



Looking Up: Locating the Raptors of Fall

by Russ Comeau



Russ Comeau

It's fall and raptors abound. Here is where you will find these magnificent creatures.

Outer Coastal Migrants:

Nice numbers of three falcon species migrate down the outer beaches of Long Island on favorable winds from northerly directions on days following cold fronts and storms during fall.

Peregrine Falcons consistently stream west along the dunes from September through mid-December along with good numbers of American Kestrels from early September through late November. The Merlin migration peaks from mid-September through mid-November.

The Northern Harrier, an owl-faced raptor, peaks on LI from October through December. Some Northern Harriers stay the winter in our larger grassy marshes and dune grasslands such as Jones Beach West End and at Calverton grasslands.

Given favorable flight weather, Peregrine Falcons, American Kestrels, Merlins, and Northern Harriers move

west down the beaches. Migrating Ospreys and modest numbers of other raptor species migrate down our beaches as well.

The Red-tailed Hawk's presence



Red-Shouldered Hawk by Jay Koolpix

peaks on LI from September through December, and it's common in winter. Sharp-shinned Hawks peak here from late September through late November.

Cooper's Hawks peak for the year during October and November. Lucky birders might see some Bald Eagles migrating through LI.

Elevated hawk watching platforms can be found at Fire Island in Suffolk County, Fort Tilden in Queens, and at dune grass level at Jones Beach West End in Nassau.

Inland, Mountain, & Ridge Migrants:

Raptors you are unlikely to see migrating on LI include Red-shouldered Hawks (reaching a peak for the year during November), even fewer, if any, Rough-legged Hawks on LI most years, and few to no Golden Eagles or Broad-winged Hawks.

But just a short distance away, these species can selectively be seen along mountains or ridges in downstate NY at Chestnut Ridge (Bedford), Hook Mountain (Nyack), Lenoir Preserve (Yonkers), and Mount Peter (Warwick). Try Oneonta's Franklin Mountain for Golden Eagles and an occasional Northern Goshawk.

Black Dirt Region:

Pine Island, NY holds impressive numbers of migrating Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, plus a chance for Rough-legged Hawks from late fall through winter.

Enjoy the raptor-watching season! ♦

Looking for goshawks is like looking for grace: it comes, but not often, and you don't get to say when or how.

– Helen MacDonald, *H is for Hawks*

And the Winners Are...

High School Scholarships:

Ava Reyer • Baldwin High School
June Cumento • Freeport High School
Michael Bo • South Side High School, RVC

College Scholarships:

Kelly Ann Andreuizzi
Matthew Franolich

Coming Attractions

In-Person at Freeport Memorial Library at 7:30 PM:
Researching the Deadliest Birds with Todd Green • 9/12
Horseshoe Crabs with Dr. John Tanacredi • 10/10
Raptors with Jay Koolpix • 11/14

See page 4 for details.

South Shore Skimmer

Editor-in-Chief: Alene Scoblete
alene.scoblete@gmail.com

Managing Editor: Frank Scoblete
frank.scoblete@gmail.com

Contributors

- Janice Basilicata
- Betty Borowsky
- Jim Brown
- Russ Comeau
- Louise DeCesare
- Guy Jacob
- Joe Landesberg
- Brien Weiner

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SSAS

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
SSAudubon.org

The mission of the South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education; conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat; and to preserve and restore our environment through responsible activism for the benefit of both people and wildlife. ♦

Bird Walks

by Joe Landesberg



Joe Landesberg

Join us on our Bird Walks! **To register, text me your name and contact information at 516-467-9498.** Bird Walks are free of charge and start at 9 AM. No walk if it rains. Text me regarding questionable conditions.

September Sundays

- Sunday, 9/17: No walk | Rosh Hashanah
- Sunday, 9/24: Norman J. Levy Park

October Sundays

- 10/1: Hempstead Lake State Park (Meet in parking lot #3)
- 10/8: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station (Meet in parking area)
- 10/15: Point Lookout/Lido Preserve
- 10/22: Massapequa Preserve (Meet at east end of train station)
- 10/29: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh | Meet at gazebo)

November Sundays

- 11/5: Hempstead Lake State Park (Meet in parking lot #3)
- 11/12: Jamaica Bay Refuge, Queens
- 11/19: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station (Meet in parking area)
- 11/26: Point Lookout/Lido Preserve

December Sundays

- 12/3: Massapequa Preserve (Meet at east end of train station)
- 12/10: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh | Meet at gazebo)
- 12/17: Massapequa Lake (Meet on corner of Merrick Rd. & Ocean Ave.)
- 12/24: No walk | Christmas Eve
- 12/31: No walk | New Year's Eve

For future Bird Walks, check our website & Facebook page:

SSAudubon.org/bird-walks • Facebook.com/SSAudubon

Directions: SSAudubon.org/directions.asp

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

All South Shore Audubon memberships expire in September.

