NEXT MEETING

John Gagliano

DATE: Tuesday, October 9, 2012
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
144 W. Merrick Rd. [at S. Ocean Ave.]

TOPIC: Birders: The Central Park Effect

After our usual coffee break, this month's meeting will feature the Home Box Office documentary “Birders: The Central Park Effect,” which first aired on HBO in July. For SSAS members who have participated in our annual Central Park walks and/or attended the two recent annual dinners at which he and the late Elliott Kutner were honored, one of the prominently featured birders will be a familiar face, voice, and personality—that of Manhattan resident Chris Cooper, who has led us in Central Park since 2003. Lloyd Spitalnik, who, like Chris, traces his birding roots to SSAS walks led by Elliott (and for a few years was a co-leader for us in Central Park) is also interviewed in the film.

The documentary has lots of great footage of birds in the Park. According to HBO, the film devotes “equal time and affection to birds and birders...telling a story of humanity, nature, and the precarious balance between the two.” You can access a preview, bird slides, and a downloadable birders’ brochure at http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/birders-the-central-park-effect/index.html. Join us!

Pre-Meeting Program on Birds. Starting at 7 p.m. most months, Scott Oglesby expands our birding horizons in the room beyond our coffee-break tables. Topic suggestions for future talks are welcome.

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS.

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 gas station that borders Sunrise Highway.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Goals and Optimism

Jim Brown

In last month’s column I wrote of many of our chapter’s accomplishments and goals. One goal, the County’s purchase of the Brooklyn Water Works property adjoining Brookside Preserve, reached a happy conclusion with approval of the deal by the Nassau County Interim Finance Authority (NIFA). A more-detailed discussion of this important issue appears inside this newsletter, but I wish here to congratulate and thank all South Shore Audubon members and our friends who worked so diligently and hard over the years to make this open-space purchase a reality. The optimism I voiced last month on this issue was indeed vindicated and fulfilled by NIFA’s pre-Labor Day action.

Another goal we have been working on has been the banning of hydrofracking in New York State. We have not been dealing with this particular issue as long as we have worked preserving the Brooklyn Water Works parcel, but we have been addressing it ever since fracking became a threat to our state. Many of you attended our presentation of the movie Gasland. Chapter members have made phone calls and written letters to public officials, registered comments with the DEC, and have even demonstrated in front of legislative offices—all this being done to protect the people, wildlife, and habitat of New York State from the harmful effects of hydraulic fracturing.

By the time you read this column, events surrounding the whole issue of fracking might well have moved the trajectory of this issue along substantially. SSAS members will have again been taking action to realize this goal of our environmental agenda. Hopefully my cautious optimism on this issue will not
prove to be ill-founded, and that like the purchase of Water Works, we will achieve our desire to see a statewide ban of hydrofracking.

Hydrofracking is a huge problem, linked to direct environmental degradation and to increased greenhouse gas production, global warming, sea level rise, and severe and rapid climate change. A critical goal — indeed the most critical mission — of the environmental community is to tackle these issues tied to our dependence on fossil fuels. The fossil fuel industry has spent huge sums of money to downplay the importance of their profitable, nonrenewable products to global warming. Large corporations and their lavishly sponsored think-tanks have engaged in campaigns of attacking the solid science that repeatedly and conclusively demonstrates the human causes of global warming. Climate change denial and the continued overuse of fossil fuels have been heavily propagandized and financed. Environmentalists, including Audubon members, with our available resources and through our own committed actions, have been attempting to counter these threats to environmental sanity, through education and public action, disseminating the scientific evidence that is becoming clearer day by day. We must wear ourselves, and quickly, from fossil fuels, whether gas, coal or oil, and whether these fuels come from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, West Virginia mountaintops, or the Marcellus shale region of our own state.

Banning hydrofracking in our state is an important goal we are pursuing, as we work closely with many other organizations and individuals engaged in this campaign. Again, I remain hopeful as I was in the case of the Water Works project. A victory here would obviously not solve all the problems related to global warming, but it would add to the solution. Prohibiting fracking in New York would certainly help protect important watersheds, habitat, and wildlife upstate, as it would protect residents’ health. Stay tuned for action alerts that may be announced at meetings and on our electronic media and listserv — this fall is a critical time for this important issue. Let’s remain optimistic, and may we indeed be successful and send the gas companies packing!

