# OUTH HORE KIMMER

**VOLUME 22. NUMBER 8 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY** 

**MAY 1993** 

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

James Remsen, Jr.

I suspect that some of you who are new to our organization, as well as some long-time members, occasionally become confused when confronted with a blizzard of environmental issues. You want to take some action, but you don't know what to do or say, or you don't even understand what the opposition is saying. Coming up is an event that will, over three days, sort out the major environmental issues of our time and tell you exactly what needs to be done to help. It is the National Audubon Society's Northeast Regional Conference, to be held Saturday, July 10th through Tuesday, July 13th at the YMCA Conference Center in Silver Bay, NY, in the scenic northern Lake George region of the Adirondacks. The theme this year is "Our Future in Wildlife Protection."

The conference is open to all. As National Audubon's Northeast Regional Vice President David Miller says: "The speakers include policymakers, scientists, administrators, educators, and activists... The setting and program are full of time for fellowship and recreation... Silver Bay is also wonderful for families, with children's programs during the conference. I encourage you to bring your family to enjoy the amenities and splendor of Silver Bay."

This gathering will attract delegates from Audubon chapters all over New York and New England. I have attended one previous Regional Conference at Silver Bay and can vouch for the beauty of the location and pleasantness of the conference center.

Among the topics to be covered are: wetlands and the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Ancient Forest Protection Act, Long Island Sound, James Bay, the Adirondacks, linking forests to migratory birds, and much more. Participants will have the option of going on field trips and early morning bird walks. Registration costs \$40 (if postmarked before June 11th) and per person, double occupancy rates, depending on choice of accommodation, are \$152 and \$173, including three nights' lodging and nine meals (Saturday dinner through Tuesday lunch). Single

# **NEXT MEETING**

Sandy Brenner

DATE: Tuesday, May 11, 1993

TIME: 8:00 PM (Letter of the Month at 7:45)

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

Merrick Rd. & S. Ocean Ave.

SPEAKERS: Harold & Kathy Lindstrom

TOPIC: <u>In Pursuit of Birds</u>

Harold Lindstrom is a well-known nature photographer whose work has appeared in major birding magazines and National Audubon calendars. This exciting slide show encompasses birds seen in Barrow, Alaska (on the Arctic coast) and in other wonderful birding spots of Canada and the United States.

Please Note: Our next general meeting at the Freeport Memorial Library will be in September, presumably on the second Tuesday. Our June speaker (to be identified in next month's *Skimmer*) will appear at our annual dinner on June 15th; the reservation form is inside.

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

occupancy rates are slightly higher, and children ages 3-12, in rooms with their parents, are half the adult rate. Children under age 3 are free.

This is going to be a fun and informative weekend. I have a limited number of conference programs and registration forms. If you are interested, drop a note to our post office box or call me (evenings) at 764-5168, and I will see that you receive them. You can also get them by writing to Regional Conference, National Audubon Society, 1789 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203, or calling (518) 869-9731.

Since many of you will (hopefully) receive this *Skimmer* before May 8th, the date of our **Birdathon**, I just want to remind you that this event is both fun and profitable for South Shore Audubon. All you need to do is get one or more people to agree to pledge a certain amount for each species of bird

you see that day and then collect the pledges, which South Shore will split 50-50 with National Audubon. Don't worry if you're not an expert birder; our Birdathon leaders will be more than happy to show you the birds! We'll be birding at top spots all over Long Island; for full details see the April Skimmer. If you can't come with us, feel free to count species anywhere you please (even out-of-state), but make sure you send us a list of what you saw, along with your pledges. Any questions? Call me at 764-5168 or my sister Doreen at 472-6830. Good luck and good birding!

# 

[Editor's Note: The following is reprinted from a "New Water Technology for the Kitchen and Bathroom" brochure published by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County. For a list of other water conservation resources available for home, garden, and lawn, write to 1425 Old Country Road, Plainview, NY 11803-5015 or call 454-0900 and ask for the Water Resource Listing.]

