment. Two of the above tied at 88%; can you guess who got the 29%?

② Visit [www.nrdc.org/bushrecord](http://www.nrdc.org/bushrecord), where the Natural Resources Defense Council has a chronological list billed as "the real story on this administration's dealings on environmental issues." There are hundreds of actions by the White House listed there. As I'm typing this in mid-August, today's *New York Times* is reporting that the Bush Administration has concluded that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, signed into law by President Nixon), which requires public environmental review of all federal actions, doesn't apply to the "exclusive economic zone" that extends 200 miles from our shores, because back in Nixon's era the U.S. only claimed 3 miles of territorial waters. If the Bush administration's view prevails in court, then, according to the article, "military maneuvers, oil and gas pipelines, commercial fishing, ocean dumping, and scores of other activities" could escape public environmental review. A proposed U.S. Navy sonar project that, according to its opponents, would disorient and kill dolphins and whales, is behind this dispute regarding NEPA.



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

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### SUPERFUND CLEANUP AT MASSAPEQUA PRESERVE

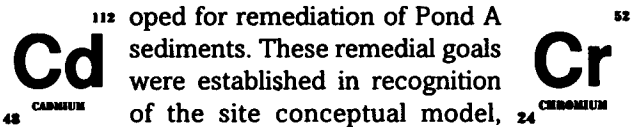
*Editor's note:* The following's excerpted from an EPA press release issued on April 1, 2002 (I ran out of space in the last *Skimmer*) and the July 2001 EPA Proposed Plan (the last paragraph here). Several SSAS board members, including myself, have been watching this cleanup plan unfold for years. Comments in brackets below are mine.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has selected a final cleanup plan for soil contaminated with chemicals and heavy metals at the Liberty Industrial Finishing Superfund site in Farmingdale, Long Island [on Motor Avenue] that sets the stage for its redevelopment into parkland and a recreation area. The plan also focuses on local groundwater and Massapequa Creek pond sediments contaminated by the 30-acre site, at which improper disposal of hazardous waste took place during and after World War II.

The final plan covers future actions for site soils, on-site and off-site groundwater problems associated with the site, as well as contamination in the Massapequa Preserve.

EPA's cleanup plan for the Massapequa Preserve requires that an estimated 2,600 cubic yards of contaminated sediments be removed at Pond A of the nearby Massapequa Creek and Preserve, and shipped off-site for appropriate disposal. A long-term monitoring system will be established in the Massapequa Preserve to measure the improvements in water quality in Pond A [located just north of the Southern State Parkway] and the other ponds as a result of the cleanup.

Based on the weight of evidence from the cumulative Massapequa Creek investigation, the remediation of site-related contamination within the Massapequa Creek ponds will be limited to Pond A. Sediment cleanup levels of 50 mg/kg cadmium and 260 mg/kg chromium were developed for remediation of Pond A sediments. These remedial goals were established in recognition of the site conceptual model,



which indicates that if the groundwater contamination is addressed, the primary source of sediment and surface water contamination within the Massapequa Creek system will also be addressed. Moreover, removal of sediments within Pond A, the furthest upstream pond, where adverse ecological effects are greatest, would remove the primary source of contaminated sediments entering the creek below the site, and its lower ponds [where SSAS has bird walks]. While concentrations of chemicals in sediment and surface water exceeded ecologically based benchmarks elsewhere in the stream system, little direct evidence of toxicity or other significant adverse effects were noted in these areas.

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NASSAU COUNTY POLLUTION HOTLINE 739-6666

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## SSAS BIRDSEED SALE COMING

Our annual birdseed sale is scheduled for **Sunday, November 3**; please check next month's *Skimmer* for the order form.

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**SHADE-GROWN COFFEE**  
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*Editor's note:* Since last year, SSAS's coffee breaks have featured "Song Bird Coffee," roasted and blended by the Thanksgiving Coffee Company for the American Birding Association. The following information comes from a brochure distributed by the company:

*Shade-Grown Coffee Saves Habitat for Migrating Songbirds.* In the midst of a shrinking habitat, migratory birds have found sanctuary in the forest environment of traditional shade-grown coffee farms. Biologists have found that shade coffee farms can support over 150 species of birds. This is a far greater number than is found in other agricultural habitats. In fact, it is exceeded only in the undisturbed tropical rainforest. According to the Rainforest Alliance, studies in Colombia and Mexico found 97% fewer bird species in sun-grown coffee than in shade-grown coffee.



The deforestation necessary to create a "full sun" coffee plantation has turned traditional coffee farms into serious despoilers of the natural environment. The new varieties require massive amounts of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers to compensate for the increase in uncontrolled insects, the need for weed control, and the rapid sun-induced plant growth which necessitates increased nutrient intake by the coffee trees. At least one half of coffee grown in the northern neotropics has already been converted to full sun, and provides minimal bird habitat.