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AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssa2_list

NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306

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.
**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 (third Tuesday this February) 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:

Baldwin .................. Carole Ryan
Belmore .................. Maria Gould
Glen Oaks ................. David Coopersmith
Hempstead ............... April Schachtel
Hicksville ............... Karen Andreone
Levittown ............... Doris Gerds, Gil Goff
Lynbrook ................. Jean O’Regan, Dawn Taylor
Massapequa ............. Eleanor Fay, Joyce Wells
Rockville Centre ....... Patricia Sachs
Valley Stream .......... Mary Berman
Wantagh .................. Robert Spicer

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**PIPE LEAKING AT JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE**

*Editor’s note:* The following consists of most of an alert on the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers’ Web site (http://jamaicabayecowatchers.org), followed by excerpts from “Busted Pipe Ruining Broad Channel Lakes” by Queens Chronicle Associate Editor Domenick Rafter (originally posted at www.qchron.com on August 30 and updated a week later).

The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge has often been called the crown jewel of [Gateway National Recreation Area] and the reason for this is the two freshwater ponds that the visionary Robert Moses had built over 50 years ago. The West Pond is extremely accessible to visitors with the walking trail that rings its perimeter and provides stunning views of the many varied bird species that are drawn to its fresh water supply, as well as breathtaking scenes of the Bay’s wetlands with the Manhattan skyscrapers as a backdrop. This irreplaceable resource is now threatened. The drain pipe for the Pond ruptured this winter. The Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers were the first to note and report this. The pipe remained broken for a few weeks and in that time the salt water of the Bay filled the Pond to the point where the salinity rate of the Pond is the same as the Bay — in effect eliminating it as a fresh water source for the thousands of shore and migratory birds. At this time, the National Park Service has no funding to correct this situation and the Ecowatchers are asking concerned residents to call Senators Schumer and Gillibrand’s offices to request assistance. [Contact info is available at ssaudubon.org,]

A broken pipeline and valve system that was built over half a century ago is causing salt water from Jamaica Bay to seep into the two freshwater ponds: 45-acre West Pond and East Pond, which is more than twice as large. West Pond is nearly entirely salinated, sharing the same salt content level as Jamaica Bay, and freshwater birds have stopped breeding there, said Don Riepe, president of the Northeast Chapter of the American Littoral Society and a resident of Broad Channel. East Pond is also at risk.

Riepe said he and other environmental groups like the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers have been lobbying the National Park Service, which oversees the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, to provide funding for reconstruction of the pipe and valve system. “We’ve been pushing them to do something about it,” Riepe said.

In a statement, the National Park Service acknowledged that the federal agency does not have the funds to fix the pipe, but has been working to maintain the existing broken system. “Although funding to fully fix the pipeline is not yet available, routine maintenance will help maintain the original system so that birds and birders alike can continue to enjoy the ponds,” the statement said.

The estimate for the cost of a new pipeline is around $1 million. The Ponds were constructed over 50 years ago and were the basis for the wildlife refuge envisioned by Robert Moses, who forced the city to build the two Ponds as mitigation in order to construct a new A-train viaduct over Jamaica Bay. The subway line now runs only steps from East Pond.

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ANOTHER BROOKLYN WATER WORKS UPDATE
Michael Spelling

Those of you who participate in SSAS’s e-list or view its messages on our Yahoo Group’s pages were notified about a hastily scheduled press conference led by Brooklyn Water Works owner Gary Melius and Freeport Mayor Andrew Hardwick. The press conference took place on August 29, with SSAS’s Rich Kopscno, who co-chairs the Brookside Preserve committee, also speaking. The reason for the press conference was concern that the Nassau County Interim Finance Authority (NIFA), which was meeting the next day, was going to vote to reject the County’s purchase of the property using unspent (and therefore yet to be bonded) open-space funds from the voter-approved 2006 Environmental Bond Act.

Our e-list was also used to urge chapter members to attend the NIFA meeting. Jim Brown posted a letter he sent to NIFA, explaining the rationale for preservation of the 4.2-acre Brooklyn Water Works property, which is located in Freeport and Baldwin, on the southern border of chapter-managed Brookside Preserve.

