**NEXT MEETING**

*Endl Klein*

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 10, 2006  
**TIME:** 7:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Freeport Memorial Library  
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)  
**SPEAKER:** Tom Torma  
**TOPIC:** Barrier Island - Ribbons of Sand

A past president of SSAS, environmental educator Tom Torma will present the slide program that he describes as follows on his website (natureshorizons.net): "Minute by minute, day by day, throughout the year, the winds, tides, ice, and rain change a barrier island. Each season brings a new view of the plants and animals, land and sky of this unique environment. This program is a photo essay that explores the changing world of barrier islands." Join us!

**Pre-Meeting Program on Birds.** Starting at 7 P.M. each month, Scott Oglesby and Jim Remsen expand our birding horizons in the room beyond our coffee-break tables. Topic suggestions for future talks are welcome.

**Parking Lots.** In addition to the parking lot adjacent to the library, there's a lightly used, well-lit, and fairly close municipal lot on the east side of S. Ocean Ave., on the near (south) side of the Gulf station that borders Sunrise Highway. Also, SSAS has a verbal pledge from neighboring Citibank that cars will no longer be towed from their lot during our meetings, but we can't guarantee this.

**IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS. SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!**

**WHO-O-O-O IS GOING TO THE HALLOWEEN PARTY?**

*Therese Lucas*

Kids and their families who want to enjoy nature crafts, a live nature program, and refreshments, that's who-o-o-o. SSAS's annual children's Halloween Party will be at
Tackapausha Museum and Preserve (see page 7 for directions), **Saturday, October 14**, from 1 to 3 P.M., with the program beginning in the auditorium at approximately 2 P.M. To attend, you'll only need to pay the regular museum admission of $2 for adults and $1 for children (ages 4 to 14; free for younger children).

********** 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 7:30—9:30 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 last month's *Skimmer* are:
Bellmore .......... Grace Alphin, Susan Krich
East Meadow ....... Corey Niederhauser
Freeport .......... Maureen Picardal
Garden City ....... Vincent R. DiGregorio, Laraine Fletcher
Lawrence ........... Barbara Thompson
Long Beach .......... Matthew Altschuler, Addie Krumenaker
Merrick ............ Maureen Gianotti, Joanna Mera-Krinsky, Robin E. Shamitz
New York .......... Michael Alcamo
Oceanside .......... Robert Brandenburg
Plainview .......... Barbara DiGregorio
Rockville Centre .... Alice Steiner, Robert E. Taylor
Seaford ............ Richard L. Galligan
Stewart Manor ..... Mr. Morton G. Vute
West Hempstead .... E. J. Cantilli
Woodmere .......... Shelley Shick

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AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

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

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OUR WEB SITE (incl. online store) www.ssaudubon.org

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********** RARE BIRD ALERT ********** (212) 979-3070

********** VOLUNTEERS FOR WILDLIFE ********** (631) 423-0982

********** FEEDING WILD BIRDS **********

**Editor's note:** The following is taken from a sheet produced by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Feeding the birds that visit your home is one of the most rewarding ways to attract and observe wildlife. The antics of cardinals and blue jays, the acrobatics of titmice and chickadees, and the interactions between these and other songbirds provide hours of enjoyment for those who put out food for them. Starting a bird feeding hobby will take just a little time and a little investment in a feeder or two plus the food to go in them.

If you are a home carpenter or craftsperson, you can make bird feeders out of a variety of materials, from wood to old plastic liter soda bottles. Bird feeders come in lots of shapes and sizes, and are fashioned to supply particular foods and attract particular groups or kinds of birds. The trick to bird feeding is choosing the right combination of foods and feeders to attract the birds you want to see.

**What (and How) to Feed Wild Birds.** Birds, or rather species of birds, have certain tastes when it comes to the food they eat and how it is presented to them. By tailoring your feeding to your favorite birds, not only can you increase your chances of attracting them, but you can also avoid attracting the wildlife you don’t want to have around. Choices of food for birds fall into four groups: seed, suet, fruit, and nectar. These are described here, along with the appropriate feeders for them.

**Seed.** Sunflower, thistle [also called nyjer or niger], cracked corn, sorghum [milo], and white proso millet, among other seed types, are readily available to wild bird lovers. Some seeds are better to buy than others. The best seeds to buy are those that most birds eat. The two seed types most preferred by backyard songbirds are black oil sunflower and white proso millet. Hulled sunflower seed [sunflower hearts] is available and will attract the same number of birds without the mess of shells on your plants or on the ground. Both sunflower and millet can be found in special mixes or can be fed separately. Common seed mixes will attract a variety of birds, including starlings, house sparrows, grackles, and pigeons.

