

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 21, NUMBER 3 – SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 1991

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Truth or Consequences

Joan Butkerei

When addressing problems, I usually recommend the setting of long and short term goals, the identification of possible consequences, and the search for the best route in reaching these goals. Since this is a conservation and education organization, there has been a lot of dialogue with members concerning our stand on several issues. Some South Shore Audubon members want us to be more actively militant about environmentalism; others have expressed the exact opposite view, criticizing the environmental community for economic hardships.

In my mind, the current economic woes are a direct result of greed, speculation, theft, poor banking regulations, and a policy of letting the next generation fix up the mess. SSAS has always attempted to strike a good environmental balance while reaching toward good economic health. We promote wise policies concerning public lands, natural resources, wildlife management, and environmental health. We believe that economics and conservation do not have to be polar opposites. Bad present conservation practices always lead to terrible economic consequences in the future. Destruction and channelization of wetlands result in flooding, loss of wildlife, loss of food resources, and loss of tax revenues in flood relief funds; bad forestry results in no forest for the future and untold species loss; wasteful fuel use results in unnecessary habitat destruction, increased air pollution, and potential hardships for the future.

Let's work together to create a secure economy that is based on sound environmental ground.

*IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS*

NEXT MEETING

Sandy Brenner

DATE: Tuesday, November 12, 1991

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
Merrick Rd. & S. Ocean Ave.

SPEAKER: John Brokos

TOPIC: Through the Seasons

Join us for a pictorial nature study of a year at Mill Pond – a slide program from January to January.

ELECTION DAY 1991 – VOTE AGAINST #2 Exchange of Forest Preserve Lands

The following is reprinted from the L.I. Sierra Club's newsletter, but also reflects the opinion of the National Audubon Society regarding Proposition #2:

This proposed amendment to the New York State Constitution would authorize the state to convey to the town of Arietta fifty acres of Adirondack Forest Preserve land within the town of Arietta for public use in providing for the expansion of the Piseco airport, in exchange for which the town of Arietta would convey to the state 53 acres of forest land. This would amend Article 14 of the Constitution, which states "*The lands [of the Forest Preserve] shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold, or exchanged ...*"

This proposition is opposed by the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the Adirondack Council, the Environmental Planning Lobby, and local residents of Hamilton County.

- There is no public need for this exchange. The Piseco airport has no transportation or economic justification.

- The Piseco airport is located in the town of Arietta (population 350). The town wants to construct a new runway for \$5 million in public funds.

- A new runway is a major threat to the Forest Preserve. The runway is visually in line with Mt. Marcy and

next to two major wilderness areas. It would cut the 130 mile *Northville to Lake Placid Trail*.

- This is the second time the town of Arietta has asked for more state land. Arietta's land area is 203,786 acres.
- The project will cause serious environmental damage to surrounding wetlands and streams, and will cause air and noise pollution in pristine wilderness forests.
- The project has not had an environmental impact statement study performed in accordance with the state Environmental Quality Review Act. The environmental impact has not been established.
- The land proposed to be given in exchange to the state has been determined to not be of equal or higher value.

We urge you to vote NO to this threat to the Forest Preserve. The runway extension would benefit a handful while posing a threat to the surrounding wilderness. This is the wrong way to celebrate the centennial of the Adirondack Park. The citizens of New York State, to whom the 106-year-old Forest Preserve belongs, would be the big losers in this exchange for lands that are of little value.

THE HARD HEAD WOODPECKER

The Adirondack Park Visitor Interpretive Centers in Paul Smiths and Newcomb, NY provide a series of "Nature Detectives" columns to local newspapers and other publications. Questions are submitted by readers; answers usually focus on the Adirondacks, but can pertain to Long Island too: Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers visit my feeders (the Red-bellied Woodpeckers discovered our yard and window feeders last winter); Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have been spotted in a neighbor's tree a few times. I'd like to thank SSAS member Porgy Smith for introducing me to "Nature Detectives."

