

THOUGHTS, NEWS, AND OPINION FROM YOUR CONSERVATION CHAIR

Bird Conservation – Acting on Many Fronts

Jim Brown

Jonathan Franzen, noted writer and environmentalist, has recently written a very provocative article on climate change and conservation issues for the *New Yorker* magazine (“Carbon Capture: Has climate change made it harder for people to care about conservation?”; April 6, 2015). Franzen is active in his local Audubon societies, and his essay analyzes, in a critical but reasoned manner, National Audubon’s recent report on birds and climate change. Audubon’s report stated that climate change was “the greatest threat” to American birds and that “nearly half” of our avian species would be seriously threatened by 2080 due to habitat loss engendered by global warming. I recommend that everyone read both the National Audubon report (climate.audubon.org) and Franzen’s *New Yorker* article. Both are important statements about climate change and what we can do to further the important Audubon goal of bird conservation.

The *New Yorker* essay acknowledges the importance of global warming while also pointing to the general adaptive capabilities of birds. Adaptive abilities are a positive factor, but also important to bird conservation are the very real pressures on bird populations that are not linked to climate change, such as collisions with buildings and other manmade structures, and predation by outdoor cats. Franzen points out that over three billion American birds perish from collisions and cat predation each year. Other pressures on bird populations include lead ammunition used by hunters, habitat loss from deforestation and the expansion of monoculture farming, excessive real estate development, pesticides, etc. The threats to birds are indeed legion!



We must combat global warming and prepare for the results of climate change that we — and birds — currently and in the future will surely experience. We must also engage on other important fronts if we are to have a real impact on bird conservation. I urge you all to become involved in these conservation efforts — there are many to choose from! Jonathan Franzen has expressed our conservation mission very well: “To prevent extinctions in the future, it’s not enough to curb our carbon emissions. We also have to keep a whole lot of wild birds alive right now.”

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BACKYARD SURVEY DATA NEEDED!

Joe Grupp

For over a decade, 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.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2015-2016 BOARD

At South Shore Audubon Society’s general meeting on May 12, officers and directors will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee (chaired by Mike Sperling, with Jim & Gail Brown) recommends the following candidates: Betty Borowsky, president; Paul Stessel, vice president; Joe Landesberg, treasurer; Arlene Rawls, recording secretary; Therese Lucas, corresponding secretary; and Mary Colway and Anne Mehlinger, directors (for three-year terms).

Directors & Officers Insurance. In accordance with state law, this paragraph informs our members prior to the election that SSAS obtained D&O insurance for its board at an annual cost of \$842 via a one-year policy from Mount Vernon Fire Insurance Company that went into effect on November 17, 2014.

LONG ISLAND BIRD CONSERVATION MANAGER – APPLICATIONS WANTED

Audubon New York’s Long Island Bird Conservation program aims to better protect at-risk birds in New York, with the overall goal of reducing threats and stabilizing bird populations on Long Island, with an emphasis on coastal birds. The Long Island Bird Conservation Manager is part of the science department and leads Audubon New York’s bird conservation efforts here, including conservation, stewardship, and monitoring, and also assists with outreach and advocacy to reduce threats to priority bird species and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Interested candidates need to apply online at <http://careers-audubon.icims.com> (scroll to the location “US-NY-Oyster Bay”); questions can be directed to Jillian Liner (Director of Bird Conservation) at jliner@audubon.org.

WE'RE GOING TO SHU SWAMP

On **Saturday, May 23**, weather permitting, starting at 10 A.M., SSAS's Joanne Del Prete will be leading us through Shu Swamp, which is described in *New York's 50 Best Places to Go Birding (In and Around the Big Apple)* by John Thaxton, *Walks and Rambles on Long Island* by Alice M. Geffen & Carole Berglie, *Short Nature Walks on Long Island* by Rodney & Priscilla Albright, and *A Seasonal Guide to Bird Finding on Long Island* by Howard Barton 3rd & Patricia I. Pelkowski (in the section about spring).

