

to having many informative membership meetings, which, aside from being edifying, will no doubt be fun! Bird walks are planned, as are cleanups, bird surveys, and festivals. We will, of course, be confronting a number of serious environmental issues affecting us, many of which we already know of and are working on, others of which will possibly arise and present an immediate challenge to us.

I look forward to working with everyone affiliated with South Shore Audubon as your new president for the coming year. I will be working with my fellow board members and committee chairpersons to keep the membership informed of our activities and challenges. Please feel free to offer me and other board members any thoughts you might have about the proper direction and activities of the chapter, and what additionally we could do to further our shared mission. Our strength comes from an engaged and active membership. Together, may we all have a successful new year of enjoying nature and advancing important environmental goals!

HUMMINGBIRD SANCTUARY VISIT SCHEDULED

Wendy Murbach

On **Saturday, August 27**, up to 35 SSAS members will again be Paul Adams' annual guests for two hours at the privately owned 3.5-acre Baiting Hollow Hummingbird Sanctuary (www.lihummer.org) overlooking Long Island Sound. To reserve a spot, contact me at wmbch@aol.com or 546-6303.



Because the parking area there is very small and unpaved, it is necessary to consolidate ourselves into as few cars as possible. So, we will meet in the Riverhead Centre shopping mall at 9:45 A.M. and do so.

Directions: Take the LIE to the last exit (73). Take Old Country Road (Route 58) east toward Orient Point for 3 traffic lights. Make a left at the third light and make the first right into Riverhead Centre shopping mall (you will see Home Depot and a not-yet-defunct Borders). Waldbaum's (1510 Old Country Road) is next. Park in front of Waldbaum's and we will meet there to pack the cars.

My cell number is 516-660-7590. If you will be later than 9:45 at Waldbaum's, please call me. And of course you can call me at home or on cell anytime for further information.

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RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

VOLUNTEERS FOR WILDLIFE (631) 423-0982

BIRD WALKS

Steve Schellenger

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

- Aug. 21 Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside
- Aug. 28 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Sep. 4 Labor Day Weekend — No Walk
- Sep. 11 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Sep. 18 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Sep. 25 Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and Lido Preserve afterwards)
- Oct. 2 Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)

OUR ANNUAL DINNER

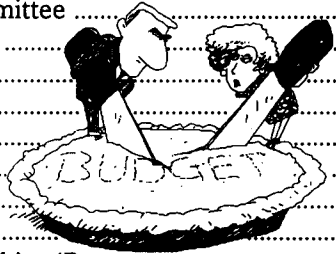
Kerry Da Silva

Thank you to everyone who attended and volunteered to make this year's annual dinner in June a success! Additionally, thank you to our generous donors:

- ⇒ American Littoral Society, Northeast Chapter ⇐
- ⇒ Atlantic Nursery ⇐
- ⇒ Audubon Mobile Field Guides, Green Mountain Digital ⇐
- ⇒ BirdWatching magazine ⇐
- ⇒ Betty & Richard Borowsky ⇐
- ⇒ Brasserie Persil ⇐
- ⇒ Gail & Jim Brown ⇐
- ⇒ Kerry Da Silva & Anthony Dalto, Jr. ⇐
- ⇒ Joanne Del Prete ⇐
- ⇒ Divine Right Acupuncture ⇐
- ⇒ Michael Farina ⇐
- ⇒ Denise & John Gaglione ⇐
- ⇒ Dolores & Joe Grupp ⇐
- ⇒ Marilyn Hametz ⇐
- ⇒ Janice M. Hughes (*Cranes: A Natural History of a Bird in Crisis*) ⇐
- ⇒ Iavarone Bros. ⇐
- ⇒ Lucy & Joe Landesberg ⇐
- ⇒ Madeline's Hair Salon ⇐
- ⇒ Wendy Murbach ⇐
- ⇒ Old Westbury Gardens ⇐
- ⇒ Panera Bread ⇐
- ⇒ Piccolo Ristorante ⇐
- ⇒ Angela & Jim Remsen ⇐
- ⇒ Elizabeth J. Rosenthal (*Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson; petersonbird.com*) ⇐
- ⇒ Mary Jane Russell ⇐
- ⇒ William G. Salon ⇐
- ⇒ Ellen Sandbeck (*Eat More Dirt: Diverting and Instructive Tips for Growing and Tending an Organic Garden*) ⇐
- ⇒ Don Temple ⇐
- ⇒ Marguerite & Robert Thornell ⇐
- ⇒ John Turner (*Exploring the Other Island: A Seasonal Guide to Nature on Long Island*) ⇐
- ⇒ Zenith Innovation (effortlessbirdfeeder.com) ⇐