Birds like titmice and chickadees that like to eat from perches off the ground will prefer to eat black oil sunflower seeds. Tube feeders are especially attractive to smaller birds. Thistle, or niger, is an imported seed that is also offered in a special tube feeder. This is a tiny and very expensive seed that is a favorite of goldfinches. Other hanging feeders are also widely used and effective.

“Platform” feeders can be easily made from treated plywood with raised edges and will draw in those birds that feed on the ground some or all of the time. Cardinals,
blue jays, juncos, sparrows, and mourning doves will flock to a mixture of millet, sunflower, cracked corn, hulled sunflower, and peanut kernels in this type of feeder. Most sparrows prefer millet and are not particular about where they eat.

Suet. Suet is the fat that surrounds the kidneys of beef cows. Many food stores will give it freely when the butcher is told it is for bird feeding. Commercial suet cakes or fresh suet mixed with sunflower and other seed will make a favored treat for woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees. These birds do not need perches and can hang from suet hung in an onion bag or special suet feeder. Starlings and house sparrows are also fond of suet, but do require perches when they feed. Fresh suet will melt and become rancid, so it should be removed from your feeders on warm days. Most commercially available varieties don't melt in the sun.

Fruit. Oranges, apples, grapes, and fruit cocktails can attract not only many of your seed-eating visitors, but also birds that you would never see at your seed feeders. Maryland's state bird, the northern oriole, is attracted to fruit feeders. Other fruit eaters include cardinals, mockingbirds, and cedar waxwings. Fruit cocktails can be offered in bowls nailed to a wooden plank. Orange, apple, and pear halves can be stuck to galvanized nails that poke through a piece of wood. Fruit feeders can be bought at specialty stores and follow this same design. Put fruit feeders in your upper story windows or about seven or so feet up in a tree or shrub.

Nectar. Nectar, a sugar solution, is a favorite food of hummingbirds. In Maryland [and NY], there is only one native species of hummingbird, the ruby-throated hummingbird. This bird is found in Maryland only during the warmer months. Attracting these tiny, colorful birds is a highlight in any bird lover's experience. Nectar can be bought in packages or it can be made at home. One part sugar to four parts water is the best solution to use. Sugar water is a prime solution for fungal and bacterial growth, so be sure to boil the water before you add the sugar. Change your nectar solution and thoroughly clean your nectar feeders every two to three days. The fungus and bacteria that accumulate in nectar feeders can kill hummingbirds.

Food Preference Chart

Editor's note: Here's what the chart shows. "Preferred" foods are listed first; foods that are "eaten readily" follow the word "also" where applicable. Safflower isn't listed; it's eaten by cardinals.

Blue Jay: whole peanut, peanut kernels, cracked corn; also sunflower
Cardinal: sunflower; also cracked corn, fruit
Chickadee: sunflower, peanut kernels, suet
Cowbird: millet, milo; also wheat
Goldfinch: hulled sunflower, thistle; also sunflower
Grackle: hulled sunflower, cracked corn; also sunflower, millet, peanut hearts

House Finch: sunflower, hulled sunflower; also thistle
House Sparrow: sunflower, millet, hulled sunflower; also peanut hearts, cracked corn
Hummingbird: nectar
Junco: millet; also sunflower, hulled sunflower, cracked corn
Mourning Dove: millet, peanut kernels, milo; also sunflower, hulled sunflower, cracked corn, wheat
Nuthatch: sunflower, peanut kernels, suet
Oriole: fruit; also nectar
Song Sparrow: millet
Starling: peanut hearts, milo, suet; also hulled sunflower
Titmouse: sunflower, peanut kernels, suet
White-throated Sparrow: sunflower, millet, hulled sunflower, peanut kernels
Woodpeckers: suet; also sunflower, whole peanut, peanut kernels

More Tips on Bird Feeding

♦ Bird feeding is most productive during the colder months, from October through April. Feeding birds in early spring is especially rewarding, because this is the time of year when the least amount of natural food is available.

♦ Feeding birds year-round will normally not tend to keep migrating birds around longer than they should stay.

♦ It is okay to forgo feeding in the summer or even for short periods in the winter. Wild birds have evolved to take advantage of all sorts of undependable food sources and they can adapt.

