

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOL. 7, NO. 7

MARCH 1977



AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION NIGHT
TUESDAY, MARCH 8
8:15 P.M., FREEPORT LIBRARY



Our March meeting will be an Audience Participation Night. Some of our members have volunteered their slides for the evening. Members will show five to ten of their favorite slides - anything from general scenes to closeups of birds, plants, rocks, etc. These slides may be sequential shots on one subject or completely unrelated to each other.

So, please come to our March 8th meeting, bring your slides, and make Audience Participation Night a big success. It depends on YOU!

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

As of February 15, I have received approximately 25 bird counts from our members. Please keep them coming - so far, our winter bird count is as follows:

Mourning Dove	<u>114</u>	House Sparrow	<u>314</u>	House Finch	<u>64</u>
Downy Woodpecker	<u>16</u>	Red-Winged Blackbird	<u>5</u>	Am. Goldfinch	<u>14</u>
Blue Jay	<u>70</u>	Hairy Woodpecker	<u>2</u>	Towhee	<u>6</u>
Black-capped Chickadee	<u>15</u>	Common Grackle	<u>10</u>	Sl. Colored Junco	<u>54</u>
Tufted Titmouse	<u>10</u>	Brown-Headed Cowbird	<u>16</u>	Tree Sparrow	<u>6</u>
White-Breasted Nuthatch	<u>6</u>	Cardinal	<u>55</u>	Song Sparrow	<u>42</u>
Mockingbird	<u>20</u>	Evening Grosbeak	<u>50</u>	Fox Sparrow	<u>57</u>
Starling	<u>266</u>	White-Throat Sparrow	<u>99</u>	Purple Finch	<u>19</u>

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

There is state legislation pending that would require a deposit on all beverage containers purchased. When returned, the deposit would be refunded. Benefits involved in such legislation would be as follows:

1. There would be a reduction by 2/3 in throw away of containers.
2. We could realize a substantial savings in energy and a net reduction in original usage of raw materials.
3. By survey, it has been determined that there would be a basic gain of 4,000 jobs connected with this new container process.

Write your state legislator. Ask for a "yes" vote on this beverage legislation.

We have been terribly worried about waterfowl this winter. Up to this writing, we have purchased and distributed three tons of cracked corn. I anticipate further purchases to help the birds get through this winter. Anyone interested in helping out can make a donation - any amount of money will help. Make your check payable to the South Shore Audubon Society, with a note requesting your money be used on "The Birds."

Keep up your own feeding programs. Your program is critical - now through spring.



Elliott Kutner, President

ON THE EDUCATION FRONT:

This year South Shore Audubon is running a pilot education project at the Columbus Avenue School in Freeport, N.Y.

Now that the first semester of school has ended, I would like to share some activities with our membership.

In October our president, Elliott Kutner, came to the school to show his film on "Backyard Birds" to grades 1 through 4. The children enjoyed the program thoroughly having had nearly two months of background education about birds and their life cycles.

At Christmastime we planted a Jonathan fir tree in the courtyard and the classes all helped decorate the tree with food for the birds (cranberries, popcorn, peanut butter and bird seed pine cones).

All the grades have been busy with many projects such as: endangered wildlife, energy savers, incubation and the breeding of chickens, building bird houses, food, noise, air and water pollution, assemblies in littering and many recycling projects.

There will be a culminating activity toward the end of the school year with all classes taking part.

I will keep you informed from time to time of new activities.

Elaine Butkerei, Education

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 GROSBEAK	_____	FOX SPARROW	_____
STARLING	_____	WHITE-THROAT SPARROW	_____	PURPLE FINCH	_____

As reported in our Jan. and Feb. Skimmers, SSAS is offering an outstanding opportunity to purchase Bushnell and Bausch & Lomb binoculars, scopes and tripods at a savings of 30 to 50%. These special prices are available when we order in groups of 12. The following article will help you decide which type of equipment will best fit your needs. If you wish further info. please call Asa Starkweather (LY 9-5824) or Joan Butkerei (LY 3-4554).