How is a woodpecker able to peck so much? Doesn't it hurt?

Woodpeckers have carved out a distinct niche for themselves as they are the only birds that actually drill for their meal in live wood. A woodpecker has a strong chisel-like bill which is protected at the tip by a hard cover. Feathers protect its nostrils from flying wood chips. The skull is designed somewhat like a helmet, sheltering the brain from the shock of its pecking. A hinge between the base of the bill and the brain appears to help defuse the shock. Strong neck muscles allow it to peck without tiring easily. These evolutionary adaptations are well suited to pecking, so it probably doesn't bother the woodpecker at all.

Woodpeckers are common in the Adirondacks. Among those you'll likely see are Pileated, Downy, Hairy, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and possibly the Black-backed Woodpecker.

HAWKS AT CAPE MAY

Tom Torma

During the fall of each year I develop the urge to join the birds in their migration and travel south to Cape May, New Jersey. The purpose of this adventure is to watch hawks that gather at that location. The most common hawks observed at Cape May are the accipiters (Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks) and the falcons (American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcons). Other raptors can also be seen there, including Osprey, Turkey Vultures, and occasional Bald Eagles. Most of these birds are immature birds traveling south along the coast. All goes well for these birds until they hit Delaware Bay at Cape May. The young hawks are afraid to cross the bay. They hang out at the cape for a while before deciding to move north along the eastern shore of the bay, and cross the water at a narrower point. In effect, the hawks back up at Cape May.

Of all the hawks I have seen at Cape May, my favorites are the Peregrine Falcons. This crow-sized bird is truly magnificent. Once, while crossing the parking lot at Cape May State Park, a small flock of Blue Jays flew overhead. Suddenly, the flock exploded into individuals dispersing in all directions. All this action caught my attention. I glanced up just as a Peregrine Falcon was diving straight at me, only to veer upward at the last second. This moment of drama only lasted a few seconds. It almost seemed unreal. It is a moment of time I will never forget.

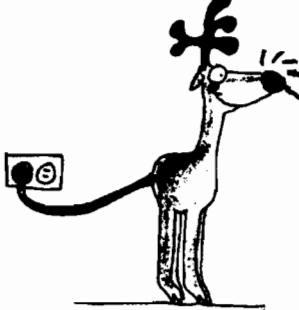
During another trip to the cape I observed a Peregrine Falcon circling overhead. It was eating another bird on the wing. Suddenly, the wing of the Peregrine's victim came off. As the wing spun toward the earth, we were able to identify the species the Peregrine was dining on. An American Kestrel had fallen prey to his cousin, the Peregrine Falcon.

My favorite place to watch hawks is Cape May State Park. The park has hawk observation towers and nature trails with boardwalks crossing wetlands. To get to the park, take the Garden State Parkway to Cape May village. Take the road from the village to Cape May Point. The park is located at the lighthouse.

I find Cape May to be an excellent location for hawk photography. I usually bring both my telephoto and novaflex lenses to the cape. I set my lenses up on an observation deck in the nature trail and hope for a hawk to land on a tree or stump nearby. While I wait for a miracle, I use my fast-focusing novaflex lens to grab a shot of low-flying hawks passing by. I should say attempt to take a photo; hawks in the wild are never easy to photograph.

So, if you want to see hawks, I'll see you in early October 1992 in Cape May, New Jersey.

HOLIDAY PARTY AND WORKSHOP FOR THE ANIMALS



FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF ALL AGES

Saturday Dec. 14
1:00 - 4:00

Tackapausha Museum
Washington Ave.
Seaford, New York

Refreshments
Live Animal Programs
Make Gifts for the
Animals
Santa Claus
Trim the Tree



IT IS PARTY TIME AGAIN!!

WELCOME VOLUNTEERS!!