♦ To attract many kinds of birds, use a variety of foods in different feeder places at various heights.

♦ An even greater variety of birds will visit your home if you plant trees, shrubs, and wildflowers that will both feed and shelter birds.

♦ Keep all of your feeders clean.

♦ Sometimes the birds at your feeders may become food for other animals, such as hawks. This is just nature at work, but to help avoid this, put your aboveground feeders near trees or other shelter so that the feeding birds can run for cover when a flying predator approaches. Feeders on or near the ground should be placed away from shrubs or any shelter that may hide house cats or other predators on the ground.

♦ Squirrels will take advantage of most bird feeders. They can jump up and across about six to eight feet. They can hang from branches above a covered feeder and swing themselves in. They can climb almost anything. The best solution for a squirrel problem is to offer alternative food (corn on the cob is a favorite) or simply live with them.

♦ To reduce fighting among the birds at your feeders, add more feeders. Adding more feeders can also help reduce the spread of disease by dispersing instead of concentrating numbers of birds.

NASSAU COUNTY POLLUTION HOTLINE 739-6666
GET AUDUBON CALENDARS FROM US

SSAS will be selling a variety of discounted Audubon calendars, tax-free, at bird walks and after meetings.

BACKYARD SURVEY DATA NEEDED!

Joe Grupp

For several years, SSAS's Research Committee has been conducting a study to document the bird species found in the SSAS area and to estimate their numbers. We greatly appreciate input from anyone that feeds and/or observes birds in their yard or neighborhood. Please do not hesitate to submit your observations, even if you make only very few.

Simply record the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species. 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. Survey sheets are available at SSAS events and at ssaudubon.org or you can create your own.

Please mail your data to Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson, 660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale NY 11553 or e-mail Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com.

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WINES FOR BIRDS

Editor's note: This article, by Kathy Piper, comes from the July/August '98 issue of Bird Watcher's Digest.

For several years after I moved into my home, a pair of house finches tried to make their nests on the L-shaped ledge of a block pillar of my porch. Each time they were unsuccessful, either because the ledge was too narrow or because their efforts were sabotaged by House Sparrows.

Then, one year, I planted a Virginia creeper in front of the pillar. By the following spring, the vine had grown up to and around the ledge, providing enough support for the finches to successfully build a nest. The vine also camouflaged the nest from other prying avian eyes.

That was my introduction to growing vines for birds. Like many others, I had been oblivious to the fact that vines are an integral part of the bird garden. They supply food for birds, as well as nesting sites and cover; evergreen types give protection year-round.

Vine, as used here, is a generic term for plants that, according to America's Garden Book, by James and Louise Bush-Brown (Macmillan, 1996), "climb, scramble up, cling to, or in other ways attach themselves or become attached to supporting structures."

There are several devices that vines use to achieve this attachment. For example, the clingers, such as Virginia creeper, trumpet vine, Boston ivy, and winter creeper, affix themselves to objects by means of either rootlets or tendrils with adhesive disks. They work best on broad surfaces such as brick, block, or stone walls, wooden fences, and tree trunks.

Grapes, greenbrier, and porcelain berry are among the vines known as grabbers. These plants use either diskless tendrils or their leaf stems to grab and wind around their supports, which can be chain-link fences, lattices, or shrubs.

These same structures are also ideal underpinnings for the twiners, which climb by twisting their stems around these items. Honeysuckles, American bittersweet, silverlace vine, and morning glories are typical twiners.

The last group of vining plants are known as sprawlers. Climbing roses, climbing nightshade, and the like merely lie on their supports, sending up progressively longer shoots. They easily scramble through shrubs and trees, and can be used on fences, trellises, and such. They may need to be tied to their supports, however, to keep them growing the way you want.

If you have limited space for a bird garden, then vines are the perfect plants. They can cover large areas of a fence or wall, yet they only take up about a foot or two of space in front of these structures.

Annual vines, such as morning glory (pictured) and cardinal climber, grow quickly, their foliage producing seasonal cover for their supports. Since they only last from spring to frost, annual climbers are invaluable for birders who are renting and therefore can't plant anything permanent.