◁ How Your Binoculars Work ▷

Choosing a pair of binoculars can be a very confusing experience. No one type is singularly the best for all uses. An understanding of how binoculars work aids in choosing a specific type that will best suit individual needs. Binoculars have three specific jobs: 1) they magnify 2) they let in light 3) they show a given area at a time. These three areas of concern cause binoculars to have a considerable number of variables. When looking at a selection, the magnification power is indicated by a number followed by an x - 7x, 8x, etc. are examples. This number tells how many times the object being viewed is enlarged. An egret viewed at 140 yds. using pair of 7x binoculars would appear to be 20 yds. away. The size of the objective lens, which is the lens closest to the object being viewed, is listed after the magnifying power. 7x35, 8x40, 7x50, etc. are all examples. The size of this lens is instrumental in letting in light. Larger lenses gather more light. The third function, that of showing a given area at a certain time, is indicated as the field of view. This is specified as feet at 1000 yds, or as degrees of angle (one degree would equal 52 ft. at 1000 yds.). An example would be Bushnell's Banner Broadfield Super-wide Angle 7x35 binoculars. They have a very wide 630 ft. field of view. If indicated in degrees, the specifications would read as follows: 7x35 WA 12 deg.

These three functions are interdependent. For example, as the power goes up, normally the field of view is narrowed. This can be compensated by specifically constructed wide angle glasses that let you see the object closely without sacrificing a broad perspective. Wide angle glasses are usually a little heavier due to larger prisms and elements required in their construction. The greater the magnification power, the less light that is let in. 7x35 would let in more light than 9x35. The relationship between the 7x and the 35 is measured in what is called exit pupil. 7x35 glasses have an exit pupil of 5. A large exit pupil lets in more light than a small exit pupil, In good daylight all binoculars have enough available light. All that is necessary is that the exit pupil of the binoculars be open to the same degree as that of the pupil of the eye at the time of use. Human pupils are open about 2.5mm in daylight to 3.5mm-5mm at dusk. 7x35 binoculars, with an exit pupil of 5 would function perfectly from twilight to dusk. Special evening uses would require 7x50 glasses or special night 7x50 glasses.

O.K.? Now to choose the best pair for your needs. Unless your needs are specifically geared to viewing objects at tremendous distances, such as the ocean or prairie, no power greater than 7x or 8x is needed. In fact, powers higher than that require a very steady hand or tripod. An exit pupil of 5 is perfect for most needs. Any additional light that would be available from a large power/objective lens ratio is not used by the eye during the day, and in fact is wasted. The additional weight of these types is often a hinderance to birders, hikers, and sports enthusiasts. Unless you have need for light at night or late dusk, 7x35 or 8x40 glasses are the most appropriate for multi-purpose wildlife viewing and most sports activities. Many companies make special compact and lightweight models for those people who need even less weight and bulk. A wide angle is of great use to wildlife viewers, although extremes are not necessarily needed. One last important consideration is to make sure the binocular you purchase is coated. This indicates that all glass surfaces and prisms are coated with a thin, hard coating to prevent loss of light through reflection. This coating appears to be slightly blue or amber on the lens surfaces.

Joan Butkerei



Bird Seed Postscript

January 22 may not have been the coldest or windiest day this winter, but it certainly was short of perfect. Many thanks to all those who worked that day distributing seed and handling phone calls - their efforts went far beyond what most of us call a full day's work. The trailer contained over 23,000 lbs. of seed, 18,000 lbs. of which our chapter sold. The remaining seed was distributed to Huntington and Lyman Langdon Audubon chapters. There still remains one bird bath warmer for anyone who is interested.

Seals



Once again the hunting season for Harp Seals on the ice pack off Newfoundland is fast approaching. The opening date has been set for March 15, with 170,000 seal pups slated to become decorative apparel. This number is the established quota set by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Environment whose minister is Romeo Le Blank. The quota system was established to halt the drastic drop (90%) in Harp Seals since the turn of the century. The system seems to have slowed but not reversed the trend towards the animals' extinction. While much noise has been voiced in the past, little has been done to curb the action of Canadian and Norwegian sealers who slaughter their prey by clubbing them to death. This year Swiss journalist, author and conservationist, Franz Weber, is attempting to stop the hunt by offering the Canadian government close to \$400,000 to find and establish new jobs for former seal hunters. If this effort fails, Mr. Weber hopes to gather 600 journalists and naturalists from around the world to witness the killing, thus arousing further public awareness. A total boycott of seal products and an effort to express your views should be directed to Romeo Le Blank and the Canadian government to help the plight of this species. Information concerning the Weber Foundation can be obtained by writing to: Save Our Seals, Box SOS, Plainview, New York 11803.

