

returned to the wild. The fate of the lone Dovekie at the marina is less certain.

I would like to commend the excellent work that wildlife rehabilitators do for so many stranded, injured, and diseased birds and other animals. Most of these wonderful people work as volunteers, for little or no money, dependent on grants, donations, and help from people who care about animals. Thanks to them, many make it back to the wild in fit shape to continue their interrupted lives.

May we all enjoy good birding.

PRESERVE BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

Marilyn Hametz

Join us at the **Brookside Preserve Spring Cleanup** on **Sunday, April 18** at 1:00 P.M. The Preserve is a lovely natural area. Come help maintain and improve it. Please bring friends and family, work gloves, and a rake. Scout groups and other community organizations are welcome. Call George Peters at 868-5480 if you know of a group that would like to help.

The Town of Hempstead (on the Baldwin side) and the Village of Freeport are installing traps and a stormwater treatment system that will alleviate the problem of debris washed into the Preserve by the storm sewers. These projects are being funded by Nassau County's 2004 Environmental Program Bond Act as the result of a proposal submitted by SSAS.

On **Sunday, June 27** we will have our second annual **Walk in the Woods** at Brookside. Last year's event included guided walks, a children's nature hunt, a display, light refreshments, and a chance to meet and chat with members of the community.

Special guided programs at Brookside Preserve can be arranged, by appointment, for community and youth groups for nature walks, activities for scout badges, or other conservation interests.



The main entrance to the Preserve is on Brookside Avenue in Freeport, just north of Sunrise Highway. To help with the Walk in the Woods or for information about guided programs at the preserve, contact Marilyn Hametz at 799-7189 or mwhametz@optonline.net.

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Discover a Refuge In Your Own Backyard.

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. 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 | Betty Bradley, Wendy Gill | |
| Bethpage | John M. Stravato, Iris Zapata | |
| East Meadow | Dorothy S. Francis | |
| Farmingdale | Rosemary Kennedy | |
| Floral Park | Catherine A. Hogg, Marilyn Levy,
Claire Mansfield, ? Roselli | |
| Freeport | Dorothy Lynch |  |
| Garden City | Arthur Boddicket | |
| Hempstead | Maureen Cleary, Audrey Husnik | |
| Hicksville | Olga Peterson, Storm Strongin | |
| Levittown | Michael Khan, Umberto Salustro,
Joan Ziccardy |  |
| Long Beach | Kathleen Basler | |
| Lynbrook | Barbara Caccamo | |
| Massapequa Park | Romeo Cammisa, Karen Higgins,
J. Strumwasser, Margaret
Urbanowski | |
| Merrick | Cecilia Brauer, Madeline Roberts | |
| Old Bethpage | Herbert B. Goldberg | |
| Plainview | D. M. Katz |  |
| Rockville Centre | Edna Gray | |
| Wantagh | Diane Higgins, Joanne Koukoulas | |
| Woodmere | Norman Strauss | |

 AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

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EARTH DAY LOBBY DAY

The 20th annual Earth Day Lobby Day will be held in Albany on **Tuesday, April 20**. Hundreds of citizens from every corner of New York State will meet with their state lawmakers and show their support for the environment. The event is being sponsored by Audubon New York, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Environmental Advocates of New York, the New York Public Interest Research Group, Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations.

The day will last from 9:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. You can sign up by filling out the form at <https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dDVadmtFQWFjWEp3THFjNWgtZWpzTIE6MA>. If you have any questions, please contact Bill Mahoney of NYPIRG at mahoney.w@gmail.com. In addition to registering using the form, it would be helpful if you let Audubon New York's Grassroots Coordinator, Laura McCarthy, know you are coming by sending an e-mail to lmccarthy@audubon.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HOG ISLAND WINNER!

SSAS congratulates Joanne Del Prete, whose investment in raffle tickets resulted in her name being drawn at our March 9 meeting. She will be attending the six-day Field Ornithology program at Audubon's camp on Hog Island in Maine.



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

SPRING BIRD MIGRATION AT JAMAICA BAY (Sun., April 25). Join retired refuge manager Don Riepe for an intimate hike around the ponds and uplands of the refuge during spring bird migration. Learn about the history, ecology, and management of the refuge as well as see many bird species. Meet 10 A.M. at refuge visitor center. For info & reservations, contact Don. Free.

HORSESHOE CRAB WALK (Sat., May 15 and 29). Meet 9 A.M. at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a hike to see the mating ritual of the ancient horseshoe crab. For info & reservations, contact Don. Free.

JAMAICA BAY ECOLOGY CRUISE (Sat., May 29, 2 P.M.). Take a 3-hour narrated cruise around the bay and backwater marshes on a 100-ft boat, the "Golden Sunshine," from Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay. See nesting herons, oystercatchers, ospreys, and peregrine falcon. Cost: \$45 incl. wine & cheese, fruit, drinks, snacks. Leaders: Mickey Cohen & Don Riepe.

MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 11-13). Spend a great weekend of natural history programs at the luxurious Manor House. Cost: \$345/person incl. 2 nights, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, star watch, and free LIRR pickup.

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

OUR TENTH ANNUAL CENTRAL PARK WALK

On **Saturday, May 1**, SSAS is planning to be in Central Park for our annual (weather permitting) early May morning bird walk. Once again, Manhattan resident Chris Cooper, who birded with SSAS in his formative years, has agreed to lead us through the twisting maze of the Ramble and adjoining areas of the park. In previous years, we've recorded 45 to 70-plus species in under three hours (47 last year, including 15 warblers; Black-and-White Warbler is pictured). Join us!

The cost of the walk is \$5, which is a tax-deductible donation to SSAS (refundable if we rain out or you cancel in advance). Please send your check payable to South Shore Audubon Society, along with your phone number and e-mail address, to Joanne Del Prete, 20 Ceil Pl., Bethpage, NY 11714-4503 (phone 433-0739, jdelprete47@optonline.net) by April 26.

As usual, a group of us will be aboard the local Babylon train that is due in Penn Station at 8:12; you can look for Joanne toward the west end of the platform in Massapequa, boarding at 7:14. We plan to depart from Penn's LIRR waiting room at 8:30 to meet Chris at Belvedere Castle at around 9:15. Please buy a **MetroCard** for the subway. The walk usually ends around noon. You can bring lunch or buy it in the park, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. Joanne's cell (476-3761) will be on that day only.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS WANTED

Thanks to another much-appreciated donation from Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society is again offering two \$750 Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships this spring to college juniors, seniors, or graduate students who are continuing their studies toward a degree

in an area of biological or environmental science, such as wildlife management, forestry, animal behavior, ecology, marine biology, oceanography, mammalogy, or ornithology. For information, call Betsy Gulotta at 546-8841 or send e-mail to gulotte@ncc.edu. Applications are due by April 30 and we typically receive just a few, so apply if you're eligible or please help us spread the word!

SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education; conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat; and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

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



All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains or snows. Any questions? Call Steve at 987-8103. Directions and summaries may be found at ssaudubon.org.

- Mar. 28 Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
- Apr. 4 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner*
- Apr. 11 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Apr. 18 Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside
- Apr. 25 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)**
- May 2 Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)
- May 9 Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)
- May 16 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner*
- May 23 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve

*Note: As was the case last year, state budget cuts will result in the closure of West End #2 except for birding and fishing. Show your binoculars and/or field guide for access.

**Another Note: The ongoing Streamflow Augmentation and Pond Restoration Project at Massapequa Preserve may result in a detour from our usual route along the paved path; if you arrive late, follow any detour signs to find us.

SSAS BIRDATHON 2010 IS COMING

This year, SSAS will conduct its 23rd annual Birdathon! SSAS raises funds through the Birdathon by having members get cash pledges for each species of bird identified during a 24-hour period in May, when the spring migration is at its peak. Birding expertise and big pledges are not necessary; anyone can join one of SSAS's teams locally for all or part of the time, sponsor themselves, and have fun while helping us find species, or you can do your own Birdathon anywhere.

Mark the dates on your calendar — **Friday, May 7** from 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 8** at 5:00 P.M. The rain dates are one week later at the same time. Team details will be in the next *Skimmer*.

LET'S KEEP ALL OUR PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES OPEN - PAINLESSLY

Editor's note: The following budget memo comes from Al Caccese, the Executive Director of Audubon New York and can be downloaded from <http://ny.audubon.org>.

As just about everyone now knows, the 2010-2011 proposed Executive Budget reduces Parks' budget by another \$29 million, which is over and above the \$46 million reduction in the last several years. As a result, Parks has developed two lists that would result in the closing of 94 Parks and Historic Sites and numerous other cuts to swimming pools and other services. All of this can be avoided for \$11 million.

To meet this latest \$29 million in cuts, NYS Parks has identified \$14 million in savings that would be realized through the attrition of 67 jobs, a reduction of \$4 million from its equipment budget, and additional Other-Than-Personal-Service reductions. It has also recommended \$4 million in increased or additional fees. This leaves \$11 million to keep all the Parks, Sites, and services open while we work on longer-term solutions.

The legislature can restore the \$11 million to the budget, but there is a real question as to whether the budget will be timely enough to avoid the closures. Campground reservations are being made NOW, lifeguards need to be recruited and tested NOW, chlorine for pools needs to be requisitioned NOW, and numerous other activities need to take place NOW to avoid these parks and sites being closed by default.