Water use has doubled in the United States since the 1950's. Fresh water now threatens to displace oil as the most valuable liquid on Earth. There is an increased consciousness of the need to conserve water. New York State and national lawmakers have enacted legislation that mandates additional water conservation in the 1990's. For homeowners, the increasing stress on water supplies translates into higher water bills. Individuals can easily lower their water consumption by installing water-saving fixtures. A good place to start is the bathroom, since over 40% of water use occurs there.

Available Technology. Ultra-low flush toilets use 1.6 gallons or less per flush. Most current toilets now use between 3.5 and 8.0 gallons per flush. These ultra-low flush toilets can save over 20 gallons of water per person per day. In NY State, legislation was enacted for 1992 that mandates ultra-low flush toilets for all new and retrofit installations.

Low flow showerheads have a flow of 2.1 gallons per minute or less when the supply line pressure is 6.0 pounds per square inch. Most showerheads now in use have a greater flow rate — 5 to 10 gallons per minute at the same pressure. Consumers can save 4 to 8 gallons of water every minute with an easily installed low flow showerhead.

Faucet aerators cut water flow by 50% while maintaining normal pressure. They easily attach to a faucet to conserve water in the bathroom and kitchen. Aerators can save 100 to 150 gallons of water per month for a family of four.

A low flow bathroom faucet has a flow of 2 gallons per minute or less when the supply line pressure is 6.0 pounds per square inch. Most bathroom faucets now in use have flow rates of 3 gallons per minute or more. These low flow faucets can save 1 to 2 gallons of water per person per day. Legislation mandating low flow bathroom faucets for all new and retrofit installations took effect in 1991.

How Much Water and Money Can Be Saved Using These Devices? You can save 31.5 gallons of water per person per day (22 with the toilet, 8 with the showerhead, 0.5

with the aerator, and 1 with the faucet), 126 gallons per family of four per day, or 45,990 gallons per family per year. The rate charged for water varies with location, season, and amount used. In Nassau County the current [circa 1990] water price ranges from \$0.06 to \$0.45 per 100 gallons. Use of these newer water conservation devices could mean a savings to a family of four in Nassau County of \$30 to \$210 per year in water bills! In addition to the savings generated by conserving water, there would be additional savings in fuel used to make hot water. At a cost of 96¢ per gallon for oil, savings could be an additional \$150 per year.

How Can These Devices Be Installed? Faucet aerators and low flow showerheads install easily. They can be installed by an unskilled person in a few minutes. Toilet and faucet installations would probably necessitate the help of a plumber.

How Can Consumers Obtain These New Water Conservation Devices? Many manufacturers produce ultra-low flush toilets, low flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and low flow bathroom faucets. The products may be obtained at most plumbing supply houses and home improvement centers. Read labels and ask questions.

What Other Measures Can Consumers Take to Conserve Water Inside Their Homes? Use these simple guidelines to make sure you aren't wasting water:

- Eliminate leaks. Test for a leaking toilet by adding food coloring to the tank. Without flushing, note if any color appears in the bowl after 30 minutes. If color appears, you have a leak. Take care of it!
- Check your water meter while no water is being used. If the dial moves, you have a leak. Find it and fix it.
  - Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket or ashtray.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running tap water.
- Know where your water shutoff valves are. In an emergency, you can shut off your valves quickly and save water.
- Use your dishwasher only when you have a full load. Choose cycles with the least number of washes and rinses.
- Don't run water continuously when washing dishes in the sink.
- Wash clothes only when you have a full load. Set the water level control appropriately. Permanent press cycles may use an additional 10 to 20 gallons of water per load.
- Add your garbage to the compost or trash instead of putting it in a garbage disposal. Disposal units not only use a great deal of water, but also add solids to an already overloaded sewer system.
- Take short showers instead of a bath (using a low flow showerhead, of course).
- Don't let water run in the sink while shaving, brushing your teeth, or washing your face and hands.
- Use the water from dehumidifiers for indoor plants. Put buckets outdoors to catch rainwater and use the water for indoor plants.

