



biology, oceanography, mammalogy, ornithology, etc. For information, call Betsy Gulotta at 546-8841; applications are due by April 30 and should be sent to Betsy at Dept. of Biology, Nassau Community College, 1 Education Dr., Garden City, NY 11530.

 **BIRD WALKS** 
Elliott Kulner

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

- Feb. 23  Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Mar. 2 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Mar. 9 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Mar. 16 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
- Mar. 23 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Mar. 30 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Apr. 6 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Apr. 13 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Apr. 20 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Apr. 27 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve



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

NY AQUARIUM (Sat., April 5). Meet 10 A.M. at aquarium entrance in Coney Island, Brooklyn for a 2-1/2 hour "Behind-the-Scenes" tour. See walrus, sea otter, penguins, sharks, sea turtles, beluga whales, and local & tropical fishes. Cost: \$15 (\$8 kids). Call Don.

ASSATEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND (May 8-11). Enjoy a wildlife bonanza on the Virginia coast. Hike trails of Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague National Seashore during peak spring bird migration. See nesting eagles, osprey, and hawks; migrating herons and shorebirds; butterflies; deer; turtles; snakes; and Chincoteague ponies. Cost: \$295 covers three nights at Refuge Motor Inn, guides, lectures, boat tour, and seafood buffet on Sat. night.

FIRE ISLAND SUNKEN FOREST (May 18). Hike the mile-long boardwalk during peak spring bird migration. Learn about the ecology, wildlife, and unique flora. Bring lunch and binoculars. Cost: \$20 includes ferry from Sayville.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE (May 31). Leave Sheephead Bay at 5 P.M. on the "Dorothy B VIII" for a three-hour narrated tour. Learn about the history, wildlife, and ecology of the 9,000 acre wildlife refuge. Cost: \$35 incl. wine, snacks.

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Peters

As open land continues to disappear under the pressures of suburban development, environmentalists are concerned about the diminishing habitat for wildlife. Overdevelopment has negative consequences for human society as well. As population density increases, open space and attendant natural beauty are transformed, leaving us with the monotony of endless residential developments, connected by highways flanked with ugly commercial properties.

Some forward-looking municipalities interested in what is called "smart growth" are attempting to control sprawl so as to minimize the worst aspects of its excesses. In areas that are already overdeveloped such as the south shore of Nassau County, the opportunity to regulate growth has largely passed. Some of the damage, however, can be undone with better utilization of land already developed and by establishing more stringent controls over redevelopment projects.

Parking lots, a ubiquitous component of the suburban landscape, are a prime example of poorly utilized space. Usually covered in asphalt from curb to curb, the barren monotony of their appearance is rarely relieved by any significant landscaping.

There are acres and acres of parking lots in every suburban community that could be made into semi-parks with plantings of trees and shrubs. If carefully selected, these would provide food and habitat for birds. But humans would benefit as well. Shaded by trees, the lots would be more inviting in hot weather. The desirability of shaded parking lots is demonstrated by the fact that spaces under trees are always filled first in the summer.



Surrounding parking lots with wide bands of small trees and shrubs, modeled after the understory in a naturally wooded area, would screen the lots and parked cars from the street. This perimeter landscaping, if done well, would become an asset to the appearance of the neighborhood.

Additionally, perimeter plantings could be designed to collect and absorb rain runoff and thereby help replenish groundwater. Aside from these benefits, trees act as "air cleaners" by removing carbon dioxide, a major culprit in global warming, from the atmosphere. Landscaped parking lots at our schools would provide educational "laboratories" for environmental studies classes.

Parking lots are an untapped, potentially valuable resource that could be used to greater advantage for us and our environment. Although a landscaped parking lot is by no means equivalent to the natural setting that it replaced, it would be far superior to the bleak, blacktopped acres that now confront us daily.

OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list

SSAS NEEDS HICKS HELPERS

Therese Lucas

Join us at the Horticultural Fair 3/22 and 3/23! Once again, SSAS has accepted an invitation to participate in the Horticultural Fair at Hicks Nurseries. The fair runs from March 14–23, is free, and is held indoors. Local horticultural and environmental organizations will partake during the second weekend, Saturday and Sunday, **March 22nd and 23rd**, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.