SST

On March 3 the Port Authority is planning to reassess its ban on Concorde landings at Kennedy Airport. If the agency was to act in favor of the plane, the door would be open for scheduled flights in and out of Kennedy for the next eight months. This is the time remaining for test flights into this country as set by the Federal Dept. of Transportation. It would then be up to both agencies to reach a final decision on Concorde operation in this country. If the agency rules against the plane, lawsuits are sure to follow. It is important that you express your opinion now in letters to both the Port Authority and Governor Carey, since the Governor has veto power over any agency decisions.

Paul Butkerei, Conservation

Ann Weinstock sent in the following info. on the necessity of grit for the birds:

"...remember that birds need a certain amount of grit to help digest their food. During extended periods of heavy snow, some sand, fine gravel, or crushed shells (available from most food stores) should be mixed with the grain or made available separately. Birds have been known to "starve" amid an abundance of food because they couldn't digest it."



(pp. 190-191) Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.
The Habitat Guide to Birding
Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1974

South Shore Audubon now has an insignia decal, showing a Skimmer in flight, to display on the rear-view window of your car or any other appropriate place. The cost is 50¢ and they are available at all meetings.

This month we begin a series of articles by Al Lemke (past President of SSAS) about the exciting, exotic continent of Africa. With its rich abundance of animals and birds, Africa is a dream come true for any wildlife enthusiast.

South Africa Revisited

Part I - Letaba - Wild Dogs and Bateleurs

It is truly said that any animal lover who has ever seen Africa will never get it out of his blood. So, after a seven-year absence, we returned for our third vacation in the southern portion of this enchanting continent.

We started with nine days in world-renowned Kruger National Park, at 7,500 square miles twice the size of Yellowstone. Our first camp was one we had not stayed at before, Letaba. It immediately became our favorite. A lovely garden area was aglow with varicolored blossoming aloe plants - of which over 300 varieties are found in South Africa - interspersed with kaffir trees blazing with huge, brilliant red-spiked blossoms. Not mere horticultural adornment, the blooms were covered with birds - Cape glossy starlings, with their iridescent blue plumage, and tiny varicolored sunbirds, closely resembling hummingbirds. Yellow and red-billed hornbills fed on the ground.

On an early morning drive we encountered, at extremely close range, a pair of the wild dogs of the region. The Cape hunting dog - an attractive looking, medium-sized predator, brown with dark spots and large, rounded ears - is quite rare and we had never seen any previously.

A short drive later we spotted, though at some distance, two bateleur eagles, smallish, dark birds with bright red bills and legs.

Our last evening in Letaba we were given a special treat. Shortly after sunset an enormous elephant cow came to within a foot of the fence at the edge of camp and stood there calmly stripping and munching her favorite food, mopane leaves. We could have reached through the fence and touched her. Fortunately, everyone there knew better. Elephants can be very dangerous, as can any wild animal.

After three delightful days we departed for our next camp, Olifants, and further adventures.

Al Lemke

This month we are also pleased to have an article by James Remsen, Jr. on his trip to the White Mountains National Forest in New Hampshire.

White Mountains Morning

The White Mountains National Forest of New Hampshire provides many beautiful birds. The mornings can be as cold as autumn even in July! It was on such a morning that noisy chickadees led my sister to a young blue jay, flapping on the floor of the woods. We knew enough not to touch it - the parents were probably nearby. The other mornings were like a paradise - birds everywhere. Cuckoos, vireos, blackbirds, sparrows, thrushes, flickers, and warblers plus an occasional goldfinch overhead provided some of the most beautiful music in nature. I must have added I don't know how many birds to my list.

New Hampshire sounded like a good birding spot, but I never thought it could be that good. For those who like mornings full of birdsong and beauty, New Hampshire is the next best thing to a walk deep in a sunlit forest.

James Remsen, Jr.

APR. NEWS DEADLINE MAR. 15



BIRD WALKS 1977

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

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

- 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

- 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

Elliott Kutner, Birding

COMING EVENTS:

Regular Meeting: Tues., Mar. 8
"Audience Participation Night"

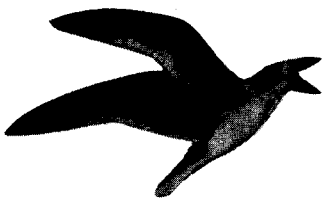
T. R. Sanctuary: Sun., Mar. 13
"Return of the Birds" - B. Kolodnicki

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

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