

# SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 50, NUMBER 2 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2019



## NEXT MEETING

**DATE:** *Thursday*, October 10, 2019  
**REASON:** Tuesday Night Is Yom Kippur  
**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Freeport Memorial Library  
 144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)  
**SPEAKER:** Heff Stoppe  
**TOPIC:** Great Horned Owl Family at Hempstead Lake State Park

For our October meeting, Ray Savage (better known as Heff Stoppe — which plays on photography’s f-stop — on Facebook, Flickr, and Instagram) will be making his first appearance as SSAS’s guest speaker.

Ray is a computer network engineer and security specialist who has been a photography enthusiast for over 30 years, starting in his teens when his father gave him a Zenith film camera, which he “promptly destroyed by taking it apart.” His father recently informed him that the camera would have been worth around \$9000 today as a collectable.

Four years ago, Ray purchased an advanced DSLR (digital single-lens reflex camera) and a “decent” short lens, and started visiting local parks. While photographing landscapes and some ducks, he encountered a hawk but found his lens’ focal length wanting; his next purchase was a 400-mm zoom lens and he was “off and running with the bird photography obsession.” Since that encounter, he has learned to love nature and appreciate the animals much more. His photos are very bird-centric, with the occasional squirrel or butterfly.

Ray will share his encounters in Hempstead Lake State Park since 2016 with the Great Horned Owls that gained attention as parents this year, successfully nesting in an easily viewed tree that is among the thousands that SSAS is trying to save from the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery’s federally funded ax. Ray captured the birth, rescue, fledging, and flight of their owlets. Join us!

**Pre-Meeting Book Discussion.** Arrive a half-hour early to participate in a discussion led by R. U. Abyrdar II (aka Paul Stessel) of the book(s) that he & Sy Schiff and/or Frank Scoblete reviewed in the previous *Skimmer*. This

meeting’s books are *How to Know the Birds: The Art & Adventure of Birding* by Ted Floyd and *Mrs. Moreau’s Warbler: How Birds Got Their Names* by Stephen Moss.

**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.

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 •  IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE  
 • BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS.  
 • **SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!**  
 • .....

**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.*

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## COME JOIN OUR FALL PLANTING AT THE PURCELL PRESERVE

*Betty Barowsky*

Many of you know that the responsibility for preserving about half of the Purcell Preserve of the Hempstead Plains has been transferred from Nassau County to the Friends of the Hempstead Plains. Although the Preserve has been almost entirely neglected for decades, and is badly overgrown with nonnative invasives, recently expert botanists found several rare prairie plants there.

In order to assist preservation efforts while making the Purcell Preserve more accessible to the public, South Shore Audubon Society obtained a grant from the National Audubon Society’s Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants to develop a safe and attractive entrance to the Preserve. We are ready for our fall planting, and would greatly appreciate your help!

We hope you can join us on **Sunday, October 13** from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. to help us in that effort. Come for as long as you wish — this will also give you an opportunity to enjoy the Preserve.



Bring gloves and small gardening tools — we will provide some light snacks and water.

*Directions and Parking.* From the west, turn left (north — or from the east turn right) from Hempstead Turnpike onto Earl Ovington Boulevard towards the Coliseum and Nassau Community College. Go about ¼ of a mile and make a right at the second entrance into the Coliseum parking lots and continue driving as far east as you can. Park near the red Hyundai Sonata. Then walk the short distance across James Doolittle Boulevard and through the open gate. You'll see us there.

If you have any questions, call me at 764-3596.

We're looking forward to seeing you!



**BIRD WALKS**  
Joe Landesberg

All walks start at **9 A.M.**; no walk if it rains. Call me at 467-9498 in case of questionable conditions or for other info. Check [www.facebook.com/SSAudubon](http://www.facebook.com/SSAudubon) (you don't need to have a Facebook account) for cancellations, changes, and lists from recent walks. Directions and lists of what we've seen in recent years are at [www.ssaudubon.org](http://www.ssaudubon.org).

- Sept. 22 Jones Beach Coast Guard Station
- Sat., Sept. 28 Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside
- Oct. 6 Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and Lido Preserve afterwards)
- Oct. 13 Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
- Oct. 20 Alley Pond Park (76th Ave. parking lot)
- Oct. 27 Jones Beach Coast Guard Station
- Nov. 3 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 10 Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)



**TACKAPAUSHA WEEKEND GARDENING**

Marilyn Hametz

With help from grants awarded to SSAS, the gardens at the Tackapausha Museum in Seaford have been beautified and improved for birds, butterflies, and people. Native plants have been added, weeds and invasives removed, and there are signs and informational materials. However, the Tackapausha gardens are works in progress. Join us on **Saturday morning, October 5**, beginning at 9 A.M. Come when you can.

If you would like more information and/or will join us, please contact Anne Mehlinger at 798-1412 or [amehlinger36@gmail.com](mailto:amehlinger36@gmail.com).



