





## 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 (**except Monday, November 10**) 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. 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:

- Bellmore ..... Michelle Laskowski, Georgina McKee
- Cedarhurst ..... Teller Development Corp.
- Douglaston ..... Linda Esposito
- East Meadow..... Dr. & Mrs. Stanley Alpert, Kathy Diamond, Vera Maitinsky, Sonia Rabson
- East Rockaway ..... Gladys Chiaffitelli
- Farmingdale ..... Walter C. Barton, Erik Gustafson, Joyce McArthur
- Floral Park ..... Karen Lester, Mary Weld Luhrs, Cynthia Perez
- Franklin Square ..... Amy Rodriguez
- Freeport ..... Dorothy J. Green, Edmund Haegele, Virginia Terris
- Garden City ..... Iris Sackstein
- Hempstead ..... Mushtaq Chohan, Albert A. Jackson, B. Millward
- Hewlett ..... Mildred Levine, Gael Shern
- Hicksville ..... E. Pound
- Inwood ..... Byungsook Yuh
- Island Park ..... G. Zimmer
- Levittown ..... Patricia Morrissey
- Lido Beach ..... Perry J. Bodnar
- Long Beach ..... Julie B. Baram, Maura V. Kuohn, Kenneth M. Levine, Michael Putnam, Trina J. Stasiak
- Lynbrook ..... Fran Green, Mildred Murray
- Massapequa ..... Tom Cooney, Georgina Devoy, Richard F. Heaning, Matty & Nicky La Gois, Joan Rapczyk, Allaire Sheehy
- Massapequa Park .... Dunkin' Donuts, J. Hillman
- Merrick ..... Marie Fitzgerald, John G. Karavolos, Mildred Peterson, Peter & Missy Whelan
- Plainview ..... Naomi Fonseca, Sachin Kamath, Sylvia Secunda, Tara Sheppard
- Point Lookout ..... Ellen Murray
- Rockville Centre ..... Susan A. Laustsen, William Wahlig, Deborah Wynne
- Seaford ..... Taylor Ryan



- Stewart Manor ..... Rose Barber, Leonard Gallo, Shirley Jessen, Carolyn D. Noble, ? Sawka, Henry C. Schreier
- Uniondale ..... Patricia Normasi
- Valley Stream ..... Jose Castro, George A. Davson, Janet Leahy, James Nunamacher
- Wantagh ..... E. Balashewitz, Charles Beers, Lloyd Harris, Vasilis Kovoros, Jean Leib, Chuck Silveira
- West Hempstead ..... Carole Adkins, Leslie Concialdi, Edgar Mendez, Lita Sollisch

## BELATED THANKS FROM YOUR EDITOR

Michael Spelling

The May–August issue of the *Skimmer* ran out of space, so I postponed my 18th annual thank-you column. I especially want to thank Bill Eichholz for picking up six issues from F&B Printers in Island Park last year and Therese Lucas for labeling all of the newsletters with me. Thanks also go to Wendy Murbach for helping with the labeling and dinner-flyer stuffing, and for printing the chapter-only labels; and to everyone who submitted articles, especially the prolific Joe Grupp.

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Explore the coast  
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**JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE** (Sat., Sept. 27, 4–7 P.M.). Join us aboard 100-ft boat "Golden Sunshine" leaving from Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn for a 3-hour narrated tour of the bay during peak fall migration time. Learn about the history, ecology, and wildlife of Jamaica Bay Refuge. Cost: \$45 incl. wine & cheese, fruit, drinks, snacks.

**NEW YORK AQUARIUM** (Sat., Nov. 15). Meet 10 A.M. at the aquarium entrance in Coney Island for a 2-1/2 hour "Behind-the-Scenes" tour. See sharks, penguins, sea otters, walrus, sea turtles, local & exotic fish, and Buzzy, the Electric Eel. Cost: \$25 (kids \$15).

**FLORIDA EVERGLADES** (Feb. 21–28, 2009). Visit the best wildlife areas of South Florida, incl. North & South Everglades, Big Cypress Preserve, Corkscrew Swamp Preserve, Ding Darling Refuge, Loxahatchee Refuge, Wakodahatchee Boardwalk, state parks, and more. Travel by van & see roseate spoonbill, bald eagle, purple gallinule, reddish egret, wood stork, Everglades kite, burrowing and barred owls, as well as American crocodile, lots of gators, butterflies, and maybe a bobcat or river otter. Cost: \$1,795 includes airfare, lodging, breakfasts & lunches, van, gas, park fees & guides.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 318-9344, doriepe@nyc.rr.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alsnyc.org.