CALL: FRIEDA G. MALAMENT
795-5842

Sponsored by
South Shore Audubon Society
Tackapausha Museum

CONSERVATION REPORT

Lois Bartow Schlegel

NYS Environmental Enforcement Act. Living next to a horse farm years ago in Ronkonkoma lent me the pleasure of daily visits and flirtations with equine life. It housed retired quarter horses, surfacing a caretaker on occasion.

Winter's start unfolded a discernable lack of care of the horses. Their frames were detectable in late-night darkness, and I believed they were left outside all night. When I called the farm the following day, the "person in charge" aimed to dissuade me that there was any wrongdoing. Another day, the horses again stood outside, affirmatively all night, in the winter cold – this time in the rain. I made another futile phone call, and became increasingly uncomfortable about the horses' conditions and the owner's dispassionate concern.

I made many attempts to find out who could be responsible for looking into this. All fingers pointed to the ASPCA. Upon calling them, I was informed that their headquarters were in NYC and they didn't have anyone to send this far east to do a comprehensive assessment of the conditions. They asked if I could perform as one of their agents by inconspicuously monitoring the farm daily for a week or two and report details back to them. In complying, the findings included continued exposure to severe weather conditions, a minimum of horse feed, and sometimes no water.

Weeks passed. The horses thinned, despite their growing winter coats. Many months passed without me receiving conclusive word of what would be done. Vain attempts in following up forced me to put their efforts on the back burner. Sometime later – certainly not soon enough – the farm closed down. Correspondence with the ASPCA was so poor that I never did find out if they had it closed or if the owner dismantled his business there for other reasons. Shelved relief that the farm was defunct urged me to entrust that the horses were distributed to healthy settings.

A more confident, amenable route for a citizen to take to ensure that laws are enforced would have suited me better. I am reminded of this incident when the thwarting question of "WHAT TO DO?" arises when a wrong is publicly being committed. The whos, whats, and hows can leave you in a maze, as can the outcome. Is this segue doing the same?

Of special concern to many of us is *environmental pollution*. There are federal, state, and local environmental laws to abide by. When a federal law is broken, public citizens can take it up in federal courts. On the state level, currently the *NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC)* has prime responsibility for enforcing *New York State's Environmental Conservation Law (ECL)* and prosecuting polluters.

Parallel to striving for laws that protect our eco-resources, we unfortunately *need to make sure that the laws that are in place are enforced!* With the DEC ceaselessly understaffed and underfunded, and the state in a budget crisis, existing environmental laws can remain unenforced.

A proposed state law to rectify this is the *Environmental Enforcement Act*, commonly known as "*Citizens Suits*." This law would grant citizens access to the courts to increase environmental law enforcement where the state has failed to act. It would supplement the efforts of the DEC, at no cost to the state.

The Environmental Enforcement Act would include the following sections of the ECL: air pollution; water pollution; solid, hazardous, and infectious wastes; fresh-water and tidal wetlands; pesticides; wild and scenic rivers; and mineral resources.

This proposed bill has been regularly passed by the *State Assembly* and supported by the Governor. Over 30 states have adopted similar "citizen suit" provisions, and they are included in most major federal environmental laws. The *State Senate* in prior years showed signs of wanting to negotiate, offering a legislative package that would give more enforcement power to the Attorney General of NY, but offered no version last year.

Offering more power to the Attorney General is progress, but with the DEC so under-resourced, I feel that private citizens must be empowered to initiate legal action to ensure enforcement of the environmental laws that we all work so hard to get passed in the first place!

The two key *Senate leaders* paramount in deciding this legislation are *State Senator Ralph Marino* (Senate Majority Leader, 220 Townsend Square, Oyster Bay, NY 11771) and *State Senator Owen Johnson* (Chairman, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, 23-24 Argyle Square, Babylon, NY 11702). **Please write to both of them, urging the passage of the Environmental Enforcement Act.** Expressing appreciation that they've worked on this bill in the past may lend encouragement for them to work on it this year to submit a version. These types of bills, that will cost nothing to the state, may be on the top of their pile for consideration – but your voice is needed to help them make the choice.