## DIPPER AT CASCADE CANYON

Tom Torma

The small boat took me across Jenny Lake to the foot of the hiking trail that leads to Hidden Falls. From the base of the falls, the trail continues up a series of switchbacks to the mouth of Cascade Canyon. The switchbacks pass back and forth across a stream that cascades down the eastern slope of the Teton mountains into a valley known as Jackson Hole. The trail continues to follow the glacier-fed stream into Cascade Canyon to Solitude Lake.

On the way up the switchbacks, I stopped to rest at the side of the stream and observed a small grey wren-like bird walking into the rapids. It appeared to be walking along the bottom of the stream with its wings half open. The bird was a dipper (sometimes called a water ouzel). These birds live along clear rapid-moving streams in western mountains, from Alaska to Central America. They are so tied to the streams that they even nest under roots or in rock crevices at streamside. Dipper nests have even been observed behind waterfalls. They make their living swimming, diving, or walking along the bottom of streams, picking up aquatic insects, small fish, and snails. Dippers can dive to a depth of 20 feet, making them truly aquatic songbirds.

There are four dipper species worldwide, all living along mountain streams. One species lives in the Andes of South America. Two other species live in Europe and Asia. Dippers are related to wrens and thrushes, and have characteristics of both. They are solitary except when nesting; each bird stays in its territory, which consists of a half-mile to a mile of stream. Dippers are well adapted to living in and around plunging mountain streams. They have filmy feathers with a heavy layer of down. A large preen gland, ten times larger than for most songbirds, provides oil to protect their feathers. Dippers have a flap to cover their nostrils and a membrane to protect their eyes from the spray of rapids and waterfalls.

Hidden Falls and Cascade Canyon are located in Grand Teton National Park. The park is located just south of Yellowstone National Park in western Wyoming. The Teton Range rises 7000 feet above the floor of Jackson Hole to create one of the boldest and most magnificent mountain fronts in the world. The park is also home to elk, bears, moose, and the rare Whistling Swan. It seems appropriate to see the remarkable American Dipper, a symbol of wild mountain streams, in one of the jewels of America's National Park System, Grand Teton National Park.

# **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

<del></del>

We are pleased to welcome the newest of our 2000 members. Join our all-volunteer chapter for two hours at our ninth (and last) general meeting of this year, or enjoy the great outdoors while watching spring migrants on a Sunday morning bird walk. Our meetings and walks are free and open to the public, so bring a friend!

For information on joining SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Marion Yavarkovsky, at 379-2090. The best time to call is after 4 PM, Monday through Friday.

Raldwin	James K. Morrow, Lynn &	
Datowiii	Marvin Nathanson,	
	Ms. Mary F. Williams	
Cedarhurst	•	
	Daniele De Bellis, Mr. & Mrs.	
East Meadow	Thomas Ferrar, Ms. Pam Furcht,	
E4 D4	Sally Omer, Robin Weiss	
East Rockaway	Ms. Joyce Bloch, Ms. Florence	
<b>.</b>	Temple, Neil West	
Farmingdale		
	Mr. & Mrs. Nat Quinn	
Floral Park	M. C. Osso, Rae Stahl,	
	Ms. Lucille Zuppardo	
Franklin Square		
Freeport	John Helwege, Dr. Patricia Long,	
	Patricia Phelan	
Garden City		
Hempstead	Ms. Carol Edkins	
Hewlett	Lois Riss	
Hicksville	Ms. Kathryn E. Kerzner	
Lawrence	Simon Lynn	
Levittown	John Geisler, Mrs. Emanuel	
	Hartofil, Ms. Vesta L. Hoppen,	
	Francine D. Sikorski	
Long Beach	Joyce Capone,	
	Ms. Dorothy B. Thompson	
Lynbrook		
•	Donna M. Donini, Robert Gallo,	
	Mr. John H. Hanshe, William	
	Krol, Ms. Christine McManus,	
	Marcia Specht, Sophie & Philip	
	Morris	
Massapequa Park	•	
Merrick		
	•	
Old Bethpage		
Point Lookout	_	
De de III. Con	Ada & Dave Goodrich	
Rockville Centre	-	
0.6.1	Mr. Philip Stevens	
Seaford		
Valley Stream		
	Miss Florence C. Johs,	
	Joseph A. Popper	
West Hempstead		
	<b>*****************</b>	
RARE BIRD	ALERT (212) 979-3070	
+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	<b>*****************</b>	
WILDLIFE POISONING HOTLINE (800) 356-0560		
+***********		
AUDUBON HOTLINE (202) 547-9017		
+ > + > + > + > + > + > + > + > + > + >	<b>*****************</b>	

