

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOL. 7, NO. 6

FEBRUARY 1977

NEXT MEETING:

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH
8:15 P.M., FREEPORT LIBRARY



GUEST SPEAKER:

Mr. Alvin Friedman, Founder and Past President of the South Shore Audubon Society

PROGRAM:

Presentation and excellent color slides of "Birds and Animals Around the World"

Alvin Friedman and his wife, Laura, are relocating to sunny San Diego next month. Alvin and Laura founded South Shore Audubon seven years ago with just a handful of volunteers and much hard work. Because of their dedication, SSAS has grown into a serious conservation group with a membership exceeding 1,000. We wish Laura and Alvin the very best in their new home. We will sorely miss them. Please make a special effort to come out on the 8th and help us give Laura and Alvin a rousing farewell!

SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SCHOLARSHIP

The Board of Directors of South Shore Audubon is offering its third annual scholarship to the Audubon Workshop in Maine. This workshop is scheduled for the last two weeks in July. If anyone would like to be considered for this scholarship, please write explaining how this experience could help you further spread the ecological theme. Anyone 18 years or older as of June 1977 is eligible. Please write to:



Scholarship Committee
P. O. Box 31
Freeport, New York 11520



BIRD FEEDER SURVEY - Please keep a log of the # of the following birds at your feeders - by the month. The Skimmer deadline is printed on the back of your Bulletin. Please send your computations to our editor, Pat Davis, 7 Myers Avenue, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| MOURNING DOVE | ___ | HOUSE SPARROW | ___ | HOUSE FINCH | ___ |
| DOWNY WOODPECKER | ___ | RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD | ___ | AM. GOLDFINCH | ___ |
| BLUE JAY | ___ | HAIRY WOODPECKER | ___ | TOWHEE | ___ |
| BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE | ___ | COMMON GRACKLE | ___ | SLATE-COLORED JUNCO | ___ |
| TUFTED TITMOUSE | ___ | BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD | ___ | TREE SPARROW | ___ |
| WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH | ___ | CARDINAL | ___ | SONG SPARROW | ___ |
| MOCKINGBIRD | ___ | EVENING GROSBEEK | ___ | FOX SPARROW | ___ |
| STARLING | ___ | WHITE-THROAT SPARROW | ___ | | |

The following article was printed in Newsday back in late June, 1976. I feel it is worth a second look at this time. We have just suffered a direct pollution of 17,000,000 gallons of oil because of a cynical economic policy on the part of fleet owners. We need strict laws governing oil tankers that approach our shores. Please write your senators and congressmen demanding their immediate attention to this problem and legislation to end it.

Managing Our Environment

We feel no sense of satisfaction or vindication. It is a joyless victory, in fact, it is a collective loss to read front-page headlines "Beaches Closed Due to Pollution."

The hue and cry of the environmentalist these past 10 to 15 years has been met with ridicule and derision. We were condemned for our negativism, hysteria and doomsday mentality. We predicted these "garbage invasions" for the 1980s. They are a reality in June, 1976! Sadly, all, not most, but all of our dire predictions are today's reality.

Our beautiful shoreline rots in the stench of our own waste.

The wildlife and indeed, the St. Lawrence Seaway itself, drowns at this very moment in 1/4 million gallons of crude oil No. 6.

The Alaskan pipeline is a potential pipebomb that threatens the very existence of one of the world's last virgin areas. This condition is due to the negligence, deceit and alleged fraud of a "cost plus - get it done at any cost" policy.

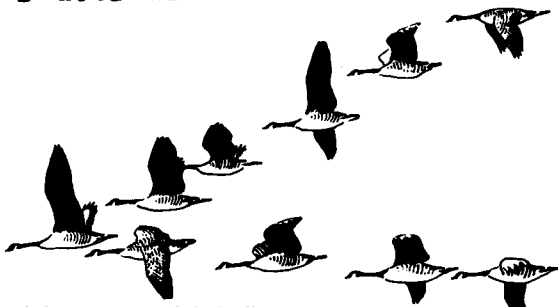
Lake Superior has been known as one of the largest, purest sweet water lakes in the entire world. Scratch out "has been." Every day Reserve Mining Co. pours 67,000 tons of taconite waste into the lake. They have been doing it for 20 years. In the face of the longest piece of environmental litigation in history, there is no solution in sight. The waste goes on.

President Ford's environmental policy is no policy. He is bankrupt in administering any reasonable program. The President actually stumps for a stretch-out in environmental goals - in the cause of economic recovery, inflationary cool-off and oil independence. Our oil freedom could cost us whatever little is left to preserve in our fast-disappearing wealth of natural resources, including that most precious of all resources: man and woman!

We know that if we give the environment a chance to heal, the results are miraculous. That is no exaggeration. With just a little bit of help and self-control on our part, we have seen the rapid recuperation and regeneration of our air and water resources.