Adequate winter food intake is necessary for the reproductive health of birds and for strength on their return trip to North America. In traditional shaded coffee farms, the upper canopy vegetation provides plant matter, fruits, nectar, and habitat for a thriving insect community. Heavy loads of epiphytes (plants anchored to the canopy) contribute to the diversity: spiders, insects, crustaceans, frogs, and salamanders. Finally, the canopy, by shielding the ecosystem from sun, wind, and rain, and by contributing a steady amount of leaf litter to the forest floor, enables diverse life to flourish in the understudy.

Without an active organic/sustainable production plan to build soil fertility, raise coffee yields, and diversify production, traditional shade coffee farms are vulnerable to change. Our experience suggests that only your demand for shade-grown coffee will help to create economically stable farms and communities, able to resist the development pressure that replaces coffee forests with cattle ranches, sun coffee plantations, or timber harvesting.

Thanksgiving Coffee Company utilizes the Rainforest Alliance certification program (ECO-OK) to certify the

shade level of our coffees. Additionally, our certified organic coffees are assessed by the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) and Quality Assurance International (QAI). On all farms, there must be a rich diversity of shade tree species and high density coverage over the coffee shrubs, providing habitat for migratory and native birds.

Thanksgiving Coffee selection criteria for shade-grown coffee were developed through collaboration with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Rainforest Alliance, and Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers. All of Thanksgiving's shade-grown coffees meet strict eco-selection standards for environmental sustainability.

Your purchase of Song Bird Coffee helps fund American Birding Association programs, including support of Partners in Flight, an outstanding neotropical bird conservation project. With every package sold, 15¢ goes directly to these nonprofit birding organizations.

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**SSAS THANKS OUR RAFFLE DONORS**  
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At last June's annual dinner, we were able to award raffle prizes to quite a few attendees, thanks to the much-appreciated donations of items by our members and by the following companies: Atlantic Nurseries (in Freeport), Hicks Nurseries (in Westbury), Marjé Salon (in Merrick), and WMF (in Farmingdale).



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

**FIRE ISLAND HIKE** (Sun., Sept. 29). Hike the boardwalk through Sunken Forest during peak fall songbird, raptor, and butterfly migration time. Cost: \$20 includes ferry and guides. Call Steve Finn evenings at (631) 821-2160.

**JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE** (Sat., Oct. 12, 4-7 P.M.). Learn about the history, ecology, and wildlife of this 9,000 acre refuge as you cruise aboard 96 ft "Dorothy B VIII." See egrets, herons, oystercatcher, ibis, falcons, shorebirds, Snow Geese. Cost: \$35 incl. narrated tour, wine & cheese, snacks.

**CAPE MAY HAWK WATCH** (Oct. 18-20). One of the nation's premier birding hot spots in fall. Cost: \$220 includes 2 nights lodging (double occ.), box lunch, Saturday supper, evening slide shows, hawk banding station, guided hikes to Higbee Beach, local butterfly gardens, Brigantine Refuge.

**ASSATEAGUE FALL WEEKEND** (Nov. 14-17). Visit Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge & Assateague National Seashore during peak fall waterfowl migration. See Bald Eagles, loons, gannets, and lots of waterfowl species. Mammals include river otter, fox, sika deer, wild ponies, and endangered Delmarva fox squirrel. Cost: \$295 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, boat tour of marshes, park fees, guides, evening program & hike, star watch, and Saturday seafood dinner.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 634-6467, donriepe@aol.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alsnyc.org

**PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS**

*James Remsen, Jr.*

In order to conform to the National Audubon Society's new requirements for chapter certification, SSAS's board will present two amendments of our bylaws to our general membership for vote and approval at the September 10th general meeting. The amendments are as follows (new language indicated in **bold** letters):

1) *Article VIII: Commitments.* This Society, or its Officers or Board of Directors, shall not enter into commitments binding on the National Audubon Society without **written** authorization from the latter. In like manner, the National Audubon Society shall make no commitments binding on this Society without its **written** consent.

2) *Article IX: Discontinuance.* This Society reserves the right to terminate its Chapter status on ~~six months'~~ **60 days'** notice, given in writing to the National Audubon Society, in which case all allocation of dues by the National Society to this Society will cease on expiration of the ~~six months'~~ **60 days'** period. This Society recognizes the right of the National Society to terminate the Chapter relationship on ~~six months'~~ **60 days'** notice, given by it to this Society, in which case the members of this Society shall continue as members thereof for the balance of the term for which dues have been paid.

Please make an effort to attend the meeting and vote on these amendments.