L. I. Groundwater. At this writing (already past our editor's deadline!), there's brief news that a management plan for protection of Long Island's nine Special Groundwater Protection Areas (SGPA's) is soon to be released. Citizen hearings may begin in November. I'm told that Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) has tons of literature about it for the asking, so call 798-6556, and we'll do an update in next month's newsletter.

Fall Berries. Here are a few shrubs and trees to grow that bear colorful fruits and berries in the fall, attract birds and wildlife, and are Long Island natives.

- (1) **Arrowwood** (*Viburnum dentatum*) – Shrub. Blue-black berries. Birds.
- (2) **Bayberry** (*Myrica pensylvanica*) – Shrub. Whitish gray waxy nutlets through winter. Birds.
- (3) **Hackberry** (*Celtis occidentalis*; aka Sugarberry and Nettle Tree) – Tree 30–40 ft avg. Dark red to purple berries. Birds and wildlife.
- (4) **Persimmon** (*Diospyros virginiana*) – Tree to 60 ft. Yellow fruit. Wildlife.
- (5) **Red Chokeberry** (*Aronia arbutifolia*) – Shrub. Red berries. Birds.

BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 AM except for Pelham Bay Park; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

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| Nov. 3 | Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge |
| Nov. 10 | Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner |
| Nov. 17 | Twin Lakes Preserve (take Sunrise Hwy. to Old Mill Rd., go north to school) |
| Nov. 24 | Pelham Bay Park for <i>Owls</i> (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9:00) |
| Dec. 1 | Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner |
| Dec. 8 | Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge |

A WORD FROM THE NAS PRESIDENT

The following originally appeared as National Audubon Society President Peter A.A. Berle's column in the October 1991 *Audubon Activist*. The accompanying cartoon by John Branch is from the same issue. The 8-page newspaper is available free to all Audubon members who pledge to write at least two letters and make at least two phone calls per year on behalf of environmental issues. Write to *Audubon Activist*, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022. Sample copies are available at SSAS meetings.

Memo to the President – Don't Forget Your Pledge. President Bush is in danger of turning his pledge of "no net loss of wetlands" into a cruel joke. The oft-repeated phrase, you remember, was uttered by then-candidate Bush in the heat of the 1988 presidential race. "All existing wetlands, no matter how small, should be preserved," Mr. Bush said at the time. In the first year of his administration, the president seemed true to his word. He spoke often of his concern for wetlands, and

backed it with action. He gave tacit approval, for example, to EPA Administrator William Reilly's courageous veto of the permit for Two Forks Dam in Colorado.

More than two years later, however, we are still losing nearly 400,000 acres of wetlands a year, and the president's promise has been eroded by one cynical measure after another. In early 1990, the administration altered an interagency agreement to essentially exempt from mitigation procedures states "with a high proportion of land that is wetland." That meant developers in Alaska, for instance, could tear up wetlands with virtually no regulation.

Ever since, the president has consistently deferred to those within the administration who would sweep aside "nuisance" wetlands. New forces have risen to prominence in the president's inner circle, such as the Council on Competitiveness headed by Vice President Quayle, that place the concerns of business well ahead of the environment.

Now the Bush administration has proposed a sweeping series of measures – among them a change in the definition of what constitutes a wetland, which would exclude between 10 and 30 million acres of lands that are wet only in some years or seasons. We know these seasonal and ephemeral wetlands to be vital for flood control, wildlife, and other values. The president claims the change will be offset by vague proposals to acquire more "high-quality" wetlands, thus preserving "no net loss."

Americans won't stand for this kind of doublespeak. But it is not too late for Mr. Bush to keep his campaign promise. He can reverse his proposals and take a stand against Representative Jimmy Hayes' H.R. 1330, a bill which would gut the chief wetland-protection law, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In doing so, he can show that his concern for wetlands is not just lip service.