# 1992 NYS ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Michael Sperling

Back in December, I started reprinting descriptions of the bills that the Albany-based nonprofit and nonpartisan Environmental Planning Lobby used to individually rate our State Senators' and Assemblymen's performances in 1992. Eight bills were given three trees (see rating system below); all passed the Assembly, but only one passed the State Senate and became law. Eleven were given two trees; all passed the Assembly, but only two passed the Senate and became law. In our last installment, five one-tree bills were listed; all five passed the Assembly, but none passed our Senate. If you'd like to receive back issues of the *Skimmer*, please call or write.

For 1993, we still have the same balance of power in New York State's legislature and the same leadership (Democrat Saul Weprin as Assembly Speaker and Republican Ralph Marino as Senate Majority Leader), but there are signs that Marino may actually allow one of the most crucial proenvironment bills to reach the Senate floor this year — the environmental trust fund (now called the environmental assistance fund) that died in the Senate in 1991 and 1992.

Before we complete our 1992 recap, here's the rating system used by EPL:

- 3 Trees. Proposed legislation would be of significant assistance and benefit to help resolve a pressing problem facing New York's environment.
- 2 Trees. Proposed legislation would provide substantial benefit to New York's environment.
- 1 Tree. Proposed legislation would be beneficial to some aspect of New York's environment.
- 1 Stack. Proposed legislation would be detrimental to the cause of environmental protection in New York.
- 2 Stacks. Proposed legislation would do substantial harm to New York's environment.
- **3 Stacks.** Proposed legislation would likely result in major or lasting harm to New York's environment.

Tug Hill Commission . This bill extends the existence of the Tug Hill Commission for an additional three years. Since 1972, the Commission has served as a useful network and effective catalyst for regional planning and preservations in the Tug Hill region of Central New York. Other regions of the state continue to look to this Commission's work for innovative guidance in their own regional planning. A11985 (Hinchey) / S8414 (McHugh) passed both houses and was signed into law by the Governor.

Pesticide Reporting . This bill requires state agencies, public authorities, and public benefit corporations to compile an annual report of pesticide use and establish pesticide and herbicide reduction policies. Although EPL recommends that this bill be amended to give more specific guidance to enable agencies to provide meaningful data, the measure recognizes the feasibility and benefits of reducing the state's use of highly toxic substances that are often unnecessary or easily replaced by safer alternatives. S1464-C (Daly) passed the Senate but did not have an Assembly sponsor.

Sewage Power Sources . This measure requires large sewage disposal systems and those near marine and coastal waters to be equipped with emergency sources of power. In the event of an energy shortage, backup power source generators would prevent tons of raw sewage from spilling out of the disposal facilities and into the waters of the state. The Hudson River estuary, an important spawning area and habitat for many aquatic species, is especially threatened by raw sewage spills. A2830-A (DiNapoli) / S1828-A (Johnson) passed the Senate but was held in the Assembly Codes Committee.

Hazardous Substance Reporting . This bill expands the annual inspection of roads and highways performed by the Department of Transportation to include reporting the existence of any known or suspected petroleum, hazardous substances, solid waste, or hazardous waste. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) would then inspect and clean up these hazards which pose an imminent threat to the safety and health of travelers. A3429 (Hinchey) / S2288 (Johnson) passed the Senate but was held in the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Sewage Floatables . DEC estimates that an average of 172 million gallons of raw sewage is released daily into New York's marine environment from sewer overflows. This sewage contains floatable material such as syringes and plastics, which contaminate New York's water, litter our beaches, and threaten the health of New York's citizens. This bill requires that all sewer treatment outfalls into marine or coastal waters be equipped with devices to remove all floatable material from the sewage discharged. S2316-A (Johnson) passed the Senate but did not have an Assembly sponsor.