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**SSAS ONLINE**

We hope that all of our modem-equipped members have taken a look at [www.ssaudubon.org](http://www.ssaudubon.org) recently and have remained in touch with SSAS during our summer break via the free e-list.

Our Web site includes lists of species seen on recent bird walks, directions to local birding sites, *Skimmer* articles, Action Alerts, contact information for our elected officials, ways that you can become one of SSAS's volunteers, links to other environmental web pages, an online store (where you can support SSAS by purchasing discounted environmental books, videos, CDs, software, bird feeders, binoculars, spotting scopes, clothing, jewelry, etc., through our arrangement with [withoutbricks.com](http://withoutbricks.com)), and more.

During your Web visit, you can join our free Yahoo Group. If you do, you'll receive occasional e-mails about birds we've seen, upcoming events, environmental policy decisions that you can influence, etc., and you'll be able to send your own messages to fellow members.

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**A NEW VISION FOR THE HEMPSTEAD PLAINS**

*Betsy Gulotta*

Imagine wandering through a large field with grasses as high as yourself and visible as far as your eye can see. Imagine seeing golden, blue, and lavender wildflowers all around you. Sparrows, meadowlarks, Upland Sandpipers, foxes, snakes, and butterflies were also abundant in this habitat. This is what the colonists encountered when they first arrived on Long Island and saw the Hempstead Plains.

Through years of settlement and development, the Hempstead Plains was a desirable area for cattle grazing, agriculture, horse racing, and commercial and residential development. Villages such as Plainview, East Meadow, Plainedge, Garden City, and Floral Park were established. Known as the "cradle of aviation," the Hempstead Plains was the site for significant early airplane flights. Mitchell Field was established to serve the military. Nassau Community College, Hofstra University, the Coliseum, and the Marriott Hotel were also built there. The Hempstead Plains diminished in size from 60,000 acres to less than 50 acres.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Nassau County citizens (including SSAS) and Nassau Community College recognized that the Hempstead Plains was in trouble, and began to take measures to preserve what was left. Some of the animals and plants were so rare that they were added to the Endangered Species list. The College contracted with The Nature Conservancy to help manage 19 acres on College property, one of the last remnants remaining undeveloped.

In 2001, a new not-for-profit organization was established to save the Hempstead Plains, called the Friends of Hempstead Plains. The Friends is dedicated to preserving, restoring, and offering educational programs about the Hempstead Plains. It invites volunteers to help with hands-on projects at the Plains. It welcomes neighboring schools, organizations, and businesses to become involved and sponsor projects. For more information, contact me at 572-7570 or send e-mail to [gulotte@ncc.edu](mailto:gulotte@ncc.edu) (yes, that's "gulotte").

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**INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP**

SSAS's faithful advertiser, the American Littoral Society's Northeast Chapter, is coordinating the 16th annual New York State Beach Cleanup. Data on the debris collected on **September 21st** will be sent to The Ocean Conservancy (formerly the Center for Marine Conservation) to help regulate pollution. In 2001, over 7,500 New Yorkers documented and removed over 216,000 pounds of debris from 330 miles of shoreline. For information on nearby cleanups, call ALS's Barbara Cohen at 718-471-2166, send e-mail to [alsbeach@aol.com](mailto:alsbeach@aol.com), check [www.alsnyc.org](http://www.alsnyc.org), or call the hotline at 800-449-0790.

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RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

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## SSAS BACKYARD BIRD SURVEY

The Research Committee is conducting a study to document the bird species found in the SSAS geographical area and to make some estimates as to their numbers. We request input from anyone that feeds and/or observes birds in their yard or neighborhood. If you would like to participate in this program, we would greatly appreciate it.

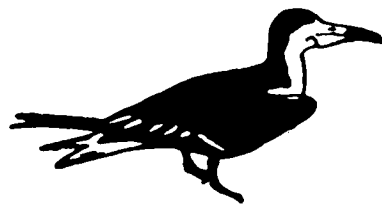
To participate, simply record the birds that you see in your yard, neighborhood, or at your feeder; the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species; and fill in the table provided below. If you have more recordings than lines in the table, please attach an additional piece of paper to the table and submit the additional recordings in the same manner. At the end of each month, please mail or e-mail your record to me at the appropriate address listed below, or hand it to me at our monthly meeting.

Please do not hesitate to submit your observations, even if you have been able to make only very few. **WE NEED YOUR INPUT!**

<i>Dates:</i> From _____ to _____							
Date	Time	Species	No.	Date	Time	Species	No.
				Submitted by: _____			
				Address: _____			
				Phone number: _____			
				Please send to: Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson			
				660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale NY 11553			
				or			
				E-mail: Birdstudyjoeg@aol.com			

**South Shore Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 31**  
**Freeport, NY 11520-0031**

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
*Americans Committed to Conservation*



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**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.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