The NIFA directors’ vote was two in favor of rejection (including the chair), two opposed, with one abstention, which under NIFA’s bylaws is great news because a minimum of four “wrong” votes are needed for a rejection (two directors’ seats are currently vacant).

JERRY BISHOP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED TO TWO OUTSTANDING STUDENTS
Betsy Barowsky

An important part of the mission of the South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education. One way we do this is by awarding scholarships to college and graduate school students who are studying the environment.

Each year Evelyn Bishop funds two $750.00 scholarships for this purpose, in memory of her husband Jerry, who loved nature and birding. This year the Scholarship Committee, chaired by Betsy Barowsky, received seven outstanding applications, making it difficult to select just two. But in the end, the Committee awarded the funds last June to Jordan Hollarsmith and Shawn Billerman.

Jordan graduated from Columbia University, majoring in environmental biology, with a 4.0 in sciences, and a 3.74 GPA overall. She requested the funds to pay for a trip to the International Coral Reef Symposium in Cairns, Australia this summer, to present the findings of her senior research project involving methods used in the restoration of reefs damaged by vessel groundings.

Shawn is a Ph.D. student in ecology at the University of Wyoming. He expects to obtain his degree in 2016, and his current GPA is 4.0. Shawn requested funds to help support his field research this summer, when he planned to collect the bulk of the data for his Ph.D. thesis. This involved collecting morphological and genetic information about the Red-naped and Red-breasted Sapsuckers in the hybrid zone in California and Oregon. His broader goal is to shed light on methods of evolution of reproductive isolation and speciation, but specifically he is interested in what influences individuals of these two woodpeckers to hybridize where they coexist.

We sincerely thank Evelyn for her continuing kindness and generosity; we are very grateful to be able to support students who plan to have a career in environmental studies, because it’s another way for us to continue to the preservation of the environment in the future.

SAVING DIAMONDBACK TERRAPINS
Russell Burke

SSAS members: You probably know about my long-term (since 1999) research on the terrapins of Jamaica Bay. We have made incredible progress and learned a huge amount. But the next step is to learn more about what terrapins are doing when they’re not on land; we need to know what they’re doing in the water. As part of the overall research, I have an exciting project which unfortunately until now I have not been able to get funded. I am now working with a group called iAMscientist that is dedicated to accelerating these kinds of discoveries. iAMscientist provides the financial and marketing platform for scientific projects to be funded through a peer-to-peer system called crowdfunding. Crowdfunding allows anyone to donate any amount of money to support scientific projects.

I’ve posted my new project on their site and it is located at www.iamscientist.com/projects/80-Saving-Diamback-Terrapins-with-New-Technology. I’ve added some rewards to encourage and thank my supporters, so please click on the link and have a look. It goes without saying I appreciate your support. I will definitely reciprocate!

Editor’s note: Dr. Russell Burke is a biology professor at Hofstra University whose most recent programs at our general meetings were “Italian Lizards Invade North America” and “Diamondback Terrapins of Jamaica Bay.”

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

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Port Washington, NY 11050
(516) 627-0600
Fax (516) 627-8504
SWSGARAGEDOORS@GMAIL.COM

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NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER

A New Bird But Only Half a Species

Joe Grupp

We felt pretty good about our day as we pulled into the parking area at the Calcite Spring Overlook in Yellowstone National Park. It was mid-afternoon on a fairly warm day and we had already had some excellent views of some of the Park’s animals since starting out on our in-and-out-of-the-car adventure early in the morning. Our list for the day included bison, elk, pronghorn, coyote, badger (pictured), and bighorn sheep, and all were observed relatively close and in dramatic settings.

The Calcite Springs Overlook edges a gorge that has been carved out by the Yellowstone River, which is well below the overlook. A boardwalk-type trail follows the edge of the gorge for a relatively short distance, then loops around away from the gorge edge, passing through a wooded area back to the parking lot.

Just as we pulled into the parking area, a mule deer, with its big ears and ropy tail, walked out of the woods and across the dirt trail leading to the overlook. The overlook is a popular spot and trailwalkers had to stop to allow the animal to move across the trail. It was another animal to add to our list.