A simple and painless solution is available: The Governor, the Senate, and the Assembly leadership can agree now to bond the \$11 million in anticipation of the revenues that will be deposited into the State Parks Infrastructure Fund, which is dedicated to capital projects. This will provide a one-time infusion of operating money which will have no impact on the budget and a minuscule impact on NYS's debt ceiling. Action, NOW, by the leadership will provide the decision-makers with the time needed to determine a longer-term fix to keep our incredible facilities available to New Yorkers and their guests. This is not just a recreation or quality of life need. This has a direct relationship to our physical and mental health and is an important ingredient to the tourism industry in NY.

Tell your leader to solve this problem — NOW!

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2010-2011 SSAS BOARD

Maillyn Hametz

South Shore Audubon Society's officers are elected each year. Directors are elected for 3-year terms. The SSAS nominating committee (chaired by me, and including Gail Brown and Mary Jane Russell) will provide a list of recommended candidates in next month's *Skimmer*. Suggestions may be submitted to the committee by any SSAS member; you can call me at 799-7189, Mary Jane at 766-7397, or Gail at 432-8156, or e-mail mwhametz@optonline.net.

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 11, officers and directors will be elected for our next fiscal year, which begins July 1. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. Officers and new directors will be installed at the annual dinner on June 8.

SSAS ANNUAL DINNER ON TUESDAY, JUNE 8

Check next month's *Skimmer* for the registration form for our annual dinner, to be held once again at the Coral House in Baldwin. Save the date for a fun evening!

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AUDUBON NY PRIORITIES FOR THE STATE BUDGET

Editor's plea: If you didn't call or write your State Senator and Assemblymember after reading last month's article about this, please do so ASAP. If you've never contacted a politician, now's the time to raise your voice, before the budget is finalized. Names and contact information for our elected officials are at ssaudubon.org. Here's the latest info from our state office:

Audubon New York, the state program of the National Audubon Society representing 27 local chapters and 50,000 members, is deeply concerned with Governor Paterson's Executive Budget proposal for FY [fiscal year] 2010-2011 and its impacts to New York State's environment. His proposal does little to stimulate the economy and keep people working through investing in environmental protection and restoration initiatives, and in some instances does just the opposite by disproportionately targeting environmental spending and environmental state agencies for cuts.

During these difficult fiscal times, continued investment in the restoration of New York's water, air, and open space resources can and should play an important role in the revitalization of the state economy. For instance, our State Parks are important drivers of local economies, supporting an ever-growing state tourism industry by providing important local destinations for the more than 55 million people who visit them each year. Yet, the longer we wait to invest in the protection and restoration of the environment, our parks, and open spaces, the more costly the problems become to fix and the return on the investment decreases. In 2010, Audubon New York strongly urges the legislature to:

***Protect the Integrity of the
Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)***
*Restore Cuts, Remove Offloads,
and Develop a Repayment Plan*

Audubon New York strongly urges the legislature to restore funding to the EPF to \$222 million, and restore cuts to the following important EPF programs: the Biodiversity Research Institute, Open Space Protection, Farmland Protection, Invasive Species Eradication, Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Initiative, the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, Hudson River Estuary Program, and the Water Quality Improvements

Program. Of utmost importance to Audubon is restoring funding for the Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquaria (ZBGA) program category.



In addition to restoring these cuts, Audubon New York strongly urges the legislature to remove the two new programs that were added to the EPF and fund them from other portions of the budget. These offloads weaken the integrity of the EPF and go against the Friends of New York's Environment Coalition position of no new EPF categories without new funding. This year, we also stand with the Friends of New York's Environment Coalition in strongly urging that the budget include a proposal to develop a multiyear repayment plan for the more than half a billion dollars that have been taken from the EPF, through an annual increase in the amount of RETT [Real Estate Transfer Tax] revenue dedicated to the EPF.

Oppose the Moratorium on Open Space Protection.
One of the most shortsighted and damaging proposals regarding the EPF is the Governor's proposal to place a moratorium on protecting open space, the elimination of land acquisition funding, and the steep reduction in farmland protection funding. This proposal would seriously undermine efforts to advance conservation at a time when the opportunities to save the last remaining open spaces could not be greater. The EPF was created to offset habitat loss from development, and the land acquisition and farmland protection categories are pillars of this important fund. This irresponsible moratorium should be undone, funding to land acquisition and farmland improvements restored in a restored EPF, and the state commitments that have been made to organizations that have purchased land on the state's behalf should be honored.

***Oppose the Disproportionate Cuts
to Environmental Agency Budgets***

The Executive Budget proposal disproportionately cuts environmental agency budgets and staffing. In particular, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) budget is cut by 34% and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) budget is cut by an additional 20%, while other agencies like the State Education Department and Department of Health are only cut by 2% and 1%, respectively. These draconian cuts to the EPF and environmental agency budgets are the wrong course of action, and put at risk many projects across the state that help restore the environment and provide for ecotourism opportunities, further compounding the economic woes facing not-for-profit organizations and local governments.