THE MAILING GAME

Michael Sperling

Your Chance to Help. The deadline for submitting articles for the December/January *Skimmer* will be Thursday, November 7th. Anyone reading this message who would be willing to contribute articles (you suggest the subject) or drawings to any issue of our newsletter is encouraged to call me at 541-0805. I'm also looking for additional volunteers who are available for occasional Monday morning or Friday afternoon trips to our printer and post office in Island Park. Those of you who enjoy carrying heavy boxes and sacks of mail, or who live near me (I'm in North Massapequa), are most likely to be called upon, but the only requirements for volunteering are a car and free time. SSAS is an all-volunteer organization; the more volunteers, the stronger our chapter!

Where the *Skimmer* Goes After You've Told the Post Office to Forward or Hold Your Mail. Unless otherwise instructed, the post office will discard any third class mail that is sent to the address of someone who has asked that their mail be forwarded or held. Because SSAS is willing to pay 29¢ extra postage for each address correction (without forwarding), we will eventually find out that you have moved, gone on vacation, or escaped to a winter home, and we will adjust our records accordingly, but you will have missed at least one issue of the *Skimmer*. If you would like to receive missing back issues or would like to inform us about a temporary or permanent address change, *please* call me.

Where Your *Skimmer* Has Been When It Arrives Late. The *Skimmer* is regularly mailed 22 days before our general meeting, but a few post offices seem to be competing to see who can take the longest amount of time to find our mailboxes (I've received some issues in just three days, but one issue took an amazing six weeks). Members frequently receiving their newsletters late or not receiving some issues at all are urged to contact me.

WRITING TO OUR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Marianne & Solomon Weinstock

We recently talked to someone who has contacts with legislative assistants to government officials. She told us that when mail is heavy and a crucial vote is near, mail is often neither read nor counted, but just *weighed*. If you, like we, have tried to keep your messages short, you may want to change, perhaps even adding relevant material, so that your opinion is given its proper weight (pun definitely intended).

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

Marianne & Solomon Weinstock

You're probably all aware of the International Crane Foundation's effort to save endangered species; some of you may be members. Since we were visiting in Minnesota at the time of the annual meeting on September 21st this year, we took the opportunity to go to Baraboo, Wisconsin and attend it. We want to encourage all of you who have ever considered going there to do so. The special tour of Crane City, where breeding cranes are kept, was especially interesting. The tour is not always available. However, a pair of each of the world's fifteen crane species is always on display. Cute babies and their (human) chick-moms (and an occasional pop) may be out for their daily exercise.

A highlight of the meeting was a talk by a Vietnamese woman, married to an American, who serves as a translator to people trying to establish a Vietnamese sanctuary for cranes, helping both the cranes and the local people.

The address is: International Crane Foundation, E-11376 Shady Lane Road, Baraboo, WI 53913-9778. Phone number is (608) 356-9462. Open daily from May 1st to October 31st. Group tours are offered from April 15th to October 31st, by appointment.

NOTES FROM A BIRDWATCHER'S LOG

Elliott Kutner

Our birding experience brings out feelings that might reflect some of your own. I hope these two poems mirror some of your thoughts.

Forest Secrets

Emilie Petersen (at Brookside Preserve)

Deep in woods
Over rocks and streams
Muddy trails
A little yellow
More and more
An entire field
Eyes widen
Disbelief
Joy!
Golden celandine
On a pillow of green
Reaching up to greet spring

The Bird

Michael Skelly (St. Mary's School)

The bird is a great and wonderful thing
It has feathers from wing to wing
Sometimes people hunt them down
Sooner or later they won't be found

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marion Yavarkovsky

It is exciting to list 104 new members this month. Fall is a wonderful time to join SSAS. You will be able to participate in nearly all of our activities this year. Join our monthly meetings, weekly bird walks, cleanups, and committees. We hope you will become active members.

