OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 2 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

OCTOBER 1993

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

James Remsen, Jr.

It is always an occasion for regret when a voice that fought on behalf of our environment is stilled. When that voice is stilled at a relatively young age, the regret felt is often deeper and stronger. The recent tragic death of ornithologist Ted Parker, in an accident while pursuing his research in Ecuador, is a loss so great that its impact may never be fully understood. To many of you, Parker was not a household name, but in the ornithological community he was a giant. He was probably one of the top two or three authorities in the world on the birds of the American tropics, and his research produced results that argued strongly for the preservation of our imperiled tropical forests. It was said that he could recognize nearly half the world's bird species by voice alone.

In the February 1992 issue of the Skimmer, I wrote an article describing some of Parker's astonishing achievements. Part of one paragraph read as follows: "Since 1974, Parker has tried to find out everything possible about the birds of the neotropics. He collects information on their life histories, collects specimens, and records their poorly known voices on tape, in an effort to educate other scientists. He is collaborating on the first field guide to the birds of Peru, and his field notes contain enough material for countless scientific papers, of which he has already published at least fifty. He leads birding tours for half the year, and as of 1988 had deposited over 8,000 tape recordings in Cornell University's Library of Natural Sounds, a vast collection of sound recordings of wildlife from around the world."

I closed my article with a quote from Parker himself, in which he reflected on how quickly some tropical forests are disappearing: "It's scary. We have to work fast ... Many species will never be recorded again because the areas where they're found are so inaccessible — some of these places are several days from the nearest road. We have to hike in with pack animals. Yet, incredibly, even these areas are disappearing, being cut down by farmers. We have to record the birds before they're gone." Today, that quote takes on an added poignancy. There is no way Parker could have known,

NEXT MEETING

Sandy Brenner

DATE: Tuesday, October 12, 1993

TIME: 8:00 P.M.

PLACE: N. Merrick Public Library

1691 Meadowbrook Rd.

SPEAKER: Elliott Kutner

TOPIC: Catch of the Day — A Walk Through a

Salt Marsh

An exciting movie presentation by our always enthusiastic Birding Chairperson, who in 1970 was one of the founding members of South Shore Audubon Society.

PLEASE NOTE: The Freeport Memorial Library is undergoing renovations, so we are temporarily relocating to the North Merrick Public Library. The library is midway between Sunrise Highway and the Southern State Parkway, so choose your favorite directions (5,5,0):

Option #1. Southern State Parkway to Exit 23 (Meadow-brook Rd.) south past two traffic lights (the second one is Camp Ave.). Look for the library on your left; its building was once a school.

Option #2. Sunrise Highway to the first traffic light east of the Meadowbrook Parkway (Babylon Tpk.). Go north on Babylon Turnpike; when Babylon Tpk. turns left (toward its interchange with the Meadowbrook Pkwy.), continue straight — you're now on Meadowbrook Road. The library is about 3/4 of a mile ahead, on your right.

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE

BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS

at the time he said it, that his own time to discover and document the vanishing life of the rainforest would be so short. Although he leaves a legacy of writings and tape recordings that chronicle his discoveries, we will never know how much new knowledge this incredibly productive

scientist and environmentalist might have contributed had he lived longer. Ted Parker will be greatly missed.

In the June Skimmer, I mentioned with regret the passing of Brigitte Braff, our local advocate of endangered Piping Plovers and Least Terns, who concentrated her efforts at Silver Point Park, a Nassau County Park in Atlantic Beach. About the time the June Skimmer was reaching your hands, SSAS forwarded a request to Nassau County Executive Thomas Gulotta that the portion of the park that Brigitte helped protect be named the Brigitte Braff Bird Sanctuary in her memory. I am pleased to report that the County has agreed and we hope to have a dedication of the property this fall. I'll update you at bird walks and meetings as we obtain more definite information on this.

BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kutner

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

| Oct. 3 | Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner |
|---------|--|
| Oct. 10 | Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner |
| Oct. 17 | Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot) |
| Oct. 24 | Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge |
| Oct. 31 | Hempstead Lake State Park (Pen. Blvd.) |
| Nov. 7 | Tobay JFK Sanctuary |
| *** | ···· |

THEODORE ROOSEVELT SANCTUARY

134 Cove Road Oyster Bay, NY 11771 (516) 922-3200

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 following programs are open to the public. Space is limited and registration is required. All program fees are required at the time of registration.

Saturday and Sunday, October 23rd and 24th (11 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.) — Annual TRS Wildlife Festival at Planting Fields Arboretum. This is our biggest fund-raiser and a great way to educate the public about wildlife. Some of the featured guests are: a golden eagle, a bald eagle, a fruit bat, a bobcat, a red fox, falcons, hawks, owls, snakes, and lizards. There will also be crafts, food, environmental organizations, games, and nature walks. Adults \$4, children \$2.50.