Grapes, winter creeper, Virginia creeper, honeysuckles, and other perennial vines supply long-lasting nesting and cover sites for a variety of birds, especially when left to grow thickly. Gray catbirds, northern cardinals, American robins, northern mockingbirds, chipping sparrows, and house finches are some of the birds that are known to nest in vines. (Climbing roses make particularly attractive nesting sites for mockingbirds.)
Besides cover and nesting, vines are also excellent sources of food for birds, in the form of nectar, seeds, and berries. Various vines offer flowers that are virtual magnets for hummingbirds, orioles, and other nectar eaters. Members of the morning glory family, including cardinal climber, scarlet creeper, and common morning glory, readily attract these birds, as do the numerous varieties of honeysuckle and the trumpet vine.

The trumpet vine’s flowers give way to seeds that are eaten by chickadees, finches, and sparrows. These birds, as well as cardinals, towhees, juncos, buntings, blackbirds, pheasants, and quail, eat the seeds of the silver-lace vine. The seeds of the American bittersweet vine are enclosed in a bright red covering and are consumed by robins, cardinals, pheasants, quail, turkeys, and bluebirds.

By far, berries are the most abundant food source vines have to offer. Grapes, porcelain berry, Virginia creeper, Boston ivy, honeysuckles, greenbriers, climbing nightshade, and even poison ivy produce fruits that are eaten by cardinals, catbirds, mockingbirds, thrashers, robins, grouse, turkeys, thrushes, waxwings, woodpeckers, and others.

Climbing plants can be put to many uses around the yard. Virginia creeper, Boston ivy, and the like, grown around a dead tree or tree stump, can enhance its appearance and increase its value to birds. “You can … make an old tree stump into a great cover for birds,” writes George Adams in his book Birdscaping Your Garden (Rodale Press, 1994), “by planting ivy plants around the base and training them over the trunk. Smaller birds, such as wrens and chickadees, will roost and find shelter in the foliage, and birds will nest in the network of thick ivy branches.”

If you don’t like the looks of a rock or brush pile, then let a winter creeper, grape vine, climbing nightshade, or trumpet vine clamber over it. Vines not only improve the pile’s attractiveness to you, but they also make it more alluring to birds by affording them extra cover. Similarly, vines add appeal to fences, trellises, house walls, and even a stone wall in the garden.

Anchoring your Christmas tree in the ground near a feeder after the holidays is over is a great way to provide shelter for the birds. Eventually, however, the needles fall off and you are left with a bare tree. When spring arrives, plant a perennial vine at the base of the tree; it will soon be covered by the vine, adding a permanent source of food and shelter to your yard. If you use an evergreen vine, such as winter creeper or some varieties of greenbrier, the cover will be available all year long.

Vines can also be allowed to grow as they would naturally, making their way up through the branches of shrubs and trees, and in hedges and hedgerows. When grown this way, many become perfect guests, their flowers, fruits, and leaves complementing that of their hosts. You do need to be wary of which vines you grow like this, however. Some become like the visitor that never knows when to leave — they take over everything and do more than make themselves at home. For instance, Asiatic bitter-
NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER
Mt. Washburn, Part I: Ascending the Mountain
Joe Grupp

I stir in my sleeping bag as the early morning light begins to filter through the material of my small, backpacker-type tent, and then nature's own alarm brings me from the world of sleep to the world of the living. Early each morning that we have been camped at Madison Campground in Yellowstone National Park, the Common Raven drifts across the site and its guttural CRRAWWK, CRRAWWK, CRRAWWK provides us with a wake-up call. Many times, leaving the tent in the early morning, before most of the camp begins to stir, I stand for a few minutes watching what is usually a pair circling and then effortlessly rising over a wooded ridge that edges the campground and that served as the ravens' impressive background moments earlier. CRRAWWK, CRRAWWK, CRRAWWK.

Thoughts quickly turn to a mountain, Mt. Washburn, that we will climb today, but first is breakfast and rudimentary coffee. We carry only a very few pots and utensils when we fly somewhere to camp, so our coffee routine is simply to put ground coffee and water together in the same pot, bring it to a boil, let it stand until the grounds settle, and then pour it carefully. Ravens come and go, Ruby-crowned Kinglets work the overhead branches, and wildflowers are there to be observed while waiting for the coffee to boil. The coffee is not gourmet, but coupled with the surroundings it is the best there is.

Shortly after breakfast, light day packs are packed and a half-hour drive finds us at the Mt. Washburn trailhead, 1,491 ft below the 10,243 ft summit and its active firelookout tower. The trail follows a graded dirt road used by official vehicles to access the fire tower when necessary. It is a moderately strenuous hike, moderately because it is graded and strenuous because for its entire three miles it is inclined at various pitches. It follows below the top of the ridge that is an arm of the mountain and then switchbacks the mountain proper to the summit.