## PAVING TRAIL VIEW STATE PARK

Back in the spring, an SSAS Research Committee survey by Joe Grupp and Joe Landesberg spotted a slew of markers on trees in Trail View State Park. We subsequently determined that the lightly used park, which is just north of Bethpage State Park and was created in 2002 along the former right-of-way of the Bethpage State Parkway up to Old Country Road, is included in plans for a 7.9-mile extension of the paved path that begins in Massapequa Preserve. Trail View currently has no pavement;



just narrow trails that cater to Greenbelt hikers, mountain bikers, dog walkers, etc. In its limited surveys of the area starting in 2005, our Research Committee discovered that despite being about 400 to 500 feet wide, Trail View provides habitat for at least 83 species, including ones that nest in its rare old-field successional habitat. Their list includes three species on Audubon's Watchlist (Willow Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, and Blue-winged Warbler) and two on its Common Birds in Decline list (Field Sparrow and, yes, Common Grackle). Thanks to Huntington Audubon Society's Sharon Brody, who did Breeding Bird Atlas surveys in Trail View, we know of other species that nest there, including Black-billed Cuckoo.

After a series of e-mails with New York State Parks' personnel on Long Island and in Albany failed to make headway, Audubon NY's executive director, Al Caccese, intervened on our behalf, resulting in a useful meeting in July. The existing proposal for a ten-foot wide bike path provides separate trails for hiking and mountain biking, effectively fragmenting the park while adding 1-1/2 miles of trail. A second meeting, this time including NYS Department of Transportation management personnel because we learned that they have primary responsibility for park pavement decisions, is scheduled for mid-August.

### JOIN THE MEADOWBROOK BIOBLITZ

SSAS board members Betsy Gulotta (the conservation project manager for Friends of Hempstead Plains) and George Peters (our representative on Nassau County's Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee) are involved in the committee that is organizing the Meadowbrook BioBlitz. The following is from a press release:

A BioBlitz involves a comprehensive 24-hour inventory of all the living organisms in a given area, covering the plants and wildlife. The BioBlitz will take place on **September 19 & 20** along a 7-1/2-mile stretch of the Meadowbrook Parkway corridor, running from the Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College to the wetlands by Merrick-Freeport Bay. The 24-hour program is expected to draw hundreds of volunteers, ranging from biologists and environmentalists to students and residents.

The corridor contains a mix of state, county, Town of Hempstead, and Village of Freeport public lands, and

consists of spring-fed streams, ponds, and forest. In total, there are 252 acres of freshwater wetlands, with red maple swamps dominating. The area plays a significant role in the county's storm-water management plan, supporting more than 100 storm-water outflow pipes that discharge directly into the Meadow Brook.

As the various governmental entities work in concert to build a plan for the corridor's future, including the possibility of a lengthy nature trail [endorsed by SSAS and awaiting long-delayed state approval], the BioBlitz is designed to enhance the public understanding of the area's ecology.

For details, visit [www.meadowbrookbioblitz.org](http://www.meadowbrookbioblitz.org), where you can register and your editor found the following:

*When will volunteer orientation take place?* Orientation will be held at Hofstra University's Monroe Hall at 6:30 P.M. on Friday, Sept. 19. Teams will be organized at orientation to work in two-hour shifts. Teams will leave from there to cover the designated areas or come back to volunteer on Saturday.

*How are volunteers organized?* During orientation, volunteers will be grouped with scientists and guides according to their interests (for example, bird interests with bird scientist). Teams will leave from there to cover the designated areas or come back to volunteer on Saturday.

*How much time do I have to volunteer for?* Minimally volunteer for a two-hour shift. You can volunteer for as many shifts as you like over the 24-hr period.

*Why is half of the BioBlitz during the night?* Most animals are nocturnal and only come out at night. Possums (pictured), amphibians, and reptiles are some examples.