Looking down over the edge of the trail into the gorge, we saw the Yellowstone River below. Its color was a greenish blue, with areas of white froth where it flowed through rapids. At one point along the far shore there was a pile of long, straight, narrow, weathered, branchless tree trunks which were trapped randomly in a pile that looked small, from our elevation well above the river, but must have been monstrous in size. The sides of the gorge are a very light yellowish tan, and have a few trees scattered in places or more concentrated in spots. Parts of the steep-sided gorge are even bare. Across the gorge, the land is capped by a narrow band of adjacent rock columns, the result of a lava flow that occurred many years ago. It is a nice scenic spot, one of many in Yellowstone National Park.

As we rounded the bend where the trail entered the woods, heading back to the cars, I caught a glimpse of a bird that flew into a rather thick-trunked pine tree. The light was dull under the trees, duller yet on the trunk and fairly heavy branch where the bird seemed to land. I dodged a few people on this popular trail and got in a position to better view the area where the bird had landed. Through my binoculars and with some difficulty I was able to find the bird when it finally showed itself as it worked the side of the tree as woodpeckers do. Seeing its details in the dull light was made more difficult by the rather dull colors of the bird itself. Persistence of observation finally paid off when the bird moved to a more brightly lighted tree.

It was a dull blackish brown in color. its back narrowly barred in that color and white. The head was dull brown. The belly was washed in a dull yellow. The breast had a dull black mark across it, more a concentration of blackish brown color than a distinct mark. Standing there as people occasionally flowed around me and even unintentionally lightly jostled me, I knew that I was looking at a bird whose species I had never seen before. Having left my western field guide in the car, I had no idea what the name of that species was.

Our next stop was a short ride away at Tower Falls, which I consider a great stop for three reasons. One, the overall view is pleasant there, just a nice place to take a break. Two, it is just a short walk to an overlook where you can look down on the impressive Tower Falls. Three, there is a store there where if you are patient enough to wait in line, you can buy an ice cream cone or cup. It was time to be refreshed that warm afternoon and buy ice cream is exactly what we did.

While enjoying our ice cream break, I turned to the woodpecker section of the field guide that I had brought from the car and found my new bird to be a female Williamson’s Sapsucker. I also found it to be a much different looking bird than the male of the species. The male has a deep black back and wings, a yellow belly, a large white showy wing patch, and other distinct marks all lacking in the female. The vast difference in markings of male and female is uncommon among woodpeckers, where most males and females differ only in more subtle markings. Later at home I found that in the mid-1800s the male and female Williamson’s were thought to be two separate species of birds and were given individual names. The male was then known as the Williamson’s Sapsucker and the female as the Black-breasted Sapsucker. Even while sitting eating that ice cream in Yellowstone, I knew that I definitely had seen a new bird but also only half a new species.

Volunteers for Wildlife (516) 674-0982

Our Web Site (incl. online store) www.ssaudubon.org

Save the Dates

Marilyn Hamelz

On Saturday, December 8, South Shore Audubon will have its annual Holiday Party for Children at the Tackapausha Museum in Seafood. If you would like to help with activities, refreshments, or setup, please contact me at 799-7189 or Marilynexpl@yahoo.com.

Tackapausha Museum’s current hours are Thursday through Sunday from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. Two special Saturday programs in October at 1 P.M. will be Birds of Prey Day on October 6 and Nocturnal Animals on October 27. Also, SSAS’s weekly bird walk will be at Tackapausha on October 14.
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.

Sep. 23 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Sep. 30 Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside
Oct. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Oct. 14 Tackapausha Museum and Preserve
Oct. 21 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Oct. 28 Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
Nov. 4 Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and maybe Lido Preserve afterwards)
Nov. 11 Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)
Nov. 18 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 25 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Dec. 2 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner

PLAN AHEAD
Therese Lucas

The best way to plan ahead is to jot things down on your calendar. And the best calendar to use, of course, is one from Audubon!

There will be an assortment of Audubon calendars available for sale at a reduced rate of $9.00 each for our members beginning at our October 9 general meeting. Thereafter, they will be available at Sunday bird walks and other general meetings as the supply lasts. The assortment will include World of Trees, Wildflowers, Nature, National Parks, Songbirds, and Butterflies.