**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 Memorial Library from 7:30–9:30 P.M., normally 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 (some of whom received last month's *Skimmer*, after National Audubon Society belatedly sent us their names) are:

- Baldwin ..... Eileen Dawson
- Bethpage ..... Lisa Collins
- East Meadow ..... Charles Seich
- Farmingdale ..... Richard Zubrod
- Floral Park ..... Susan Anaischik, Margaret McCaffrey
- Garden City ..... Robert Catell, Tim Martins, Elizabeth Reilly
- Hicksville ..... National Grid Foundation, Greg Simon
- Lawrence ..... Stuart Weinerman
- Levittown ..... Dennis Yasinowski
- Long Beach ..... Brian Brady, Sarah Brewster, Robin Donovan & Robert Saminsky, Stephanie Marra
- Lynbrook ..... William McAlpin
- Malverne ..... Phyllis Morrissey, Ursula Nupp
- Massapequa Park ..... Elaine Galloway
- Merrick ..... Frederick Bear, Josephine Gencorelli, ? Langlois, Patsy Turrini
- Plainview ..... Saul Maluth, Ray Perlman
- Valley Stream ..... Nancy Facci, Joyce Goldberg, Letecha Harris
- Wantagh ..... William Baade, Megan Ferguson-Koci



NAT'L AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (844) 428-3826





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## OCEAN INITIATIVES

### Fish Gotta Swim if Birds Gonna Fly

Brien Weiner

As our oceans warm and fill with plastic, bleaching coral reefs and killing marine and avian life, a number of ocean conservation initiatives around Long Island offer hope for our seabirds and shorebirds.

#### Forage Fish

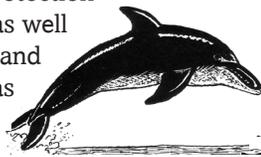
As part of a National Audubon Society campaign, SSAS has lobbied our Representatives in Congress to cosponsor the Forage Fish Conservation Act (HR 2236), a bipartisan bill that is fundamental to restoring healthy ocean ecosystems and their related economies. Declines in forage fish such as herring, anchovies, sardines (pictured), menhaden, capelin, and sand lance could be catastrophic for our entire marine ecosystem of larger fish, marine mammals, and seabirds that depend on them, as well as for the fishing industry and our food supply.



As a volunteer shorebird monitor, I have spent many early morning hours with Town of Hempstead Conservation and Waterways staff watching Common and Least Terns and Black Skimmers provision their nests with silversides, killifish, needlefish, menhaden, and sand lance. Both the quality and quantity of available forage fish determine whether the chicks will survive and develop into strong fliers to survive their arduous migration.

Most commercially harvested forage fish are ground up to meet growing demand for nutritional supplements, livestock feed, and food pellets for farmed fish. In a study published last December by David Grémillet, researchers confirmed that commercial fishing is increasingly and directly competing with seabirds for forage fish, helping to make them the world's most endangered group of birds, with global populations plummeting 70% in the last 70 years. This includes such species as the iconic Atlantic Puffin.

Around Long Island, humpback and fin whale populations have increased due to the return of the menhaden on which they feed. Without protection of the menhaden, these whales, as well as the endangered right whale and other marine mammals such as bottlenose dolphins (pictured), will also decline.



The Forage Fish Conservation Act:

- provides a national definition for forage fish, which are not currently defined in the Magnuson–Stevens Act

- limits new fishing of currently unmanaged forage species until the impact on existing fisheries, fishing communities, and the marine ecosystem is assessed

- directs fishery managers to account for the needs of predators (e.g., seabirds, larger fish, and sea mammals) in their existing management plans for forage fish

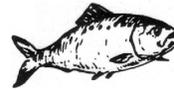
- specifies that councils consider forage fish when establishing research priorities

- ensures the scientific guidance for fishery managers includes forage fish recommendations

- requires conservation and management of river herring and shad (pictured) in the ocean

The bill amends our country's only federal fisheries management law, the Magnuson–Stevens Act (enacted in 1976), to include these vital fish in its framework. To date, the law has mainly affected the way we manage larger fish.

This change will help forage fish populations to rebound and become more stable so that the wildlife, people, and economies that depend on them can continue to thrive.



#### Artificial Reefs

To encourage the growth of healthy ocean ecosystems, and in the spirit of waste not, want not, New York State is in its second year of a program to create artificial reefs by depositing cleaned sections of obsolete roadways and bridges and entire decommissioned ships offshore Long Island. In August, a few Long Island Audubon chapter leaders were invited by Audubon New York on a fishing-boat trip with Governor Cuomo, during which workers deployed recycled materials at Fire Island Reef from the Staten Island Expressway, Kew Gardens and Kosciuszko Bridges, Erie Canal, and the retired U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' steel vessel M/V HUDSON, which will provide shelter for fish and other marine life. Although the artificial reef is promoted as a boon for recreational fishing and diving, our birds who do the same for a living will also benefit.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) artificial reef program manages 12 artificial reefs (two reefs in Long Island Sound, two in the Great South Bay and eight in the Atlantic Ocean). Artificial reefs promote marine life where there is generally featureless bottom, and sites must be chosen carefully so that existing benthic communities are not harmed. Artificial reefs are generally designed to provide hard surfaces to which algae and invertebrates such as barnacles, corals, and oysters attach; the accumulation of attached marine life in turn provides intricate structure and food for assemblages of fish. They must be monitored, however, for the growth of invasive species. Artificial reefs can also serve to prevent coastal erosion.

