

BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff

This month's book is where the "bird story" begins — in the nest! *Into the Nest: Intimate Views of the Courting, Parenting and Family Lives of Familiar Birds* by Laura Erickson and Marie Read, with support from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is an important companion to your field guide. It offers a rare glimpse into the breeding and nesting cycles of some of our most familiar birds — from raptors and hummingbirds to woodpeckers and wrens. Now Sy offers his opinion and review:

This book pretty much covers the topic in its subtitle. Part 1 examines the Facts of Bird Life (Courting and Mating, Enter the Egg, and Nesting and Parenting). This short beginning covers in exquisite very brief detail everything from the chicken to the egg and back. It is accompanied by lovely photographs illustrating the points discussed.

There is a complete discussion of precocial and altricial nestlings, and how they survive. This is the period when the newly hatched imprint on their mothers and why one should never pick up young birds. Just put them back in the nest or hide them in a close bush.

After the above, Part 2 proceeds to a detailed look of the life history of a representative of the bird families chosen. The first bird covered is a duck, the Mallard. I learned that when the male Mallard jumps on a female in the water, he's not defending territory or chasing the bird away. Mallards prefer to use the water rather than the land. It's hard to escape in the water. So far, no hen has complained to the authorities.



Twenty-five families are covered and in some cases more than one bird per family. All are familiar birds, from the Mallard to the American Goldfinch. The shorebirds are represented by the Killdeer; a logical choice since the bulk of shorebirds breed in the far Arctic. Almost all the land birds are familiar local breeders, including Mourning Doves, chickadees, House Wrens, bluebirds, and American Robins.

When two species are closely related and rear their young in similar fashion, they are treated together with any differences clearly noted. For example, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers both nest in cavities. The ins and outs of cavity nesting are explored and described.

Each bird is lavishly illustrated, from nest, eggs, newly hatched, feeding, to fledglings. The story stops at this point. Adults are not the thrust of this book. The pictures show aspects of bird life not often seen and then only in special cases such as this book.

Part 3 is a series of small maps showing the breeding, migrating, and winter range of the described species, so that you know where they are in case you want to look for them. Also included are nesting facts: clutch size, egg-shell color, broods per season, and a cross reference to the page number of the species' account.

This is a different kind of book, fully describing in detail an aspect of bird life and behavior not found elsewhere. You'll learn all about fidelity, who does the work of rearing the young, who defends the nest, and how the young cope and mature.

If you're a lister, "who cares?" But if you want to increase your knowledge of birds, this is an indispensable book.

R. U.'s conclusion: As Sy opines, this is an indispensable read! Enjoy!!

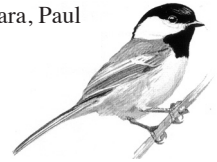


WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wendy Murbach

Our new members since the last *Skimmer* are:

- Bellmore..... Steven & Clare Cassara, Paul Tzinivis
- Elmont..... Laura Scheer
- Floral Park..... R. Snyder
- Franklin Square..... Karen Wright
- Freeport..... Irene J. Buszko
- Garden City..... Geraldine De Leo, Howard W. Isenberg
- Massapequa..... Helen Cرامي
- Plainview..... Loretta Rinaldo
- Seaford..... Cathy Lahm



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SSAS Post Office Statement — *South Shore Skimmer* is published monthly from September through December and February through May by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.



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“DRILL, BABY, DRILL!” – ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO GREATLY EXPAND OIL AND GAS DRILLING OFF ALL OUR COASTS

Jim Brown

The expression “Drill, baby, drill!” made famous by 2008 Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, became an infamous statement following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. This exhortation to drill for ever-increasing amounts of oil and gas is unfortunately still with us. BOEM (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management), the bureau of Ryan Zinke’s Interior Department responsible for energy leases in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), recently announced that the U.S. will be greatly expanding the number of fossil fuel leases off our coasts — all of them. Forty-seven lease sales are planned for the period 2019–2024, covering more than a billion acres, which amounts to 90% of all the land of our entire OCS. Nineteen lease sales are planned for Alaska. Six of these leases are planned for the Arctic Ocean’s Alaskan seas, the Beaufort and the Chukchi. Other sections of the country that have been exempted in past leasing programs — the Pacific coast, the Atlantic OCS — are now included. The waters surrounding Florida were originally included in the plan, but were withdrawn within days of the announcement — perhaps illegally — when the state’s Republican Governor and Trump ally Rick Scott complained. The huge chilling and audacious scope of this “2019–2014 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program” clearly shows that the current administration in Washington wants nothing more than to “drill, baby, drill!”