Utilize 'Obesity Tax' to Offset Cuts to State Parks

Many emerging studies are showing that parks and open space help keep people healthier and play an important role in combating the obesity epidemic. However, Governor Paterson's budget cuts vital funding to parks, which will lead to many state parks closing their doors at a time when more people are looking to recreate closer to

home, get outside, and be active. We strongly urge that a portion of the proposed "obesity tax" revenue be dedicated to OPRHP to offset the cuts to their budgets, keep parks open, and develop new initiatives programs with the Department of Health to combat obesity and inspire children and their parents to get outside.

Promote and Expand Ecotourism Opportunities

Bird and wildlife watching is the fastest-growing outdoor recreation in New York State, with over 3.8 million bird-watchers contributing over \$1.6 billion to the state economy each year! To enhance the state's image as a destination for bird and wildlife watching, Audubon New York urges the state to create an "I BIRD NY" program, similar to other "I Love New York" campaigns. Such an initiative should provide promotional assistance to local governments in their efforts to promote ecotourism and wildlife-watching opportunities, and enhance promotion of voluntary conservation funding programs like the Habitat Access Stamp and Return a Gift to Wildlife programs.

Consider Other Revenue-Generating Ideas

To increase revenues in the state and offset environmental damage, Audubon urges the creation of a clean-water surcharge on the sale of nonagricultural, aesthetic lawn-care pesticides and fertilizers, which could be used to generate additional funds for water-quality improvements and wastewater infrastructure upgrades. Additionally, the state should consider instituting application fees for permits to modify freshwater wetlands.

Expand Severance Tax for Natural Gas Drilling

To offset the many negative and destructive environmental impacts from expanded drilling for natural gas, strong mitigation requirements and funding must be put in place. Audubon New York strongly believes that any severance tax considered by the state must apply not only to expanded drilling, but to existing wells already in production and provide funds for the protection of unfragmented forests, restoration of wetland habitat, and improvement of water quality, in addition to providing increased staff to the DEC and other agencies. The Governor's proposed severance tax does not go far enough to mitigate the environmental destruction that will occur if this expanded drilling is allowed, and must be amended to ensure this funding is used to protect and restore New York's environment.

Oppose the Elimination of Certain Boards and Commissions (S.6613/A.9713)

We urge the legislature to retain the Bird Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Invasive Species Advisory Council, neither of which have any state costs associated with them.

For more information on these proposals and to see a copy of the budget testimony, visit http://ny.audubon.org/PDFs/Testimony_10_11.pdf.

NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306

RECORD-SETTING YEAR FOR PEREGRINE FALCONS

Editor's note: The following comes from a March 10 press release.

2009 proved to be a record-setting year for Peregrine Falcons in many productivity categories according to a new report released today by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). DEC surveys found that there were 73 territorial pairs of state-endangered Peregrine Falcons present in the state in 2009, with 42 pairs recorded upstate. That's a slight increase from 2008, when 67 pairs were recorded statewide. In 2009, 61 pairs bred and produced 132 young, also slightly up from 2008. New York State has the largest population of peregrines in the eastern United States.

Peregrines raise one to five young in nests located mainly on cliffs, bridges, and buildings. They are known for their high speed — over 200 mph — dives on their bird prey.

These birds had disappeared as nesting birds from the eastern United States by the early 1960s due to pesticide (DDT) residues which caused eggshell thinning. Once DDT use was banned in the United States, an experimental restoration program began involving widespread releases of captive-raised birds from the Peregrine Fund, a global nonprofit organization focused on conserving birds of prey. Through this program, 169 young peregrines were released in New York State from the mid-1970s through the late 1980s.

In 1983, the first new pairs nested at two bridges in New York City, and in 1985 two pairs returned to nest on Adirondack cliffs. The population has grown steadily since then. There are now about 20 pairs in the metro New York area and 27 in the Adirondacks, a pair at every major bridge between NYC and Albany, and about 10 pairs scattered through the rest of the state.



At many of the urban nest locations, wooden nest trays have been placed to increase the falcons' productivity. Peregrine Falcons do not build nests of sticks like most raptors, but instead lay their brownish eggs in whatever substrate is available. Protection and management is necessary to continue this species' success in New York, which means working with building and bridge authorities so that whenever possible their work is done in a way that does not negatively impact nesting Peregrine Falcons. DEC has had excellent cooperation from many agencies and volunteers in protecting, managing, and monitoring this endangered species.

Webcams operate during the nesting season at several sites in New York State. For links to these sites and other information, including a link to view the new 2009 Peregrine Falcon report in full text, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7059.html.

VOLUNTEERS FOR WILDLIFE (631) 423-0982