BUDGET 2011-2012

Annual Dinner	\$2,800
Bank Fees	\$50
Brookside Preserve	\$100
College Scholarships	\$1,500
Conferences	\$1,200
Conservation	\$100
Donations	\$200
Education	\$700
Festivals	\$500
Greening of Long Island	\$2,000
High School Scholarships	\$1,000
Insurance	\$2,500
Library	\$1,500
Membership Committee	\$200
Membership Dues	\$50
Miscellaneous	\$200
Office Expenses	\$700
Publicity	\$350
Refreshments	\$310
Skimmer	\$6,200
Speakers	\$1,000
TR Camp Scholarships/Bus	\$5,000
Total	\$28,160



SEAHORSE LEGISLATION SIGNED

On June 22, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation that was endorsed a year ago by the Long Island Audubon Council (consisting of LI's seven Audubon chapters) after being brought to our attention by Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society's John Turner. According to global wildlife trade monitoring group TRAFFIC, more than 20 million seahorses are collected each year, causing some seahorse populations to crash by 50 percent over the last five years.

A..2439/S.2324 was introduced by Assemblyman Steve Englebright and Senator Ken LaValle of Suffolk County. It prohibits the taking of the northern or lined seahorse for commercial purposes. The justification for the bill (as posted on the Assembly's website) was as follows:

An unregulated harvest and pet trade currently exists in seahorses. The northern seahorse is traded for use as aquarium fish, ornamental displays, curios, and traditional Chinese medicine.

Long Island's south shore estuaries provide habitat to the northern or lined seahorse (*Hippocampus erectus*) during the warmer months of the year. The northern seahorse can be common in the Great South and Moriches Bays during the summer, where it concentrates in vegetated areas like eelgrass beds, but is apparently absent or very rare in the winter. It also appears to be absent from other estuaries surrounding Long Island. It is thought that this species undergoes seasonal movements in which it moves into shallow coastal waters as they warm and then migrates offshore during the winter months.

Seahorse behavior is characterized by monogamous pairing and fidelity to narrow home ranges amongst all species studied. Being slow-moving or attached to eelgrass with their prehensile tails, northern seahorses can be easily captured by sweeping through eelgrass beds with seine nets. Seahorses are very difficult to keep alive in captivity. Little is known about their overall abundance or population trends, so it is unclear whether they can sustain the level of harvest to which they are currently being subjected. Any harvesting should only be for scientific or educational purposes.



GREENING LEVY

Therese Lucas

This past June, SSAS donated more than 40 plantings to the Norman J. Levy Preserve in Merrick as part of its Greening of Long Island program. Only plants native to our area are included in the donations. Preserve personnel chose a variety of rhododendrons and azaleas. The plants have been dispersed throughout the preserve. You can enjoy them during our bird walks there or whenever you are able to visit, if you have not already done so. Directions to the preserve are included on the Directions page of ssaudubon.org.

BE PART OF "FOR THE BIRDS"

Marilyn Hametz

The Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay, with a grant from the Helmsley Foundation, is bringing a wonderful program to elementary students in the Hempstead, Roosevelt, and Westbury school districts.

Audubon New York's "For the Birds" is an education program that teaches environmental awareness, science, and appreciation of nature through the study of birds. The eight weekly sessions include classroom lessons, field trips, a live bird program, and participation in a habitat improvement project. The program sessions are led by staff educators with the help of volunteers.



This is a great volunteering opportunity for anyone, with or without birding expertise, who enjoys working with children. For further information about the project or volunteering, contact me at 799-7189 or Richard Santangelo, the coordinator at TR Sanctuary, at 922-3200.

SSAS IS NOW ON FACEBOOK.COM — LIKE US!