Environmental organizations have responded immediately to protest the far-reaching January 4th BOEM announcement. Some examples of the strong opposition: Greenpeace responded within hours of the announcement: “We need to fight this tooth and nail at every level of government, starting by flooding the Interior Department with public comments.” Surfrider Foundation urged people to “make sure our federal representatives oppose this terrible plan by flooding their phones and inboxes.” All Our Energy, a Long Island environmental advocacy organization, stated that “Apparently your ocean (yes, including the Atlantic) is being made great again for gas and oil drilling, spills, pollution and everything else that comes with it... We will be opposing this at every possible turn and will be joining with our allies to bring the public together to stop this.” The National Audubon Society stated in its own Action Alert that “Expanding lease sales to sensitive marine areas off the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific coasts threatens critical bird habitat as well as the economic viability of hundreds of coastal communities.”

Many governors of the targeted coastal states, Republican and Democratic, are also strongly opposed to the possibility of expanded drilling. Governor Cuomo has emailed New Yorkers a request to sign a petition to “Say No to Offshore Drilling off New York’s Coast”: “This

should outrage all New Yorkers. Our beautiful coastline is crucial to the state’s economy. What’s more outrageous is that Florida has been given an exemption from this offshore drilling decision after a bipartisan outcry. If Florida gets an exemption, then New York should too.”

The U.S. government is withdrawing from the Paris climate accord. Congress has passed (and Trump has signed) a tax bill that includes the opening up of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for fossil fuel drilling. And now this offshore drilling plan has been proposed, yet another potentially huge gift to the fossil fuel industry. The world is experiencing horrific impacts from global warming. Phenomena such as strong hurricanes, wildfires, floods, desertification, species endangerment, rising sea levels, loss of glacial ice, social unrest, immigration, and war are all linked to the climate crisis we are experiencing. To pursue a fossil fuel drilling program such as the one BOEM just announced is irresponsible. Added to its undeniable negative climate change impacts, expanded drilling also needlessly endangers our shorelines, wildlife, and coastal communities with the threat of accidents and spills.

All South Shore Audubon members and friends are urged to follow this important issue and to take action to combat this new misguided fossil fuel initiative as the industry attempts to move it forward.



At this time comments can be sent to BOEM, via the National Audubon Society, in opposition to their plan and in support of our imperiled environment:

https://act.audubon.org/onlineactions/e_Vm3cJ1d0WzmFBz_TQ2sA2.

Editor’s note: Last year, a coalition of conservation and Alaskan native groups filed a still-pending lawsuit in response to President Trump’s April 2017 executive order reversing the Obama Administration’s permanent protections for the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans from offshore drilling. See <https://earthjustice.org/cases/2017/challenging-trump-s-reversal-of-arctic-and-atlantic-drilling-ban> for details.



TACKAPAUSHA – WINTER AND SPRING

Marilyn Hametz

Many thanks to all the SSAS volunteers at the Tackapausha Children’s Holiday Party on Saturday, December 9: Kathi Berlin, Betty Borowsky, Gail and Jim Brown, Helen Buckley, Rich Kopsco, and Anne Mehlinger. In spite of snow falling, many children and adults attended and enjoyed the animals, crafts, museum, and snacks.

Beginning in the spring, we will be involved in a new project with Tackapausha. With a collaborative grant that South Shore Audubon was awarded from the National Audubon Society, new native plants will be added to the Tackapausha wildlife garden and publications encouraging the use of native plants in gardens will be distributed.