This year's displays include a bulb garden, vegetable garden, herb garden, and one especially for children, along with many surprises.

Hicks Nurseries is located at 100 Jericho Turnpike in Westbury. Further information can be garnered at www.hicksnurseries.com. This event has attendance numbering in the thousands and affords an excellent opportunity to greet the public, share information about our chapter and its goals, and recruit new chapter members.

To volunteer, please contact me at 221-8654 or TKLWingsII@aol.com, or use the sign-up sheet that will be provided at our next general meeting.

Any time you can spare during the weekend will be greatly appreciated. This is a great way to support your chapter and shake those winter doldrums!

15th ANNUAL WINTER WATERFOWL SURVEY

The remaining dates of SSAS's 2002–2003 Waterfowl Survey are as follows, rain or shine:

February 22

March 22

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the main team's surveys; identification expertise not required. If you are interested, call Joe Grupp, Research Chairperson, at 481-4208, and spend a full or half-day visiting 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park. JOIN US!

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ANOTHER SSAS WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

SSAS's fourth annual early May visit to migrant-filled Central Park is scheduled for **Saturday, May 3**. Details about preregistration and the cost will be in the next *Skimmer*. Former NYC Ranger Bob DeCandido is doing postdoctoral bird studies in Eilat, Israel, so SSAS's Ann Marie Pozzini is making arrangements for someone else to help lead our group.

WE THANK THE HOLIDAY PARTY VOLUNTEERS

South Shore Audubon's perennial wildlife-oriented holiday party for children was held on December 21 at Tackapausha Museum and we'd like to thank the members who helped out: Gloria Berkowitz, Alice Blaustein, Helen Buckley, Mary Jane Conlon, Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, Doris Pirodsky, Laurie Raisher, Chris Schmitt, Marcia Specht, and Michael Sperling.

We'd also like to thank Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary's Lauren Thomas for presenting the live-raptor show three times in order to give all 250 attendees a chance to see it.

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

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BIRD FEEDING DO'S AND DON'TS

Editor's note: The following is reprinted from *Bird Watcher's Digest's* Web site, ©1999 BWD Press, and can be downloaded from there as a two-page flyer. I've omitted the tips regarding hummingbird feeders and some "further reading" (for space reasons), and would like to note that in January I spotted two House Finches with blindness-causing conjunctivitis in my yard.

Dear Bird Feeder:

Bird feeding provides enjoyment to millions of North Americans each year. When proper feeding methods are followed, both humans and birds derive benefits from feeders. However, recent research on the impact of bird feeding has shown that feeders can sometimes be a source of disease for the birds visiting them. There is good news, too: With minimal effort, any feeder operator in North America can provide a safe, healthy feeding station for birds. This flyer, compiled by the editors at *Bird Watcher's Digest*, offers useful tips and techniques for maximizing your bird-feeding enjoyment.

Tips for a Healthy Feeding Station

- Give your seed feeders (especially thistle and tube feeders) a shake before you refill them, to dislodge any compacted seed. Dump out any wet clumps of old seed.
- Clean all hulls off platform feeders and out of seed trays daily.

- Keep some old spatulas and brushes handy by the feeding station for cleaning purposes.

- Disinfect feeders by scrubbing with a weak bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of warm water) every few weeks, more often in summer or rainy periods. Rinse and allow feeders to dry before refilling.

- Wash your hands thoroughly after filling or cleaning your feeders.

- Move your feeding station when the ground beneath it becomes covered with seed hulls and droppings. Rake the old site to remove hulls and to give the grass a chance to recover.

- Store your seed in a clean, dry, airtight container, such as a metal or plastic garbage can.

- Don't put hulled sunflower hearts (or bits) out where wet weather can cause them to spoil. Offer them in a tube or hopper feeder.

- Don't put out any more seed than can be eaten by the birds by nightfall, especially where raccoons, opossums, bears, deer, or rodents are a problem.

- Don't use grease, oil, petroleum jelly, or similar substances on your feeder poles or wires to thwart squirrels, ants, or other feeder-raiding creatures. If these substances come into contact with bird feathers, they are impossible for the bird to preen or wash out. Goey feathers can become useless for flight or insulation, thus putting the birds at risk to predators, extreme weather, and disease. For squirrels and other mammals, use a pole-mounted baffle (many are sold commercially). For ants, use an ant guard that prevents ants from reaching the feeder. Both baffles and ant guards are available on the Internet, by mail-order, or in retail stores that sell an extensive array of backyard products.