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

ANOTHER BROOKLYN WATER WORKS UPDATE

Michael Spelling

In the last *Skimmer* before our summer break, we reported that the latest proposal to develop the Brooklyn Water Works property on the southern border of SSAS-managed Brookside Preserve had been withdrawn by the developer on the day of a standing-room-only public meeting of the Landmark Preservation Commission in Freeport's Village Hall. At that meeting, nearly every speaker voiced concerns about the proposed building's size (said to be larger than any existing Freeport building), appearance, traffic, and/or environmental impact.

Hope remains that the 4.2-acre property will be acquired using unspent open space funds from Nassau County's 2006 Environmental Bond Act (as proposed years ago by SSAS), but a revised development proposal was shown at the Commission's July meeting. The new proposal calls for 121 apartments (instead of 127), a facade color that resembles that of the original Brooklyn Water Works building (dark red instead of beige), and a peak in front that is intended to resemble the shape of the original building. The six-story building would be 66 feet tall.

The new proposal can be viewed at the Commission's next meeting, on **Tuesday, August 23** at 7:30 P.M. in the Freeport Memorial Library. A formal hearing is tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, September 8** at Village Hall.

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.

26TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

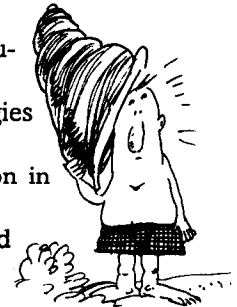
When: September 17, 2011 (mostly)

Where: Beaches of New York State, including Long Island Sound, the Hudson River, Atlantic Ocean, and the Great Lakes, Finger Lakes, and creeks and bays.

Who: You and thousands of other volunteers, led by Beach Captains from local environmental groups, schools, scout leaders, corporate public service directors, divers, civic associations, etc.

Why:

- To clean the beaches and document what litters our shores
- To compile data to devise strategies to combat pollution
- To increase public participation in solving the problem of pollution
- To increase public awareness and appreciation of the coastal environment



In 2010, 9,235 volunteers, coordinated by the American Littoral Society, cleaned and documented 186,582 pounds of debris along 397.5 miles of New York State's shoreline.

For a growing list of 2011's cleanup sites, visit www.alsnyc.org. As of when your editor was typing this, the first four sites for our area were posted: Woodmere Bay, Long Beach, Wantagh Park, and Zach's Bay.

To organize a cleanup in a location that isn't posted, contact the NY State Beach Cleanup Coordinator, Natalie Grant, at alsbeach@nyc.rr.com; 26A West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; or (718) 474-2643.

NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306



Explore the coast
with the

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

6TH ANNUAL JAMAICA BAY SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL

(Sat., Aug. 27, 7 A.M. – 5 P.M.). Meet at refuge visitor center for hike around the East Pond. Digital slide presentations before & after lunch. Afternoon hike around the West Pond. Leaders: Andrew Baksh, Tom Burke, Kevin Karlson, Don Riepe, Lloyd Spitalnik, Shane Blodgett, et al. Contact Don to reserve. Free!

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE (Sun., Sept. 25, 4–7 P.M.). Learn about the history, ecology, and wildlife of the bay aboard the 100 ft. boat "Golden Sunshine" leaving from Sheepshead Bay. See migrating raptors, egrets, herons, peregrine falcon, osprey, oystercatcher, terns, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Cost: \$45 incl. narrated tour, wine & cheese, drink, fruit, snacks.

NYC AUDUBON RAPTOR MIGRATION WALK (Sun., Oct. 9, 10 A.M. – 1 P.M.). Meet at Bldg. 1, Fort Tilden for a hike along the trails. Visit the hawk watch platform high up on the top of Battery Harris East Bunker. Enjoy a great view of the ocean and NYC harbor, and see sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, kestrel, merlin, peregrine, osprey, and maybe a bald eagle. Contact Don to reserve. Free!

ASSATEAGUE NATIONAL SEASHORE/CHINCOTEAGUE REFUGE WEEKEND (Nov. 3–6). Great birding and wildlife!