To renew your membership and receive the *Skimmer*, please use the form on the back page to send \$20.00 to South Shore Audubon Society at P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031. Thank you!

SSAS Post Office Statement—*South Shore Skimmer* is published quarterly by the South Shore Audubon Society, PO Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

On the Record: Frank Scoblete

An Interview by Alene Scoblete



Frank Scoblete

Editor's Note: The interviewee originally engaged for this issue disappeared. Substituting is the South Shore Skimmer's Managing Editor (and my husband) Frank Scoblete.

Frank Scoblete is the author of 35 books, two plays, and over 4,000 articles. He wrote and edited several TV shows and has been a consultant for movies and TV. He has appeared on TV and, at last count, was featured on over 200 radio shows.

Editor's Note: Frank insisted on this lengthy bio in exchange for the interview. But let's face it — I'm stuck.

What was your first encounter with birds?

FS: I grew up living over a store on Third Avenue in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. We had plenty of buses and trillions of pigeons in Brooklyn. The only birds of the non-pigeon variety I saw was when I went down to Shore Road to play baseball. My athletic career ...[Edited by Alene]

Speaking of pigeons, when my late and sainted mother heard that my wife Alene and I enjoyed birding, she mistakenly thought we were raising pigeons. Brooklyn can do that to you, especially in the good old days. Yes, those old days were ...[Edited by Alene]

What prompted you to start birding?

FS: My wife did. And my wife is always right. She told me I had to get out with people and stop living like a hermit because ... [Edited by Alene]

What kind of birder are you?

FS: I am a laid back birder. I like to go on an occasional walk but too many brambles and bugs bother me. I prefer backyard birding from our deck. A couple of years ago we moved to a more rural ...[Edited by Alene]

What birds do you usually see on your property?

FS: In the last *Skimmer* issue, I wrote about my relationship with the Blue Jays, a bird I really like. We have dozens of them coming to our property every day. I've learned a lot about them just by observing them and did some reading as well.

We get regular visits from Northern Cardinals and Dark-Eyed Juncos, which I enjoy.



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volunteersforwildlife.org

And my wife is always right.

Describe how you are converting your property to native plants.

FS: That was my wife's idea. We'd love to get hummingbirds, which neither of us has ever seen in person. We want to attract pollinators, but I'm hoping not the ones that sting. The ones that sting are attracted to me, not the plants. There was the time a wasp flew straight at me across the deck and stung me right on my...[Edited by Alene]

What are your favorite books about birds?

FS: My all-time favorite is *Wings for My Flight* by Marcy Cottrell Houle.

There are multiples in second place, including *Wesley the Owl: The Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and his Girl* by Stacey O'Brien. Do you know that my wife threw out 5,000 of my books ...[Edited by Alene]

Anything else you'd like to tell us?

FS: Yes, quite a few things... [Edited by Alene] ♦

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Frank Scoblete for filling up this page as our deadline loomed.

Not Mourning Doves; they're not as pretty as the pigeons in Brooklyn. I would also say ... [Edited by Alene]

What are your three favorite birds and why?

FS: Raptors! They are the gods of the air. Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles (go to Alaska!), and just about every type of owl.

Why do you find raptors so fascinating?

FS: They embody raw nature. They soar; they hunt; they own the air.

How do you feel about the South Shore Audubon Society?

FS: They're nice, friendly, knowledgeable people; some of them a bit strange, for example ... [Edited by Alene]

Coming Attractions

Researching the Deadliest Birds on Earth with Dr. Todd L. Green

Tuesday, September 12 @ 7:30 PM

→ In-Person Program at Freeport Memorial Library, Freeport, NY

The majority of the population does not know cassowaries exist. These large, flightless birds native to Australia and New Guinea are far more charismatic than their relatives, ostriches and emus.

Despite their territorially aggressive nature, these vegetarian birds are critically important to the delicate rain forest ecosystems that they inhabit. In addition, cassowaries are used as modern analogs by paleontologists to help untangle the mysteries of long-extinct dinosaurs.