Flow Control Package . These three bills establish laws and regulations for Greene, Tompkins, and Sullivan counties to impose limitations on competition with regard to the collection, transportation, storage, and disposal of solid waste. These county laws would override any conflicting local law. EPL opposes all solid waste "flow control" measures that do not specifically mandate that all recyclable material actually be recycled and not permitted to be buried or incinerated. All too often, flow control measures that do not address recycling facilitate the construction of an incinerator, which requires a consistent stream of solid waste. This usually discourages meaningful recycling programs and may even lead to the importation of waste from other counties. A10151-A (Faso) / S7317-A (Cook), A10167-B (Luster) / S7348-B (Seward), and A10655-A (Coombe) / S7787 (Cook) passed both houses and were signed into law by the Governor.

Catskill Park Signs . Much too often, the beauty and integrity of New York's scenic areas are compromised by overzealous billboards, signs, and other advertisements for the area's commercial interests. However, current regulation allows the Catskill and Adirondack Parks to preserve much of their beautiful vistas that keep tourists coming back again and again. This bill would undermine existing regulation and

allow businesses in the Catskill Park to post up to four additional directional signs. S1658-B (Cook) passed the Senate but had no Assembly sponsor.

Crane Pond Road I. This bill would reopen Crane Pond Road, which travels through state lands within the Pharaoh Mountain Wilderness Area. Under the State Land Use Management Plan (SLMP) for the Adirondack Park, motor vehicles are not permitted in designated wilderness areas. Crane Pond Road has already had damaging effects to this area's pristine, wild character due to excessive and inappropriate use of motorized vehicles. This bill would establish a destructive precedent by undermining the SLMP and continuing destructive motorized use of a state wilderness area. A8037 (King) / S4910 (Stafford) passed the Senate but was held in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

Deregulate Floridone II. This bill sets a dangerous precedent by overriding existing pesticide registration procedures, in order to facilitate the unsafe and largely unregulated use of the pesticide floridone (Sonar) to control weed growth in water bodies. Such careless use of floridone could lead to drinking water contamination, hazards to humans in contact with treated water, and destruction of wildlife habitat and beneficial aquatic plants. A576 (Kelleher) / S416 (Stafford) passed the Senate but was held in the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee.

Cicero Swamp Spraying II. This bill permits the circumvention of an important process for declaring a "public health threat" or "public health emergency" in order to allow mosquito spraying in the Cicero Swamp region of Onondaga County. The measure exploits the occasional presence of the eastern equine encephalitis virus in certain Cicero Swamp mosquitoes to pave the way for indiscriminate "comfort" spraying. Already, Cicero Swamp spraying has resulted in more than one case of pesticide poisoning in humans, and poses a great risk to this unique wetlands ecosystem that is a designated state nature and historic preserve and home to the endangered Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. A10039-A (Bragman) / S7254-A (Lombardi) passed the Senate but was held in the Assembly Health Committee.

Bear Dog Bill II. This measure legalizes the use of packs of dogs to hunt black bear in New York State, as part of a larger bear management bill. EPL opposes this abusive practice, which works as follows: A pack of dogs chase a bear for typically hours at a time. The intent is to drive the bear up a tree and maintain it there until the hunter arrives after tracking the dogs through their radio collars. The hunter is then able to shoot the bear at point blank range out of the tree. It is a known practice for the hunter to allow the dogs to maul the still-alive bear as their reward. A10231-A (Bragman) / S7384-A (Stafford) passed both houses but was vetoed by the Governor.