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

Phone: (516) 931-1445
Fax: (516) 931-1467
E-Mail: lgk1cpa@aol.com

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JAMAICA BAY SEWAGE AGREEMENT SIGNED

Editor's note: In February 2010, an agreement in principle was announced by four environmental organizations that had sued New York City regarding sewage being discharged into Jamaica Bay — Natural Resources Defense Council, NY/NJ Baykeeper, Jamaica Bay Eco-Watchers, and American Littoral Society. This past June 27, the final settlement was announced in the press release that is excerpted below:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announce the signing of two parallel agreements to significantly improve water quality and habitat in Jamaica Bay. The agreements continue several years of joint efforts to clean up the bay by DEP and DEC, with the active participation of a civic and environmental coalition, including the Natural Resources Defense Council and Jamaica Bay Eco-Watchers, which were named in one of the legal settlements announced today.

The agreements require DEP to invest in heightened nitrogen treatment systems at four New York City wastewater treatment plants that discharge into the bay, at an estimated cost of \$100 million. DEP will also dedicate \$13 million in Environmental Benefit Projects (EBPs) and \$2 million to restore marsh island habitat in this nationally prominent ecosystem.

The agreements also require New York City to adhere to a schedule for plant treatment upgrades, and provide for the civic and environmental coalition's continued involvement in the cleanup. The agreement between DEC and DEP also will keep on track the multiyear program to improve water quality in Long Island Sound through nitrogen treatment upgrades.

"Jamaica Bay and Long Island Sound are national treasures that have been harmed by nitrogen discharges that cause algae blooms, low dissolved oxygen levels, and impaired water quality," said DEC Commissioner Joe Martens. "This agreement will be the turning point where the bay is placed squarely on the path to recovery. Thanks to our strong partnership with Commissioner [Caswell F.] Holloway and the DEP team, and the support of Attorney General [Eric T.] Schneiderman, we're able to give the citizens of New York the water quality and the water environment they deserve."

"The signing of this historic agreement will benefit generations of New Yorkers and millions of tourists who want to enjoy one of New York City's hidden gems," said New York City Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway [who became Deputy Mayor in August]. "And we have not waited for the drafting to be complete to get to work. We are already removing roughly 8,000 pounds more of nitrogen per day than would be the case without this agreement; when it is fully implemented, we will have cut nitrogen discharges from our treatment plants by at least 50%."

Don Riepe, Jamaica Bay Guardian, American Littoral Society, said, "Jamaica Bay has been designated as Critical Fish & Wildlife Habitat by NYSDEC and an Important Bird Area by National Audubon. This agreement will greatly improve water quality and enhance habitat by reducing the amount of nitrogen coming into the bay, which we believe is a probable major source of marsh dieback."

The bay is a diverse ecological treasure that supports multiple habitats, including open water, salt marshes, grasslands, coastal woodlands, maritime shrub lands, and brackish and freshwater wetlands. These habitats support nearly 100 fish species, 325 species of birds, and many reptile, amphibian, and mammal species. Over the past several decades, Jamaica Bay's marsh island habitats have been disintegrating at an accelerated rate.

Excess nutrient nitrogen in salt water systems is a major cause of algae growth and associated low oxygen conditions that can cause fish kills, wetland habitat decay, odors, and bio-slimes — sometimes referred to as a nitrogen "dead zone." These conditions often impact both Jamaica Bay and Long Island Sound during warmer weather. Ninety percent of the nitrogen going into the bay comes from municipal sewage treatment plants.

Highlights of the modified Nitrogen Judgment include:

- By 2020, New York City will have completed upgrades to its four wastewater treatment facilities that discharge to Jamaica Bay. The agreement contains both a schedule of major milestones and limits that the treatment plants will meet. The upgrades will reduce the amount of nitrogen discharged to the bay daily by approximately 20,000 pounds, which equals approximately 50% of the nitrogen entering the bay.

- New York City will establish a \$13 million environmental benefit fund to support planned and future U.S. Army Corps of Engineers salt marsh wetland restoration projects. In addition, \$2 million will be paid to DEC's Marine Resources Account.

- In anticipation of the agreement, DEP has already prepared and submitted, in conjunction with DEC, a request that EPA designate Jamaica Bay as a marine "No Discharge Zone." If approved by EPA, boat operators would be prohibited from dumping the contents of their sewage holding tanks into the bay.