Todd is an Assistant Professor at NY Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine, Jonesboro, Arkansas and has dedicated his career to studying and providing educational outreach for endangered cassowaries.

Follow Dr. Green on Twitter @TheCassowaryKid



Todd L. Green

Horseshoe Crabs: Blue-Blooded Laboratory Stars with Dr. John Tanacredi

Tuesday, October 10 @ 7:30 PM

→ In-Person Program at Freeport Memorial Library, Freeport, NY



You may never have thought of the American Horseshoe Crab as a star, but you will find yourself a fan of these strange-looking creatures by the end of John's presentation. He has tracked up to 115 locations for Horseshoe Crab breeding conditions and habitat on Long Island, and will explain why they and their habitats are worthy of our time and attention.

John Tanacredi John is an environmental science Professor at Molloy University and Molloy's Director for the Center for Environmental Research and Coastal Oceans Monitoring. He is a founding member of the IUCN SSC Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group.

Raptors of Nassau County's South Shore with Jay Koolpix

Tuesday, November 14 @ 7:30 PM

→ In-Person Program at Freeport Memorial Library, Freeport, NY

Jay Koolpix is back to wow us with photos and videos of the raptors that fascinate us! He has patiently scoured the South Shore of Nassau County to bring us Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Merlins, and a variety of hawks, owls, and falcons as they fledge, fly, catch prey, eat, and mate.

Jay is an accomplished photographer and a Director on the SSAS Board. He finds it an honor every time he presents programs to SSAS. For more information about Jay, see Editor-in-Chief Alene Scoblete's interview with him in the Summer 2023 *South Shore Skimmer* on page 3: tinyurl.com/bdewenn4



Jay Koolpix



Photos by Jay Koolpix. Left to Right: Great-Horned Owl; Snowy Owl; Bald Eagle Family

More Programs Coming Your Way!

Find program updates & links on SSAudubon.org • facebook.com/SSAudubon

The Borowsky Report

by Betty Borowsky

2023 South Shore Audubon Society College Scholarships Awarded

Thanks to the generosity of Jay Koolpix and the family of Jerry and Evelyn Bishop, this year the South Shore Audubon Society has been able to award \$1,000 college scholarships to two students who are committed to a career in Environmental Science.

The winner of the Jay Koolpix scholarship is **Kelly Ann Andreuzzi**. Kelly is a senior at Adelphi University. She is an Environmental Science major who is minoring in Ethics, Law, and Justice, and is enrolled in an accelerated program which will award her a Masters in Environmental Studies in only one year. Among many accomplishments she was president of the student Environmental Action Coalition at Adelphi, and volunteered at beach cleanups, invasive species removals, and native plantings. Of special interest to South Shore Audubon Society—she advocated for the installation of window stickers on campus buildings to prevent bird collisions.

The winner of the Gerry and Evelyn Bishop Scholarship is **Matthew Franolich**. Matthew has just graduated from Molloy College, and will be continuing his studies toward a higher degree in Environmental Science.

He will put the scholarship to use this summer to help support his studies at CERCOM (Center for Environmental Research and Coastal Oceans Monitoring), a marine field station belonging to Molloy College located in West Sayville.

Matthew will assist in ongoing horseshoe crab studies as well as in coastal water quality monitoring. He will be gathering research information to support CERCOM's efforts to have Fire Island National Seashore named a World Heritage Site. He will also gather information to bolster CERCOM's application to Dr. Sylvia Earle's Mission Blue to make all of Long Island a designated Hope Spot. Hope Spots are marine areas that warrant extra protection and preservation due to a special abundance or diversity of species, unusual or representative species, and/or special habitats or ecosystems.

Congratulations to Kelly Ann and Matthew! ♦

Insights

by Jim Brown

Climate Change News: We've Reached the Boiling Point!

Large swaths of the earth are literally on fire this summer, from Canadian forests to Mediterranean basin nations in Europe, Africa, and Asia, to our own forests in the West. Record temperatures have been recorded in locations from Arizona to Sicily. **July 2023 is the hottest month ever on record, and estimated to be the hottest monthly period experienced by the earth in over 120,000 years.**



Jim Brown

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres, a vocal leader in the fight against climate change, has consistently drawn attention to a rapidly deteriorating climate. With equal persistence Guterres has justly confronted the weak and insufficient response of world government leaders in the face of what is a deepening and explosive worldwide crisis.