- Don't allow large amounts of seed to become wet, as on platform feeders. Instead, when it's wet outside, feed primarily from covered feeders that will keep seed dry, or put out only a handful of seed at a time on platforms.

- If you see a sick or dead bird at your feeders, halt your feeding for a few weeks to allow the healthy birds to disperse. This lessens the possibility of disease transmission. Remove and discard in the trash any dead birds. Report the sick birds to your local wildlife officials, many of whom monitor wildlife health.

- If you provide suet, reduce the amount you offer in hot weather. Heat can make suet rancid and unhealthy for birds. Runny suet can also stick to birds' feathers, making them hard to keep clean and useful. Use rendered suet or heat-resilient suet blocks that are available commercially.

- Reduce window-kills of birds by placing feeders a safe distance away. If birds regularly strike a particular window, place a screen, crop netting, or a series of branches over or in front of the outside glass panel to break up the reflection.

- Though birds may not be entirely dependent on your feeder, it's best not to leave them totally without food if

you plan to be away from home in midwinter. Purchase an oversized feeder with a large seed capacity, or ask a willing neighbor to continue feeding your birds.

- Don't discontinue feeding as soon as the grass greens and the weather warms in spring. Many birds will continue coming to your feeders all summer long.

Tips for Better Feeding

- Black-oil sunflower seed is the most widely used birdseed, popular with the greatest number of bird species. Its thin shell and large nutmeat are ideal for most feeder species.

- Offer a variety of seeds and food in a variety of appropriate feeders (sunflower seed in tube, hopper, or platform feeders; thistle in tube feeders; peanuts in peanut feeders; suet in suet cages; and mixed seed on platform feeders or scattered on dry ground).

- Offer the thick-shelled gray-striped sunflower seed to cardinals, grosbeaks, jays, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches.

- Offer safflower seed to cardinals. Squirrels and black-birds in many parts of the continent do not like it.

- If your feeder is overrun with blackbirds, pigeons, or house sparrows, stop offering mixed seed on the ground or on platform feeders. Feed only black-oil sunflower seed in tube or hopper feeders until the problem species disperse.

- Don't offer so-called wild bird mixes in tube feeders. These are better fed on platforms or out of hopper feeders. Birds that prefer sunflower seed will just empty the feeder to get at the sunflower seeds.

- Make a brush pile near your feeder to make sparrows, towhees, and other shy birds feel more at home, but be sure it won't harbor roaming cats.

- Add natural features to your feeding station, such as branches to perch on, to make birds feel more at ease.

Tips for a Healthy Bird Bath

- Don't situate bird baths under feeders or perches, where droppings can fall into them.

- Rinse and scrub birdbaths daily in summer, or whenever they become fouled with bird droppings. Once a month, scrub out with a light bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach in 2 gallons of water), rinse thoroughly, and refill.

Further Reading

- *Enjoying Bird Feeding More* by Julie Zickefoose. Paperback, 32 pages, full color. (©1995 BWD Press, P.O. Box 110, Marietta, OH 45750. 800-879-2473. www.birdwatchersdigest.com)

- *An Identification Guide to Common Backyard Birds* by Bill Thompson III and Eirik A. T. Blom. Paperback, 32 pages, full color. (©1995 BWD Press)

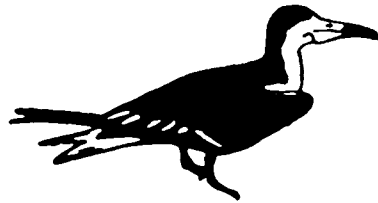
- *Bird Watching for Dummies* by Bill Thompson III.

- *Backyard Bird News* (bimonthly newsletter), P.O. Box 110, Marietta, OH 45750. 800-879-2473. www.birdwatchersdigest.com.

- For answers to frequently asked questions and links to informative feeding-related Web sites, visit www.birdwatchersdigest.com.

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P.O. Box 31
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Americans Committed to Conservation



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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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