Dirty Air Bill 111. EPL strongly opposed this bill that prohibits the Department of Environmental Conservation from implementing the California Low Emission Vehicle program, which would provide us with significantly cleaner cars and less air pollution. Passage of this measure would

have a devastating impact on New York's attempt to comply with the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA), and would force its citizens to continue breathing dangerous levels of ozone, carbon monoxide, and toxics. Additionally, it would aid the automobile and petroleum industries' nationwide attempt to undermine the CAAA, which they hope will lead to a reversal of the most significant federal environmental law passed over the last decade. A9652-A (Bragman) / S7003-A (Johnson) passed the Senate but was held in the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee.

Improper Landfill Closure III. Landfills contain many toxic and hazardous substances that can severely damage the environment and threaten public health if not carefully treated. This bill would allow communities to close their overflowing landfills improperly based upon insufficient information about the landfills' history, for purely economic reasons. The measure would begin the practice of reversing environmental standards when localities are having difficult fiscal times, despite historical proof that pollution only becomes more expensive when allowed to bloom into crisis proportions. S4211-C (Bruno) passed the Senate but was not sponsored in the Assembly.

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO OUR BYLAWS

James Remsen, Jr.

The Board of Directors of SSAS recommends to the general membership two amendments to our bylaws. It is required that the general membership approve all amendments to the bylaws by majority vote before they become final.

The effect of these amendments, if approved, will be to increase the number of consecutive terms that the President and Vice President can serve in those offices from two to three. This will allow talented individuals to serve longer in the top offices and allow them more time to be productive.

In each of the two sections below, the proposed amendment is to change the italicized "two (2)" to "three (3)."

**Article 4, Section 1.** The elected officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice President, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, and a Treasurer.

All officers shall hold office for a period of one (1) year. The President and Vice President shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive one-year terms, but there shall be no limitations on the terms of the other officers.

Article 3, Section 3. (The section to be amended is excerpted here.) ... The Vice President, regardless of prior service, shall be eligible to serve two (2) years as President, and any other officer, regardless of prior service, shall be eligible to serve two (2) years as Vice President.

Please note that these amendments, if passed, will not change the way we conduct elections. Presidents and Vice Presidents must still be reelected to their offices each year; the number of consecutive years for which they are eligible is all that will change.

The vote on these amendments will be taken at our Annual Dinner on June 15th. Please come and vote.

# ARCHAEOPTERYX — IS IT A BIRD? (Is it a Dinosaur? Superman? Should We Care?) Betty Borowsky

In 1861, paleontologists found a well-preserved fossil in Bavaria. The fossil, about the size of a crow and believed to be about 140 million years old, was so well preserved that the teeth of the skull and the bones of the tail were extremely well defined. To the scientists' surprise and delight, in addition to these reptilian characteristics, the fossil also had wings and its body was covered with feathers. The fossil was named Archaeopteryx ("archae" for "old" and "pteryx" for "wing") and its combination of features suggested that it might be a link between the reptiles and the birds. Since the original discovery, other specimens of Archaeopteryx have been found and scientists have had a field day arguing about whether this species was in the direct evolutionary path that led to modern birds or was an offshoot.

The most recent controversy centers around a study by Alan Feduccia of the University of North Carolina, who concluded that "Archaeopteryx probably cannot tell us much about the early origins of feathers and flight in true protobirds because Archaeopteryx was, in the modern sense, a true bird." In other words, Archaeopteryx was not a link between the reptiles and the birds. The study received a lot of attention, with an article in the New York Times and a commentary in Science, the journal in which the study was published. Actually, the study and the attendant controversy reveal more about how science works than about the evolution of birds.

Science is based on common sense. One of science's most fundamental assumptions is that two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. In biological systems, this means that if two things have the same structure, then they have the same function. For example, the wings of a penguin and the flippers of a seal look very much the same and, sure enough, they are used primarily to propel their owners through the water. Among the birds, relatively short, thick bills generally indicate that the birds are seedeaters, and so on. (Now, biological systems are complex, and sometimes this assumption turns out to be incorrect, but it generally holds and even when it isn't true, the assumption forms the basis of a testable hypothesis, which can lead to interesting new information).