We admire the scene as we hike ever upward. Looking down, we find a green landscape of grass that seems to flow down to reach the uneven tree line. Looking out, there is a great space and then another massive mountain. Looking slightly behind us, the view goes on for great distances to other mountains but includes a rainstorm moving our way. It seems that its path will just miss us or we will get soaked by the edge of the storm.

We are about at the halfway point when the wind begins to blow with a force strong enough to make us concentrate on our balance. The edge of the rainstorm is upon us as the sky darkens. The slope immediately below us is a patch of grassland in the shape of a "U" about a quarter mile or more across. Its shape is delineated by two arms of woodland, one before and one after us, that climb the slope from the forest below. Large rocks are scattered among the grass. In a split second, a pronghorn (pictured) bounds from the arm of the woodland before us.

The scientific name for a pronghorn is Antilocapra americana, meaning American antelope goat, but it is neither a goat nor an antelope but a unique animal, the only species in its family. The name comes from a point called a prong low on the male's somewhat vertical, tall, inner-curving black horns. It is deerlike, tan in color, with white chest, belly, inner legs, and rump patch. There are also white markings on the face, while males and an occasional female also have black markings there.

It is the fastest animal in the western hemisphere and its speed, up to sixty miles per hour, is what we witness as it springs into the air, covering a great distance before hitting the ground and springing forward again, all in a spectacular flow of motion. I watch in amazement as when it first springs forward the legs are outstretched and before the hooves hit the ground again they are coiled underneath the animal, a bundle of energy waiting to be released. An excitement stirs inside me each time the animal gracefully bounds forward. With great speed, the animal is gone across the grassy flat before us, almost as quickly as we first saw it.

My excitement is dulled quickly as the first drops of windblown rain strike me. We scramble to get the raincoats out before we get really wet, and just make it as the rain becomes heavy. The gusty strong wind blows the large raindrops with such force that they are uncomfortable when they hit the bare surface of the face. Pulling the hood of the raincoat partly across the face eases the discomfort. The rain lasts for about fifteen minutes, ending just as we reach some trees that could provide protection. The hot sun that follows the rain and the dry air of the higher elevation has us just about dry as we reach the summit's fire tower. The mental picture of the bounding pronghorn was worth the pounding wet soaking we got. The energy, speed, and graceful motion of the animal will last in my memory for a long, long time.

All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667. Directions and summaries may be found at ssaudubon.org.

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<td>Nov. 19</td>
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The museum is located on Washington Avenue in Seaford and lies about 1/2 mile south of Sunrise Highway, just north of Merrick Road. Since there will be only a little extra for sale that day, preordering is greatly appreciated; an order form appears below for your use. Please keep this upper portion as a reminder of the sale date. All preorders must be received by TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17. Please make checks payable to the South Shore Audubon Society. Mail check and order form to Paul Butkereit, 268 Wallace St., Freeport, NY 11520.

Sanctuary Special Blend: black oil sunflower, white proso millet, peanut hearts and pieces, safflower, striped sunflower, sunflower hearts, canary seed, thistle (nyjer), tree nuts, dried fruit (raisins or cherries), and grit (to aid digestion)

Select Blend: white proso millet, black oil sunflower, striped sunflower, sunflower hearts, cracked corn, safflower, thistle (nyjer), and peanut hearts

For average backyard feeding, Paul suggests using the Select Blend. The Sanctuary Blend contains a higher volume of sunflower seeds and no cracked corn; it also contains dried fruits and nuts to attract more migrants.

Help will be needed on the sale date to process orders and to aid in unloading seed. If you wish to volunteer, call (516) 593-1994 and ask for Paul. As in recent years, we will not have another seed sale until next autumn.

My name is

My address is

City _________________________________ State _________ Zip ______________

Telephone __________________________ SSAS Member? _____ Yes _____ No

E-Mail Address ________________________

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TOTAL AMOUNT: __________
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Joseph Grupp, Research ............................. 481-4208
Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve Co-Chair ...... 546-8841
Enid Klein, Programs ................................. 561-0004
Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips ............... 486-7667
Therese Lucas, Envtl. Fests. & Annual Dinner .... 221-3921
Doreen Remsen, Birdathon .......................... 764-5168
James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon ...................... 631-957-0949
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming ......................... 599-1224
Mary Jane Russell, Hospitality ...................... 766-7397

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