Most recently, the UN Secretary General stated that the earth is no longer only experiencing global warming, but is entering an **"Era of Global Boiling."** He further stated that it is imperative that "leaders must lead" if humanity is to solve the planet's ever-more-obvious and menacing climate crisis.

The UN Secretary General has scheduled a **Climate Ambition Summit for Wednesday, September 20** at the UN headquarters in New York City. The goal of the Summit is to rapidly advance concerted climate action by government leaders, especially leaders of the most highly developed nations, those richest countries most responsible for fossil fuel emissions.

An important climate march, **the March to End Fossil Fuels, has been scheduled for September 17 in NYC.** The march has been endorsed by SSAS and many other organizations. We will demand that President Biden become a true climate leader by finally declaring a climate emergency and halting new fossil fuel projects. We urge all Audubon members and friends to support this March, attend the event, and carry forward the climate movement after the march is over. ♦

READ MORE ABOUT IT

UN Climate Ambition Summit:

un.org/en/climatechange/climate-ambition-summit

Join the March To End Fossil Fuels:
endfossilfuels.us/

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Volunteering For the Birds

by Janice Basilicata

The For the Birds program is among the volunteer opportunities offered by the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center (TRSAC).

The program educates children about birds and the environment and includes both classroom and outdoor learning. Environmental Educator Julie Nelsen runs For the Birds and trains volunteers such as me.

My experience led me to elementary schools in Baldwin where I taught children to use binoculars, took them birding on the school grounds, and played educational games with them. A favorite activity is the Piping Plover game that demonstrates what it feels like to be a Piping Plover, the difficulties they face migrating, and how we can do our part to help.

Julie is warm and welcoming. The children are eager to learn. I know I will be back next year, and I hope you will consider volunteering for this or other TRSAC programs. ♦

LEARN MORE ABOUT IT

TRSAC Volunteer Application:

<https://tinyurl.com/mtn2ax8u>

Contact Julie Nelsen:

Julie.Nelsen@Audubon.org

LEONARD G. KONSKER

Certified Public Accountant

990 Westbury Rd., Ste. 103

Westbury, NY 11590



Phone: (516) 931-1445

Fax: (516) 931-1467

lenny@konskerandcompany.com

Through Guy's Eyes

by Guy Jacob

Birds & Bees Protection Act on Hochul's Desk

The Birds and Bees Protection Act (BBPA) passed through the NYS Assembly and the NYS Senate due to a culmination of several years of hard work, as well as support from over 280 organizations, businesses, and farms. If signed by Governor Hochul, the BBPA would strictly limit the use of neonicotinoid (neonics) pesticides. Neonics are arguably the most egregious class of pesticides since DDT.



Guy Jacob

Neonics are wreaking havoc on our pollinator populations. These pesticides affect pollinators' central nervous systems, causing disorientation and weakening their immune system. A recent UN report predicts that as many as one million species will disappear from Earth because of human activities. (See Link 1) The problem is no less grave close to home. The recent Empire State Pollinator Survey found 40-60% of species at risk of extirpation in New York State. (See link 2)

Neonics are in Long Island's drinking water as well. While the Suffolk County Water Authority has invested in granular active carbon filtration, which can remove neonics, their most recent report shows that some of the largest water distribution areas still test positive for the neonic, imidacloprid. Taken together with private wells, this problem directly impacts hundreds of thousands of Long Island's residents. (See Link 3)

Notably, the BBPA has strong bipartisan support. In addition to all Long Island's Democratic senators and all our Democratic Assembly members, all seven Republican senators from Long Island as well as two LI Republican Assembly members voted to pass the BBPA. Thoughtful legislators on both



Help Gov. Hochul Sign BBPA
See 2-Minute Call to Action

sides of the aisle understand the difference between being business-friendly and acquiescing to the unethical, profit-driven demands of large corporate interests. Common cause diminishes the potency of culture wars, and when we work together to tamp down the flames of polarization, our environment wins as we all benefit.

Bipartisanship will bode well for us as we seek Governor Hochul's signature, but the Governor is under intense pressure from industry to veto the bill.

Safer alternatives exist. And science is on our side. We can, we must do better, for our families, for our future. ♦

TWO-MINUTE CALL TO ACTION

Tell Gov. Hochul to sign the BBPA into law: <https://tinyurl.com/4td97f57>

RESOURCES

1. **UN Sustainable Development Goals:** tinyurl.com/49wh9bhd
2. **Empire State Native Pollinator Survey:** nynhp.org/projects/pollinators/
3. **2022 Drinking Water Quality Report:** tinyurl.com/2p8kwbc

All SSAS Memberships Expire in September!
Join or renew using the form on the back page.