Until this recent study, most researchers were of the opinion that birds had evolved from the dinosaurs. No one questions that birds evolved from reptiles, because modern birds have scales on their legs and lay eggs. Most paleontologists felt that the birds evolved from dinosaurs because, among other things, one group of dinosaurs, Archaeopteryx, and modern birds have wishbones, the fused shoulder bones that assist flight.

Dr. Feduccia measured the curvature of the claws of 30 species of birds: 10 ground dwellers, 10 perchers, and 10 trunk climbers (woodpeckers, etc.) to see whether the claw geometries of birds with different habits would be different.

(He omitted species that depend on their claws for other functions as well, such as raptors, who use the claws to capture prey.) He found that ground dwellers tend to have straighter claws than perchers or climbers. This is easily explained — while perching birds would benefit from curved claws to help them grasp branches, ground dwellers would be impeded by curved claws, which would force them to limp along the ground. (Now, we know that most perchers spend some time on the ground. They just can't move around very well there. Think of how some sparrows hop on the ground, or how awkward a pigeon looks as it careens from side to side when it's in a hurry. Typically, when a perching bird has to move fast, it takes off and flies away.)

Dr. Feduccia's next step was to measure the curvatures of the claws of *Archaeopteryx* to see whether they matched the ground dwellers or the others. He found that the claws of *Archaeopteryx*'s feet were like those of perching birds. Ergo, it must have been a perching bird.

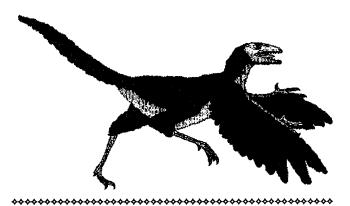
Let's look at this study. There is no way we will ever be able to prove that Archaeopteryx actually perched; the species has been extinct for a long time. However, in the absence of any contradictory data, and based on common sense, it is reasonable to conclude that Dr. Feduccia is right and that this species was a percher.

What about the global conclusion that Archaeopteryx was a true bird? Dr. Feduccia described other features of this fossil that suggest it was a bird. It had true feathers. Further, the microstructure of the feathers looked like that of modern, flying birds, not like the feathers of flightless species. Archaeopteryx had a wishbone indistinguishable from that of modern birds; the large rear toe was fully reversed, as in modern perching birds, but different from any known dinosaur. In addition, its bones were hollow, an adaptation that reduces an animal's weight to make it easier to fly. All these things suggest that this species was closer to the birds than to the dinosaurs. However, Archaeopteryx also had teeth and a long, bony tail (although covered with feathers), and lacked the typical keeled sternum of birds. This bone is where the large flight muscles attach and is necessary to permit true, vigorous flight.

Even Dr. Feduccia said that the bird probably could not fly as well as modern birds. So was it a bird, was it a dinosaur, or was it a link? Well, should we really care?

Now this was a really neat study (and I wish I had thought of it), but in truth the revelation that Archaeopteryx perched does not force us to reject the possibility that it was in the main path — it merely shows that the animal spent more time in trees than on the ground. It is entirely possible that there were dinosaurs that spent time in trees, too, but we haven't found their fossils yet.

We will need more fossils to tell us more about the links between the reptiles and/or the dinosaurs and the birds, and the nature of things is that we may never get them. In the meantime, in the interest of truth, let's not conclude more from an experiment than the facts warrant.



## **BIRD WALKS**

Elliott Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 AM; no walk if it rains. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

May 2	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
May 9	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 16	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
May 23	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 30	Memorial Day Weekend — No Walk
June 6 & 13	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

# **CLEANUP AT COW MEADOW**

Our cleanup is scheduled for Sunday, May 2nd at 1:00 PM, with a rain date of May 16th, also at 1:00 PM. Bring rakes and gloves; we supply the bags. Cow Meadow Preserve is located at the end of South Main Street in Freeport. Call Betsy Gulotta at 546-8841 for more information.

# 

Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bird Sanctuary is owned by the National Audubon Society and operated by the Community and three local Audubon chapters, including South Shore Audubon. The Sanctuary's address is 134 Cove Road, Oyster Bay, NY 11771; telephone (516) 922-3200.