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## GREENING OF LONG ISLAND DONATION

Therese Lucas

It was with a feeling of great pleasure and satisfaction that South Shore Audubon Society was able to donate native plantings to Lido Nature Preserve through our Greening of Long Island program. Thanks to John Zarudsky, Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation & Waterways biologist, for his assistance, enabling planting of the most appropriate species for that location. This preserve is great for birding and walking, and brings a feeling of complete relaxation when you're there. Reward yourself with a visit if you have not already done so.

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*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.*

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### WHAT TYPE ARE YOU, MR. FALCON?

Jonathan Staller

It was a sudden trip. It wasn't planned; funerals never are. Here I was when I heard the news of a passing on my wife's side of the family. In three days I'm going to Trinidad! Where are my birder's guide and my field notes? I had them packed in a box, on the bottom of many other boxes I'm sure, in my storage locker. Like I said before, not a planned trip. Well, I never did take that book, but I did grab my binoculars and with my family by my side, we went to Trinidad.

We arrived on the Saturday afternoon before Easter. My sister-in-law Leela and her three sons met us at the airport. It was Leela's husband Dean who passed on. Dean walked Sarah down the aisle at our wedding. Leela looked good; everyone looked good. Everyone was in good spirits, and they told us to relax and have fun. That's exactly what we did; the Stallers are on vacation.

After unpacking, Leela told us that they have prayer services at the house around 7 P.M. every night for 11 days. A pundit (Hindu rabbi) would play his organ, sitting Indian-style. I wonder if that's how Indian-style sitting got its name? Anyway, his band would consist of a drum (tabla) player and a bell player whose bell looks like a 3-ft long iron rod. A smaller rod would be used to strike it, creating a ding-ding sound. Freshly made snacks were served afterward. I helped serve and that's when I encountered my first new bird of the trip. Too bad I didn't have my birders' guide. I couldn't identify the falcon I was looking at!

The day hours of our trip were full from morning until dusk. We visited family every day and my daughter got to meet her cousins. We went swimming in the ocean and

went to the zoo; never a dull moment. When we went out with my nephew-in-law Ashook, it was really special. Ashook is a captain in the Trinidadian defense forces and many have much respect for him. Our drivers were our bodyguards!

I did manage to bird-watch though. At first I saw the blue ones that I've seen before. Then the red ones and then the green ones. That's a tanager; I've seen it before. Fourth time I'm in Trinidad and I should know that one by now! It was so difficult watching and not being able to identify anything. Oh, there it is again, the falcon. It flew at dusk with the bats. Lots of mosquitos, so lots of bats. The falcon flew like a nighthawk, making oval flight paths, searching for prey.

Ashook said he'd take me to Mt. St. Benedict. It's the largest Benedictine establishment in the Caribbean and home to the famous Pax Guest House. I've been there before with my other nephew-in-law, Errol; he loves bird-watching and owns 14 little birds that he calls robins. We arrived there at 7 A.M. There we saw the bluish birds and a mockingbird, BUT "That's a Palm Tanager. The other bird is called a Tropical Mockingbird." Yes, but, who said that? Mr. Gerald Ramsawak, the manager of the Pax Guest House for 10 years, would be our personal guide. He designed and planted all the gardens to attract the optimum amount of birds possible. Each morning he put chopped mangos, papayas, bananas, and other native fruits on platform trays that attracted Bare-eyed Thrush, Yellow Oriole, Great Kiskadee, and Bananaquits on the ground floors.

The cottage itself had rooms to stay overnight in and a small dining room. At the end of each hall there was a patio where you can witness the bird activity from the treetops to the ground level. Upstairs hung many hummingbird feeders, which attracted numerous delicate yet so fascinating birds. The males looked like flying gems when the sunlight shined on the breast feathers. To name a few that I liked were the Green Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, and the Blue-tailed Emerald.

Being built on a side of a mountain, the guest house is a great spot to see birds of prey. I saw a Gray-headed Kite, a Zone-tailed Hawk (which looks just like a Turkey Vulture but smaller), and a Short-tailed Hawk. Both Black and Turkey Vultures were present. There were Orange-winged Parrots flying and chattering from mountain to mountain. I also got to see rare birds such as the Trinidad Euphonia, Long-billed Gnatwren, Streaked Flycatcher, Barred Antshrike, and Buff-throated Woodcreeper.

After two hours of bird-watching, we were served breakfast and I got to ask Gerald about other birds I'd seen on this trip that I couldn't identify. He helped me with all of them, including the Bat Falcon; the falcon feeds on the bats themselves, not the mosquitos after all.