The Charles T. Church Nature Sanctuary (its official name) is the jewel of the several properties owned and managed in the Mill Neck/Locust Valley area by the North Shore Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc. Tracing its origins back to 1929, the small but beautiful preserve features both wetlands and uplands, with most of the wildlife drawn there by the clear waters of Beaver Brook, which is



fed by many springs and seeps. Shu is an old Dutch word that means "cascading waters." It's a lovely place to walk, with a two-mile trail along a marshy estuary that is a habitat for nesting Great Horned Owls and Wood Ducks (pictured), mink (also pictured), muskrats, and brown trout. It's also home to evanescent spring flowers such as the trout lily, marsh marigold, dwarf



ginseng, and a rare shrub called hearts-a-bustin' that is found nowhere else in New York. A lengthy plant list can be found at www.nswildlifesanctuary.org/charles.html; we'll identify some of them while we're birding.

Directions. From Route 107, take Route 25A east to Wolver Hollow Road. Turn north to its end and turn right on Chicken Valley Road. Next, turn right in 1.6 miles on Frost Mill Road, which will seem to end at a stop sign at a T-shaped intersection. There, turn left (north) to continue on Frost Mill Road. The parking lot will be on the left, immediately before an LIRR overpass. There aren't any bathroom facilities; bring binoculars and insect repellent. Any questions? Contact Joanne at 433-0739 or jdelprete47@optonline.net.

BIRD PLANTINGS FOR YOUR BACKYARD

Plant trees and shrubs that offer food and protection for birds! Birds need a constant and varied food source, so plant a variety of early and late blooming flowering plants for a steady food supply. The plants will also attract insects for spring and fall migrants to feed on. Native species are better adapted to local soils and climates; they require less water, fertilizer, and pest control. Let plants grow naturally and create a controlled untidiness in your naturescape. For ideas, you can obtain the following books and others from Long Island's public libraries (search for the subject "gardening to attract birds" at <http://encore.alisweb.org>) or online bookstores (your editor recommends the search engine BookFinder.com).

➤ *Long Island Native Plants for Landscaping: A Source Book* by Karen Blumer (1990; long out-of-print but in many libraries; not specifically focused on birds)

➤ *Attracting Birds & Butterflies* by Barbara Ellis (1997)

➤ *Attracting Birds to Your Backyard* by Sally Roth (1998)

➤ *The Audubon Backyard Birdwatcher: Birdfeeders and Bird Gardens* by Robert Burton (1999)

➤ *The Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds* by Stephen W. Kress (2006) or his *The Bird Garden* (1995)

➤ *Backyard Birding: Using Natural Gardening to Attract Birds* by Julie Zickefoose and *Birdwatcher's Digest* (2011)

➤ *Backyards Are for the Birds* by Edward R. Ricciuti (1998)

➤ *Bird Gardens: Welcoming Wild Birds to Your Yard* by Brooklyn Botanic Garden (1998)

➤ *Birds in Your Backyard: A Bird-Lover's Guide to Creating a Garden Sanctuary* by Robert Dolezal and *Birds & Blooms* (2004)

➤ *Garden Secrets for Attracting Birds: A Bird-by-Bird Guide to Plants* by Rachael Lanicci (2010)

➤ *Gardening for Birds & Butterflies* by *Birds & Blooms* (2012)

➤ *Gardening for the Birds: How to Create a Bird-Friendly Backyard* by George Adams (2013; this is the fifth edition of his *Birdscaping Your Garden* from 1998)

➤ *Natural Gardening* by Jim Knopf et al. (1995)

➤ *Songbirds in Your Garden* by John K. Terres (1994)



Explore the coast
with the

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

HORSESHOE CRAB & SHOREBIRD WALK (Sat., May 23, noon to 2 P.M.). Meet at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and carpool to American Ball Field Beach Site to view annual mating ritual of the primordial horseshoe crab. Wear boots, bring binoculars. Kids welcome. To RSVP, contact Don.

JAMAICA BAY ECOLOGY CRUISE (Sat., May 30, 3 P.M. to 6 P.M.). Learn about the history, management, ecology, and wildlife of the bay aboard the 100' boat "Golden Sunshine" leaving from Pier 2, Sheepshead Bay. See nesting egrets, herons, ibis and many other species. Cost: \$55 includes narrated tour of backwater marshes, wine & cheese, fruit, snacks. With NYC Audubon & NYC Sierra Club. To purchase tickets visit <https://jamaicabayecologycruise.eventbrite.com>.

MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 5-7). Hike the "Walking Dunes," Lighthouse Beach, Montauk Bluffs, and Shadmoor State Park. Cost: \$395/person includes 2 nights lodging (double occ.), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, and a star watch. View full itinerary and purchase tickets at <https://spring-montaukweekend.eventbrite.com>.

CAPE ANN WHALE WATCH (Aug. 13-16)

JAMAICA BAY SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL (Sat., Aug. 29)

CHINCOTEAGUE REFUGE & ASSATEAGUE (Nov. 19-22)

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 474-0896, donriep@gmail.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.littoralsociety.org.

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SHOREBIRD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Audubon New York is looking for volunteer beach docents. Help us increase awareness of beach-nesting birds (such as Piping Plovers) while spending a day at the beach! Being a volunteer involves talking to beachgoers about beach-nesting birds, the importance of sharing the beach, and encouraging beachgoers to sign a "Share the Beach" pledge. It's also an opportunity to connect with people about birds and share what you know! Interested in volunteering for one of our scheduled beach days (listed below)? Please e-mail Laura McCarthy at lmccarthy@audubon.org.

- Lido Beach Town Park: May 24 & July 5*
- Point Lookout Town Park: May 25 & July 12*
- Jones Beach State Park: July 4 & 11*

Also: The Town of Hempstead's Department of Conservation and Waterways needs your help in ensuring the protection and survival of Piping Plovers, Least and Common Terns, and Black Skimmers that nest between Point Lookout and Atlantic Beach. Audubon volunteers will help prevent disturbances to nesting areas, will record the presence of plover chicks and any incidents of predation, and can give beachgoers educational literature pertaining to Piping Plovers and terns. Help is particularly needed on evenings, weekends, and holidays from May through August. If you're interested and are able to volunteer regularly, please contact SSAS member John Zarudsky, Conservation Biologist, at 486-5272.

Interested in Helping to Monitor Shorebirds? Audubon is participating in International Shorebird Surveys and is looking for volunteers to cover some of our survey routes. Submissions are made electronically through eBird's International Shorebird Survey portal (ISS eBird) using your regular account; it's a great way to help contribute data.

We're also encouraging birders to pay special attention to **shorebird legs** this season! Band and flag resightings are very important to shorebird managers, and help us learn a lot about migration patterns and survival. To learn more about the survey protocol, submitting data, and reporting band sightings, please e-mail Emma Carpenter (ecarpenter@audubon.org), who is one of SSAS's directors, for more information.

WHAT TO DO WITH DISPLACED YOUNG WILDLIFE

Most young wildlife that you come across are not orphaned. The parents are temporarily away finding food or are staying away to avoid attracting predators and will later return. If you are concerned that a bird or animal may be orphaned, watch from a distance for a while to see if the parents return. If you have to chase it, it doesn't need your help!

A nestling songbird is only partially feathered and cannot yet run, hop, or move about easily. It should be returned to the nest. If you can't find or reach the nest, make one from a berry box or strainer (something with drainage), line it with grasses, and secure it up in a tree close to where you found the bird. The parents will continue to feed it.



If you are certain a young songbird is orphaned, leave a message for Volunteers for Wildlife at 674-0982 for assistance and follow the emergency instructions at www.volunteersforwildlife.org.

**OUR FIFTEENTH ANNUAL
CENTRAL PARK WALK**

On **Saturday, May 2**, SSAS is planning to be in Central Park for our annual (weather permitting) early May bird walk. As usual, Chris Cooper (who was featured in HBO's 2012 documentary, "Birders: The Central Park Effect," and traces his birding roots to SSAS) has volunteered to lead us through the twisting, hilly 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 (excluding a dismal 31 in 2013). Last year we had 55 species, 15 of which were warblers.

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).

A group of us will be aboard the local Babylon line train that is due in Penn Station at 8:12; you can look for Joanne on the platform in Massapequa at 7:12 (only the western half is open, due to ongoing renovations). We aim 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. You can bring lunch, buy lunch in the park or elsewhere, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. Joanne's cell (476-3761) will be on that day only. Join us!

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

NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306