L.I. DRINKING WATER HEARING SCHEDULED

Nassau County Legislator Judi Bosworth of Great Neck and Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer of Centerport have teamed up to host public hearings on how to "protect and secure" Long Island's water supply.

The information in the last three paragraphs was taken from a press release issued on August 31 by Dr. Spencer (a pediatric surgeon) after the first hearing took place in Suffolk. The next one is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 2** from 6 to 8 p.m. in New Hyde Park, at Clinton G. Martin Park, 1601 Marcus Avenue, at the corner of New Hyde Park Road. A third hearing will be scheduled if needed. The objectives of the first hearing were as follows:

* Pursuing how to safeguard our water supply from pollution, overuse, saltwater contamination, and other threats.
* Presenting expert testimony regarding aquifer threats and conditions.

* Seeking to address the concerns of the public at-large.
* Focusing on the need to increase water protection through public discourse.

"It is important now, more than ever, for Long Island to come together to find a solution to this concerning issue," says Legislator Spencer. "Salt water, pollution, and other factors are contaminating the water we obtain from the aquifer every day and we cannot let any more time pass. Action must be taken now to establish a serious management plan to ensure the future of this essential natural resource!"

Because the quality of Long Island drinking water has decreased substantially over the past few years, everyone agrees that action is necessary to protect and prevent the aquifers from future contamination, saltwater intrusion, and overuse. Issues brought up [at the first hearing] included pharmaceutical contamination, U.S. Geological Survey monitoring, existing plumes that have rendered some wells useless, and a potential new power plant proposed, among others. A report will be issued jointly by the Legislators by the end of the year to recap the issues and recommended solutions.

Those interested in listening to the audio recording of the meeting should call our office. A Web page is being developed with the link to the recorded meeting. For further information or if you have questions, please call (516) 854-4500.

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

**HAWK WATCH AT FORT TILDEN** (Sun., Oct. 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Meet at Bldg. 1 in Fort Tilden, Queens for a hike along the beach & dunes and visit to the hawk watch platform during peak migration time. Great views of NYC Harbor, ocean, and bay. Contact Don to reserve. Free.

**ASSATEAGUE SEASHORE — CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE** (Nov. 1-4). A weekend of great wildlife viewing along the Delmarva Peninsula. Visit Cypress Swamp and Bombay Hook Refuge on the way home. Cost: $395/person includes 3 nights lodging, guided hikes, Safari Bus Tour of refuge backwater area, seafood dinner on Saturday night (all the oysters you can eat), plus a visit to a cypress swamp and Bombay Hook Refuge. Please send deposit of $100 to NYC Audubon, 71 W. 23rd St., Ste. 1528, New York, NY 10010. Car pooling.

**NATURAL HISTORY OF LONG ISLAND CONFERENCE** (Fri., Nov. 18, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.). A full day of speakers on various natural history topics and concerns to be held at Brookhaven National Laboratory plus many field trips held on Sat., Nov. 19. Contact Don for info.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 319-9344, donniepe@gmail.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alany.org.
SSAS BACKYARD BIRD SURVEY

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.

To participate, simply record the birds that you see in your yard, neighborhood, or at your feeder; the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species; and fill in the table provided below. If you have more recordings than lines in the table, please attach an additional piece of paper to the table and submit the additional recordings in the same manner. 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. Additional survey sheets are available at SSAS events.

Please do not hesitate to submit your observations, even if you have been able to make only very few. WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

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Submitted by: ________________________
Address: ____________________________
Phone number: ______________________

Please send to: Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson
660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale NY 11553
or
E-mail: Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com
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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 $20 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 by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS (we get $0 from your dues 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.

Recurring? Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS (we now get $0 for all NAS renewals).

Donations to SSAS are always welcome! $______

Yes, I'd like to join: ☐ SSAS only  ☐ National Audubon too

NAME: ____________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: _________________________________________________________

PHONE NO.: ______________________ (Zip+4)

E-MAIL: ___________________________________________________________

Chapter Code C2ZR1502 (South Shore Audubon Society)

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