**Pre-K Through 4th Grade.** The Sanctuary's Explorer programs will be offered at TRS in **Oyster Bay** and simultaneously at Tackapausha in **Seaford**, from 9 AM to 1 PM on Mondays through Thursdays. You can enroll your child for one to seven weeks; program topics will be different for each week and for each of three age groups. Contact TRS for more information on these weeks of hands-on discovery, outdoor exploration, conceptual games, and live animals.

Ages 12 Through 15. An Earth Stewards Camping Program featuring ten days at Camp Dippikill in the Adirondacks and two at TRS will take place from June 30th through July 11th. Camp Dippikill is an 827 acre wooded wilderness retreat owned and operated by the Student Association of the State University of NY at Albany. One of the trip leaders will be a TRS staff member; a group of 20-25 young people will spend seven days in cabins with conveniences, and three days hiking and camping. For details, please contact TRS.

# **NOMINATIONS FOR 1993-1994 OFFICERS**

Elliott Kutner

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 11th, officers will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee [Elliott Kutner (Chairman), William Hollweg, and Nora Lourenco] has recommended the following candidates:

President — James Remsen, Jr.
Vice President — Michael Sperling
Treasurer — George Popkin
Recording Secretary — Louise Hillen
Corresponding Secretary — Doris Pirodsky
Director (to 6/96) — Steven Goldberg
Director (to 6/96) — Carole Adams

# **DINNER TIME AT SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON**

Shirley Kutner & Diane Singer

We would once again like to invite all our members to a wonderful evening of fun at Pompei Restaurant, 401 Hempstead Ave., West Hempstead, NY. This year's dinner will take place on Tuesday, June 15th; the cocktail hour starts at 6:30, with dinner at 7:30 PM. The cost is \$17.50 per person.

Please complete the form below and send it, along with your check payable to *South Shore Audubon Society*, to: Diane Singer, 118 Kent Road, Valley Stream, NY 11580. Early reservations help!

×
NAME:
ADDRESS:
AMOUNT OF CHECK:
NUMBER OF PEOPLE:
NUMBER OF EACH MENU CHOICE:
Roast Beef
Filet of Sole Dijon
Chicken Francese
Eggplant Rollatini
or, if you prefer:
Broiled Chicken
Broiled Fish

# 1992-1993 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

James Remsen, Jr., President	764-5168
George Popkin, Treasurer (8 to 9 PM)	
Louise Hillen, Recording Secretary	546-6147
Doris Pirodsky, Corresponding Secretary & Historian	378-1790
Paul Devendittis, Director (6/95)	
Bruno Leporati, Director (6/95)	
Marge Jaeger, Director (6/94)	536-9166
Richard Packert, Director (6/94)	
Evelyn Blume, Director (6/93) & Scholarships Chairperson	378-7122
Tom Torma, Director (6/93) & Fund-raising Chairperson	223-7947
Sandy Brenner, Program Chairperson	249-4919
Joan Butkereit, Wetlands Conference Committee Chairperson	623-0843
Paul Butkereit, Bird Seed Savings Day	
Rose Ermidis, Education Chairperson	
Joseph Grupp, Duck Survey	
Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve Committee Chairperson	
Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips Chairperson	486-7667
Joseph Lancer, Binocular / Book Sales (7 to 9 PM)	
Annie F. McIntyre, Conservation Legislation Chairperson	
Doreen Remsen, Birdathon Chairperson	472-6830
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming Committee Chairperson	599-1224
Mary Jane Russell, Hospitality Chairperson	766-7397
Diane Singer, Publicity	561-6118
Porgy Smith, Environmental Information Chairperson	887-2054
Michael Sperling, Skimmer Editor and Interim Vice President	541-0805
John Staropoli, Youth Representative	599-1569
Marion Yavarkovsky, Membership Chairperson	
	317-2070

# South Shore Audubon Society P.O. Box 31 Freeport, NY 11520-0031

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED** 





U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 1181
NONPROFIT
Freeport, NY