I'm glad I went on vacation. My Trinidad bird list increased and my family got to see my other family. We'll miss you, brother-in-law.



## TR SANCTUARY BUS CHAPERONE WANTED

In her President's Message, Wendy included our TR Sanctuary nature camp scholarship program as a way for you to help our all-volunteer chapter. According to organizer Mary Jane Russell, we have an immediate opportunity available for **Thursday, August 28** from 7:45 A.M. until about 3 P.M. and could use some backup volunteers for August 25-27. The "job" is to be one of two chaperones for the eleven expected young campers we will be busing from Oceanside to Oyster Bay. To volunteer, call Marilyn Hametz at 799-7189.

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## CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN MASSAPEQUA PRESERVE

*Editor's note:* We've mentioned the Massapequa Preserve Streamflow Augmentation and Pond Restoration Project in these pages since 2003, and it's finally expected to begin as this newsletter is being printed. We heard a while ago that construction was going to start at the north end and therefore wouldn't affect our bird walks for many months, but just to be sure, we suggest that you watch SSAS's e-mail list for updates and/or check [www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/Parks](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/Parks). As of now, there's a press release from County Executive Suozzi posted that explains the project, which is the result of a mandate that was issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency when sewers were approved for the surrounding neighborhoods. Here's the press release...

In early August 2008, the Department of Public Works will undertake a major stream corridor enhancement project within the 423-acre Massapequa Preserve. This project has several components aimed at restoring, enhancing, and protecting one of the most valuable freshwater wetland habitats remaining in Nassau County. The major components of the project include:

- Augmenting the Massapequa Creek stream flow with 800 gallons per minute of water that will be withdrawn from the decommissioned Brooklyn Water Works infiltration gallery piping located below ground near part of the preserve by Sunrise Highway. The withdrawn water will be pumped northward in a new pipeline buried below the bike path (which will be completely replaced) and discharged into the stream channel at several locations just south of Linden Street. The aim of augmenting the flow is twofold: to allow the stream to flow more consistently during dry weather, and to provide colder water to the stream in an effort to provide habitat for cool-water fish species (trout).
- Dredging/berming portions of two ponds to segregate the stream flow from the storm flow, thereby enhancing the aesthetic and ecological values of the ponds.
- Conducting stream channel improvements to prevent erosion and loss of wetland vegetation while restoring its suitability as a trout habitat. The improvements consist of

some sediment removal from the channel, stream bank reinforcement, and protection using vegetative erosion control techniques and plantings. Other techniques such as rock weirs and stream diversions will create fish habitat as recommended by Trout Unlimited.

- Improving the Massapequa Reservoir through the partial dredging of a deep channel near the eastern wing to enhance flow and water temperature.
- Irrigating a 12-acre red maple swamp with diverted storm-water runoff from the newly segregated ponds. These wetland areas are in need of additional irrigation if they are to remain viable as a wetland habitat.
- Providing storm-water treatment at various locations throughout the watershed, to prevent floatable trash and debris from entering the stream. These devices will filter suspended solids, nutrients, metals, oil, and grease, as well as pathogens.
- Providing educational and recreational improvements through signage, trail and path markers, benches, and walkways.

The size and scope of the project will necessarily involve some disruption within the Massapequa Preserve.



Accordingly, the Nassau County Department of Public Works; the Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums; the Nassau County Office of Public Safety; Bove Industries (the contractor); the Village of Massapequa Park; and local County legislators will coordinate their efforts to alert surrounding residents and preserve visitors about anticipated construction activities, path closures, and path detours. In addition to the updates provided on the County website, there will also be signs posted in the preserve.

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## 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](http://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](mailto:Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com).

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NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306  
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**South Shore Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 31**  
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**BECOME A MEMBER OF SSAS**  
**Think Globally, but Join Locally!**

*Option 1.* You can join SSAS for a year by sending \$15 payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** using the form below. Our address is P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

*Option 2.* To join NAS and your all-volunteer local chapter, 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 \$0 unless you join through us). Mail the form below and your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to SSAS at the address above. The special rate for the first year is \$20 per household; \$15 for students and seniors.

➔ **Renewing?** Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS (we now get \$0 for all NAS renewals).

**Donations to SSAS are always welcome!**



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