Going Native: When is a Weed a Weed?

by Betty Borowsky & Louise DeCesare



Betty Borowsky

Maintaining a garden involves weeding. **Deciding if a plant is a keeper or a weed takes knowledge and decision making.** Adding to the confusion, some desirable plants have weed in their name (e.g. butterfly weed, milkweed, and ironweed).

Without hard and fast rules, how do you determine what is a weed? **The answer lies in the garden's purpose.**

At Tackapausha Native Demonstration Garden, we aim to educate the public on the value of adding native plants to their gardens. We showcase plants that are aesthetically appealing, grow easily on Long Island's South Shore, can be bought at local nurseries, and offer a valuable food source and habitat for local birds and pollinators.

Generally, weeds don't meet these criteria. Almost always aggressive and invasive, they threaten the survival of

the demonstration plants by outcompeting for vital resources.

But what if a demonstration plant goes rogue? This year we got a bumper crop of **common milkweed**, which had been planted at Tackapausha before SSAS began gardening there. A few obedient plants stayed behind their sign, but most migrated into spaces where we had weeded out our old nemeses — mugwort and dogbane. However, removing a plant coveted for its crucial role in Monarch butterfly survival feels wrong.

So it is with a heavy heart that we have been pulling out countless tender stalks of common milkweed around the blueberry bushes, coneflowers, and asters.

What is your favorite weed? Mine (Louise) is **swamp milkweed**. It attracts pollinators but doesn't spread. It's the perfect weed you don't need to weed! ♦



Louise DeCesare

The Wise Owl: The Importance of Wising Up

Courtesy Danielle Scoble



Wise Owl

If you want to be as wise as I am, read all about me in **What an Owl Knows by Jennifer Ackerman**. I'm a *New York Times* bestseller!

Although I don't always approve of their methods, scientists have learned to speak my language, and I've given them some tips on how to hunt, court, and raise a family. For instance, housecleaning: bring a live snake to the nest to vacuum up the parasites. Then you can eat the kids' poop and regurgitate it far from home. Brilliant, right?

But we need your help. Remember Barry the Barred Owl? She accidentally ate a rat with poison that impaired her flight and was then hit by a car. And Hedwig the Snowy Owl from Harry Potter? Worst film ever for owls! People took us as pets, then abandoned us—because we're *not*.

Please read Jennifer Ackerman's book and share what you've learned to help us survive. It's the wise thing to do. ♦

Donations

SSAS made a donation to Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area for bird seed.

Recent donations to SSAS were made by:

Anonymous ▪ Derrick Hughes ▪ Diana Ihnman
Joe Landesberg ▪ Kathryn & Stanley Powell



Enhance Your Fall Birding with ID Classics

Heading to a hawk watch? Pack **Hawks in Flight** by Pete Dunne and **Hawks from Every Angle** by Jerry Liguori.

Hawks follow the food, those LBJs (little brown jobs) in flocks on the grass, that if you look closely, have subtle patterns and unique markings. Discover their joy and beauty with **Sparrows of the United States and Canada: The Photographic Guide** by James D. Rising and David Beadle and the **Peterson Reference Guide to Sparrows of North America** by Rick Wright.

And they are not all Yellow-rumped Warblers! Well, the bird in this photo to the right is, but you can have hours of feathered fun identifying the winter, juvenile, and female-type plumages of confusing fall warblers with **The Warbler Guide** by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle, the hands-down definitive authorities on the subject. ♦



Photo by Alene Scoble

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Janice Basilicata, Corresponding Sec'y: (516) 546-0275

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Chris Braut: (631) 834-6070
Gail Brown, Hospitality: (516) 608-1446
Jim Brown, Conservation Co-Chair: (516) 608-1446
Bill Clifford: (631) 991-7989
Louise DeCesare, Native Plants: (917) 548-6974
Todd Green: tgreen09@nyit.edu
Betsy Gulotta, College Scholarships: (516) 546-8841
Marilyn Hametz, Publicity: (516) 799-7189
Linda Ilan, Programs: (516) 935-1268
Guy Jacob, Conservation Co-Chair: (516) 312-3348
Jay Koolpix: NaturePhotography7@gmail.com
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