In this Bicentennial year there is no greater service we can perform for ourselves, our country, and this very finite world, than to demand a specific policy statement from our candidates for Congress, the Senate, and the next President of the United States. We must insist on a reasonable and practical program leading to sensible management of our environment. If we do not do it now, the sign on the world's door will read: "Closed due to pollution"!

Elliott R. Kutner, President
South Shore Audubon Society
West Hempstead, New York



SKIMMER SHORTS

The Bald-faced Hornet and Its Nest

It was late fall, and all the leaves had fallen, when I first noticed the nest. My first impression was that it was a squirrels nest. But I realized that its contour was too regular, too smooth. Also, it was not located in a crotch of the tree. As it was several hundred feet away, and on the other side of a stream, I used my field glasses for a better look. It had to be a hornets nest. Probably the Bald-faced or White-faced Hornet (Paper Wasp) Dolichovespula maculata. It was undoubtedly the largest one that I had ever seen; much larger than a football. I decided to get a better look. With some difficulty, I found the tree in which it was hanging. It was almost at the top of the tree; about 40 or 50 feet up. Through my field glasses, the outer paper covering looked almost like burlap.

About a month later, I noticed that it was becoming smaller; probably the weather was breaking it apart. I found a number of pieces on the ground. One small piece, about five and one-half inches by seven and one-half inches, had approximately four hundred and fifty cells. So, it is quite believable, as one authority states, that a nest could accommodate as many as 10,000 insects.

The nest is built from wood that has been chewed up. It is started, in the spring, by a single queen. She may be joined by other young queens and it reaches its full size by autumn. Inside there are several sections of combs. Each comb is made up of six sided cells, similar to a honeycomb, in which the eggs hatch and the larvae mature. The outside has a covering of gray, paper-like material. A number of mated queens will leave the nest, in the fall, and hibernate. The rest of the colony will die with the freezing winter weather.

The paper wasps have a caste system. The large, fertile females are queens. If she lays fertile eggs, they produce only females. These could become future queens or infertile workers. This is determined by the amount of food the larvae are supplied with during their development. If she lays infertile eggs, these will produce only males. Their only job is to mate with the queens. The workers take care of the nest, enlarging it, and feeding the young. The food consists mostly of harmful or not useful insects. Therefore, the paper wasps should be considered as being beneficial.

Stanley Ziminski



The Snowy Owl

On a short daytime flight to Rochester in January, we had nearly arrived when I heard the Captain's voice over the loudspeaker. (I don't always listen, I'm too busy talking, but when the Captain talks on a plane, I do listen!) "As we approach the airport, if you will look out the windows on your left, you will see a snowy owl perched on a pole. He has been in the area for several days and the noise of the plane does not seem to bother him at all."

I dashed to the window and sure enough there he was, sitting quietly, unperturbed by the plane's roar. A beautiful bird, he was plainly visible against the blue winter sky, without binoculars.

I spoke to the Captain on our arrival and told him how thrilled I was by his announcement. He said he also was an Audubon member - naturally he was a very nice guy!

I'm flying again to Rochester in a few weeks and I'll be on the lookout once again for that snowy owl!

Ruth Grossman



In mid-October, President Ford signed into law one of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation to ever affect the chemical industry in this country. The Toxic Substances Control Act will require industry to notify the Environmental Protection Agency when it intends to market a new chemical or utilize an existing chemical in a new capacity. Also listed in this important act are the criteria which can require the testing of certain chemicals. This testing could potentially delay or cause a ban in the manufacturing and marketing of a suspect substance. The bill, first introduced over six years ago, seems palatable to most everyone in its final form. No one will know for certain just what direction the law is taking for several years. One key issue will be EPA's interpretation of the mandate to carry out the act "in a reasonable and prudent manner". Since this is new ground for EPA, it is likely that they will move slowly in enforcement during the next few years. Another good reason for this is a lack of funds, limited to \$13 million per year through 1979.

Industry does not foresee any major regulations being issued until early 1980, and points to the fact that it may take one full year to inventory all existing chemical substances. This must be done so manufacturers will know if their products fall into the new or existing categories. During this first year, an interagency committee (comprised of members from several governmental agencies), will publish a list of existing substances and mixtures that they feel should be tested. The EPA will then have one year to either authorize testing or issue a statement why testing is unnecessary. Also during the first year, EPA will define the term "significant new uses for existing substances".

At present, industry is concerned with what the future costs of implementation will be in terms of money, manpower, staff changes, etc. They are also concerned that no clear cut directional indicators exist at the present time and probably will not appear until the end of this decade. Environmentalists are just as concerned. A major worry is that improper enforcement in the early stages may doom the entire project, while slow implementation runs the risk of exposing the public to very costly environmental and health hazards.

In its most comprehensive analysis of the economics of solar energy yet, the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration reports that "solar heating can now compete economically" with electric heat in several major cities across the U.S. Solar power still has a long way to go before it can compete effectively with oil or natural gas, but the gap between these different forms of power is closing. The two major reasons for this are the dwindling supplies and increased costs of refining conventional fuels, and the fact that the budding sun power industry has been steadily lowering the cost of solar equipment. It will be interesting to watch how fast the transition from one form of energy to another will take place. In the past the average time period has been thirty to forty years.