[For information on joining the South Shore Audubon Society, please call our Membership Chairperson, Marion Yavarkovsky, at 379-2090. The best time to call is after 4 PM, Monday through Friday.]

Atlantic Beach Frances Brander
Baldwin Susan/Edward/Rachel Frankel, Mrs. R. Hackett, Howard Hindin, Mr. Steven Mavroubis,
Mr. William Purje, Lois W. Sheaff
Bellmore Mr. Joseph Dubs, Dr. Paul R. Medici, D. Schmidt
Bethpage Ken Rose
Cedarhurst Helen Mandelbaum
Commack Kathy Baca
East Meadow F. Peter Herzberg
East Rockaway Ms. Deidra O'Hea
Elmont Lorraine Engenito, Lynn Lyons
Farmingdale Fredric A. Herrel, Mr. Robert J. Krapp
Floral Park Stewart Blechner, Mr. Bill James, Mr. Joseph G. Kirschner, Linda A. Realá, Diane
Scaplehorn, Mr. Jack Silverman
Franklin Square Ms. Alison Moyer Wolin
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Gregory Scala
Garden City Maxine Chrein, Barbara Smutny
Hempstead Mrs. Walter Ganzi, Mrs. Karen Landsman, C. Schroder
Hewlett Mrs. Frederick Bruell
Hicksville Ms. Pearl J. Curran, Ms. Elizabeth Dittmar, Miss Hermine E. Kelley, G. Krause, Mrs. Doris
Williams
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Lawrence Mr. & Mrs. B. Blaustein
Levittown Ms. Linda J. Burke, Miss Maureen Mahoney, S. Mendelson, Deborah Ross
Long Beach Linda Bogash, Mr. Warren L. Forman, Ruth Goldsmith, Ms. Vicki L. Miller, Mary Murphy,
Henry E. Rakowski, S. Tydings
Lynbrook Ruth Bayer, Mr. Gary J. Campagne, Kenneth Gibbons, George T. Kavanah, M. Kuhnle,
Mrs. Dawn McGrath, Mike Whitty
Massapequa Denise Capparelli, Donna Infozino, Terry Matarazzo
Massapequa Park ... Howard Schusterman, Hedy Strunk
Merrick Joyce Becker, Mr. Christopher Gilhooly, Hessen Family, Mr. Robert A. Margolis, Laurence
F. Mullin, Louis P. Polillo, M. Sanders, Beth Spranger, Judy Lee Sweeney
Oakland Gardens ... Colleen Veltri (Editor's note – in Queens, not California)
Oceanside Mrs. Anne P. Schachtel
Plainview C. Houk, Liduina Monicelli, P. WidELITZ
Rockville Centre Sally Katz, Martin Levine, Ms. Janet S. Matthews, Isabelle Ramsdell, Mr. Vito Vitrano
Seaford Ms. Alyce Gehrling, Miss Gina Mennella, Karen Shoffstall
Valley Stream Rae Blasenheim, Mr. Robert Golaszewski, Albert Greifenberger, Joan Pupke
Wantagh Mr. Richard F. Carr, Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Esrick, Ms. Alexandra A. Kitch, Mr. Robert
Lyons, S. Williams
West Hempstead ... Shi-Hen Huang, Mrs. P. Johnson, Mr. Joseph F. Murphy
Woodmere Miss Alice Carroll

AUDUBON HOTLINE (202) 547-9017 ★ RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 832-6523 ★ WILDLIFE POISONING HOTLINE (800) 356-0560

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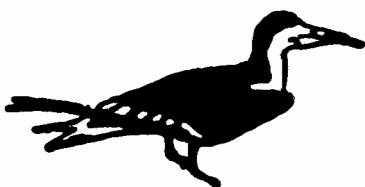
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