On the heels of efforts to strip EPA of its authority to regulate air pollution, the House has now turned its sights on the Clean Water Act. A new bill, H.R. 2018, would hamstring the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to enforce key elements of the Clean Water Act, threatening national ecological treasures like the Florida Everglades and Long Island Sound. H.R. 2018 was fast-tracked through committee—next stop for this bill is the House floor.

Because of Florida's failure, in recent years federal courts have instructed the Environmental Protection Agency to take a greater role in enforcing the Everglades water quality standards. H.R. 2018, the Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act, would strip the EPA of its essential ability to step in when a state has failed. If the bill passes, there will be no one to ensure that Florida's water is free of harmful pollution.

Another globally significant ecosystem, Long Island Sound, provides critical habitat for an extraordinary array of birds, fish, and other wildlife, all while contributing more than \$8 billion to the Northeast's regional economy annually. The quality of its waters and marine environment impacts more Americans than any other estuary in the United States. Due to its environmental and economic significance, in 1985 the Sound was one of the first four estuaries recognized under the National Estuary Program. Yet, H.R. 2018 would prevent ongoing efforts to treat human waste and other pollution that threaten Long Island Sound. [This bill passed 239–184.]

Conservation funding for the lands and wildlife that we hold dear has been slashed to the bone in the sorely misguided House spending bill that funds natural resource programs. Conservation programs targeted by this bill, H.R. 2584, protect our National Parks, Refuges, and other wildlife areas. The cuts run the gamut, but among the most alarming are dramatic reductions to State and Tribal Wildlife Grants and the complete elimination of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants face a nearly 65% reduction under this bill. These grants help keep wildlife off the endangered species list through state-based conservation programs. The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is a small-dollar program that has huge benefits for migratory species, with a proven track record of reversing habitat loss and advancing conservation strategies for songbirds and other migratory species.

But wait, there's more — the "Extinction Rider" to this bill is the most sweeping attempt in recent history to gut the Endangered Species Act, paralyzing our nation's ability to protect hundreds of imperiled species. The rider prevents the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service from spending any money to implement some of the most crucial sections of the Endangered Species Act, jeopardizing America's natural heritage for all future generations.

We won one! We scored a major victory when the House removed anti-endangered species language from H.R.

2584, a major conservation funding bill on the House floor. By a vote of 224 to 202, members of Congress from both parties rejected a misguided attempt to weaken the Endangered Species Act. This bipartisan vote draws a clear line in the sand that pushing species to extinction will not become the new law of the land.

It now appears that this terrible bill, which governs programs on public lands like National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks as well as the EPA, and funds divisions of the Interior Department like the Fish and Wildlife Service, will see a hiatus until Congress returns after the August recess, September 6. Even then, this stand-alone appropriations bill may still be rolled into a larger omnibus effort. Please be aware that we will need your support to fight back this threat to the environment and our shared conservation values.

Spending cuts tied to raising the debt ceiling will likely have a strong ripple effect on environmental programs throughout the coming decade, according to the *National Journal*. Details are obviously sketchy, but energy and environment programs, energy research, and land and water conservation funds will feel deep cuts as legislators look to meet deficit targets. The one bit of good news in this morass of bad is that the 45-cents-per-gallon subsidy for ethanol and the \$4 billion in annual tax breaks given to the oil industry may see the chopping block as well.

In the midst of budget cuts, anti-environment legislative attacks, and continued inaction on climate change, the worldwide effort to chart a smarter environmental future continues on September 24 during the Moving Planet day of action. It's a single day to move away from fossil fuels and demand climate solutions. Find out about events in your community or register one of your own at www.moving-planet.org.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUOTATIONS

Editor's note: Here are a couple of federal budget quotations from *A Dictionary of Environmental Quotations*, compiled by Barbara K. Rodes and Rice Odell (published by Simon & Schuster, copyright 1992):

"I will err on the side of public use versus preservation. We will use the budget system to be the excuse to make major policy decisions." — James C. Watt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, on management of the National Parks, speech, conference of National Park concessioners, 28 March 1981

"President Nixon deserves praise for giving an unprecedented emphasis to the environmental needs of the



country. But if the country is really to 'make peace with nature,' as he wisely counsels, he will have to demand for the purpose, in far greater quantities than he has yet suggested, the chlorophyll of good green cash." — *New York Times*, editorial, 11 February 1970