According to the DEC, "All materials placed on reefs are selected and prepared for use on reefs [and] are scrutinized based on national standards, DEC guidelines, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) best management practices. This ensures the materials are cleaned properly, will function as intended, and will not harm the environment."

Similarly, offshore wind turbine platforms can serve as artificial reefs and hopefully will do more good than harm to marine ecosystems.



## THE BOOKCASE

### “The Birds” by Daphne du Maurier; the Film by Alfred Hitchcock

Frank Scoblete

“The Birds” is not a novel. Rather it is a short story by Daphne du Maurier that appears in her book *The Apple Tree*. I’m guessing that you probably know about those birds from Alfred Hitchcock’s movie *The Birds*.

The short story and the movie are quite different but that doesn’t matter. Both have our flighted friends, now turned enemies, attacking us with horrific designs such as — to put it mildly — wiping us out. Yes, “The Birds” and *The Birds* both feature fierce, feathered, beaking, clawing killers of planet Earth’s dominant creatures, meaning us, meaning you and me.



Not a nice thought, is it? Those often spectacularly beautiful creatures ripping us to shreds don’t fit into our concept that birds are peaceful, nonaggressive beings out to make the world a more beautiful and loving place. We don’t think of them as “fierce, feathered, beaking, clawing killers,” do we?

Du Maurier’s “The Birds” focuses on a farmer in England, post World War II, whose native birds decide to take matters under their own wings and begin the extermination process. It appears that the birds have gone crazy throughout England but no person seems able to communicate with anyone else. The birds have cut our communication channels.

In Hitchcock’s *The Birds*, the small town of Bodega Bay in California gets a visit from the beautiful Tippi Hedren and then from a massive influx of really nasty avians whose purpose is to not only slaughter Tippi, but also to make an unsanitary mess of the town.

Oh, well, this is all fiction, right? Not so fast: I was attacked by a Blue Jay in Chicago and by one in my backyard in New York. I’m hoping it’s not the same exact bird, because flying from Chicago to New York to dive-bomb my head seems like a very long trip for one bird to achieve basically nothing. Neither Blue Jay drew blood; both just scared me. I will admit I’m easily scared and Blue Jays are notoriously tough.

But seriously, birds don’t attack people except for the occasional Blue Jay protecting its nest, right? Again, not so fast: Just go to the Internet and type in “mass bird attacks” or “birds killing humans,” or find out what’s going on in Houston, Texas. Our feathered friends seem to have more aspects to them than we think or wish or pray. Sometimes we are indeed their prey.

But look on the bright side; we eat more turkeys on Thanksgiving than turkeys have eaten us and we actually have chicken farms that allow millions of us to delight in eating those feathered morsels every day.

The birds have not yet evened the score. Maybe though, maybe though, they just need a little more time.

Visit Frank’s web site at [www.frankscole.com](http://www.frankscole.com). His books are available from [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com), as e-books, and in bookstores.



## WELCOME, GRETA!

Jim Brown

Greta Thunberg, the sixteen-year-old Swedish student climate activist, just arrived in the United States. She arrived after a 15-day voyage from Plymouth, England to New York on a sailing yacht equipped with solar panels, underwater turbines, and — of course — sails. Ms. Thunberg is noted for starting a movement of students throughout the world known as the “School Strike for Climate,” also termed “Fridays for Future.” In May of 2018 she began protesting on Fridays outside the Swedish Parliament; she has been joined by hundreds of thousands of children since then, in a growing international movement. School walkouts are staged by students on Fridays to draw the attention of the public, and their political leaders, to the climate emergency that we face and the need to take rapid action to halt global warming.



Greta traveled to the U.S., in her chosen carbon-neutral manner, to attend the UN Climate Action Summit scheduled for September 23, called by the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, to bolster the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. Following events in New York, she is scheduled to attend the COP25 climate change conference in Santiago, Chile [see <https://www.cop25.cl/en/> for info — ed.]. She will again travel with a low carbon footprint. In September, two major global School Strikes for Climate are scheduled — one on September 20; the other on September 27. These strikes will not be confined to students, but will be intergenerational. Hopefully these actions will be successful and impact policy.

The young, such as Greta Thunberg and the many thousands of schoolchildren she has motivated to take action, will be the ones bearing the brunt of the impacts of climate chaos that are predicted for upcoming decades. After many of us are no longer here, they will be the truly unlucky ones to experience firsthand the results of tipping points reached and whole ecosystems destroyed. That is, unless action is taken quickly and dramatically, at all levels of government, and throughout all sectors of society.

Ms. Thunberg has stated: “The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have all the facts and solutions. All we have to do is to wake up and change.” This is a strong message and a hopeful one. Perhaps her message, as it appears in this one quote, overstates matters, but her drawing attention to all the solid science we have accumulated around climate change and the number of solutions to combating it that exist is right on the mark. The need to “wake up and change” is undeniable. Changes, as the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on