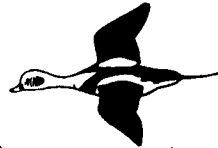
Paul Butkereit, Conservation

BINOCULAR & SCOPE SAVINGS: South Shore Audubon is still offering an outstanding opportunity to purchase binoculars, scopes and tripods made by Bushnell & Bausch & Lomb. The response to the offer from the last newsletter has been rewarding, and our first group of orders has been placed. As mentioned in January's Skimmer, all items will be purchased through affiliation with Bushnell and will enable our members to realize savings of 30 to 50%. These special prices are available to us when we order in groups of 12. The nominal profit on these items will be added to our sanctuary fund. This sale will not be held on a continuing basis, but will be sponsored at intervals according to interest. Further information is available from Asa Starkweather (LY 9-5824) or Joan Butkereit (LY 3-4554).

The following is an article by Miss Eileen Connolly, President of the Waterfowl Resue Team for our area. With the recent Argo Merchant disaster, I think her article is especially timely.-Ed.



THE WATERFOWL RESUE TEAM



On December 15, 1976 the now infamous Liberian supertanker, Argo Merchant, ran aground 27 miles southeast of Nantucket. Within a matter of days its 7.6 million gallon cargo of heavy-grade oil had spilled into the waters of the Atlantic.

Shortly after, in Philadelphia, another Liberian supertanker spilled 134,000 gallons of oil into the Delaware River. As a result, a 20-mile slick reached shorelines in three states. 60,000 wintering waterfowl in that area continue to be menaced by the shifting oil.

While these events have been met with shock and utter disbelief by many, others knowledgeable in the scandalous lack of safety procedures in the oil tanker industry were not so surprised.

There is much that can and should be done by us to rectify this situation. We need to actively promote reform in the areas of oil spill prevention and the enforcement of adequate safety measures to be incorporated into the production and transport of oil in our waters.

Outer Continental Shelf oil drilling in the waters off Long Island in the Baltimore Canyon and the Georges Bank becomes daily an increasing probability. We must protect our invaluable natural resources and indigenous wildlife. Toward that end, the time to move is now. Prevention and protection are the goals. Let's avoid the bitter lessons taught by hindsight.

Reports are being received each day by the Audubon Society and various affiliate organizations of oiled waterfowl coming into our waters from neighboring states experiencing effects of oil spills in their waters. All too often these birds are in a severely debilitated condition and their chances of survival are slim. However, if rescued and cared for by trained volunteers, many of these birds can be cleaned and released back to the wild.

We need to prepare for the possibility of oil spills in our waters. The Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary is organizing efforts to establish waterfowl rescue plans throughout Long Island. There are numerous aspects to this project and volunteers are very much needed. The response so far is very encouraging.

Among the diverse and rewarding committees being formed are - Fund Raising, Photography, Telephone Alert, Transportation, Publicity, Typing, Equipment, Records, Work Teams and Education. There is something for everyone to do and ideas (etc.) are gratefully received.

Please, let's prepare and participate in the protection of the beautiful environment we all love here on Long Island. All interested please call the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary, 516 WA 2-3200 or Eileen Connolly, 516 938-3949.

Eileen Connolly



Ed Chasin, SSAS member from Oceanside, reports that he has a Wood Thrush residing in his backyard this winter! Also, a Hermit Thrush is a frequent visitor - two rare guests who have taken a liking to Ed's special backyard habitat of wood chips, bird feeders and running water!

BIRD WALKS 1977

Field Trips: Starting time - 9:30 a.m.

No walk if it rains, snows, or temperature is 25 degrees or below.

- FEB. 6 - West End #2, N.W. corner
- 13 - Tobay, J.F.K. Sanctuary
- 20 - West End #2, N.E. corner
- 27 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

- APR. 3 - West End #2, N.W. corner
- 10 - Zach's Bay, Pkg. Fld. #4
N.E. corner
- 17 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- 24 - West End #2, N.W. corner

- MAR. 6 - Zach's Bay, Pkg. Fld. #4
N.E. corner
- 13 - West End #2, N.W. corner
- 20 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- 27 - Tobay, J.F.K. Sanctuary



Elliott Kutner, Birding

COMING EVENTS:

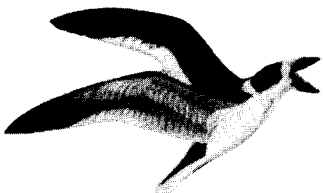
Audubon Wildlife Film Series, Mar. 23
Henry Peterson, "Bahamas: Top to Bottom"
Hempstead Town Pavillion

Regular Meeting: Tues., Feb. 8
Alvin Friedman, "Birds and Animals Around
the World"

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