Saturday, October 30th (7 P.M. to 9 P.M., Grades 1 to 6) — All Species Day Halloween Program. Our Halloween program with a twist. Participants must come dressed as their favorite animal. Awards will be given for best costumes. We will have activities on endangered species as well as nocturnal animals and traditional Halloween fare. TRS members \$4, nonmembers \$6.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Our Treasurer, George Popkin, has provided the following information as determined by our volunteer accountant, Jeffrey Liebowitz of Solomon, Schneider, Orenstein & Liebowitz.

| Assets | |
|--|----------|
| * General Fund Checking | \$24,260 |
| * General Fund Savings | |
| * General Fund Money Market | |
| * Certificates of Deposit | 38,607 |
| Total Assets as of 6/30/93 | |
| Receipts | |
| * Audubon Adventures | 455 |
| * Birdathon | |
| * Business Trips | |
| * Donations | |
| * Dues — Members | |
| * Greening of Long Island | |
| * National Audubon Society | |
| * Sales — Bird Seed | |
| * Sales — Flea Market | |
| * Sales — Opticals | |
| * Skimmer Ads | |
| * Skimmer Subscriptions | |
| * State of NY Grant — Brookside Preserve | |
| * Interest Income | - |
| * Charity Raffles | |
| Total Receipts | |
| | 0 1,20 1 |
| Disbursements | 200 |
| * Bank Service Charge | |
| * Brookside Preserve | |
| * Cleaning — Twin Lakes | |
| * Conferences & Conventions | - |
| * Contributions | |
| * Dues — Membership | |
| * Greening of Long Island | |
| * Licenses (Mailing Permit) | |
| * Meetings — Speakers | |
| * Miscellaneous | |
| * National Audubon — Birdathon | |
| * Office Expense | |
| * Postage | 177 |
| * Printing/Mailing — Skimmer | |
| * Purchases — Bird Seed | |
| * Purchases — Opticals | |
| * Rent | |
| * Scholarships | |
| *T. R. Sanctuary | |
| Total Disbursements | |
| Net Increase in Fund Balance | 18,141 |



BIRDING IN TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

Michael Higgiston

The Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo were two birds most likely to be found on the Edwards Plateau in the Texas Hill Country west of San Antonio. As I had never seen these birds, I decided to travel to Concan, Texas last April to add both to my life list.

Concan is about a two hour drive west from San Antonio. I stayed at Neil's Vacation Lodges, located on the Rio Frio. These lodges are especially advantageous because the tour guide I engaged, June Osborne, has led birding trips from Neil's and had practically guaranteed my seeing both birds in this area, the Vireo right on the grounds.

We started our birding with a walking tour of the property. We spotted Phoebe, White-winged Dove, Carolina and Bewick's Wrens, Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Inca Dove, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (shown at right), Titmouse, Verdin, Long-billed Thrasher (at its nest), Bell's Vireo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and my first life bird of the trip, a Black-chinned Hummingbird at a feeder outside the dining room.

At dinner, June persuaded me to forego birding for a visit to the Concan Bat Cave. Located on private land, it is the home of 17 million Mexican free-tailed bats. We arrived about 7 P.M. and, in the distance, we could see a steady stream of bats leaving their roost site for their night feeding. We drove to the cave and saw bats pouring out of the cave mouth. We stayed there for about an hour and at no time did the volume of bats emerging from the cave diminish. We also saw some Turkey and Black Vultures, a Swainson's Hawk, a Vermilion Flycatcher, and a Rufous-winged Sparrow. We returned to Neil's to seek out an Eastern Screech Owl. It didn't take long. We went to a spot June had previously scouted and after playing a tape for a few moments, we were delighted to see two owls peering at us quite intently from a nearby tree limb. This was life bird number two for the trip.

The following morning, we left Neil's with a basket lunch for Lost Maples State Natural Area, about 20 miles north. Once we arrived, it was difficult to leave the parking lot. Carolina Chickadee, Titmouse, Black-and-white and Nashville Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Canyon Wren, and Scott's Oriole were present. We left the parking area to attempt to spot our target birds. We finally heard the Vireo, but an hour of searching could not locate the bird. This bird is so secretive that even catching sight of its movements is nearly impossible. We continued birding through the park, when a very striking warbler popped out in plain view in response to our spishing sounds. This warbler gave us good views and it was life bird number three - the Goldencheeked Warbler. It nests in the Texas Hill Country and winters in Mexico; it is threatened because of human encroachment on its habitat. I received a dividend soon thereafter; on our way out of the park, we came upon a singing bird perched on a dead crag. It was a Brown Flycatcher, life bird number four. We drove back to Neil's and made several roadside stops to see Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Eastern Bluebird, Summer Tanager, Orchard Oriole, Eastern Meadowlark, Wild Turkey, Loggerhead Shrike, and Cattle Egret.

We decided to have lunch at Neil's at a picnic table behind one of the unused cottages that is a good birding spot. So there we were, with a sandwich in one hand and binoculars at our sides, when the Black-capped Vireo came for a visit. He stayed for some time, darting in and out of the bushes, but we were able to get good views of the bird. You never know. Life bird number five was certainly an easy one, but not as easy as number six.

After lunch, June took me 10 miles south of Concan to a crossroads, turned right, and pulled off the road. She mentioned that this was a good spot for Cassin's Sparrow, and as luck would have it, we spotted several sparrows singing and acting all the world like Cassin's Sparrows. They should all be this easy.

We continued further south to the Sabinal Grain - Driskill Feedyard. Although aromatically it left a lot to be desired, it



was quite impressive as a birding hot spot. Common Ground Dove; Black-bellied Whistling Duck; Lark Bunting; Brownheaded Cowbird; Kestrel; Orange-crowned Warbler; Yellow-breasted Chat; Lark Sparrow; Yellow-headed Blackbird; Grasshopper, Rufous, and White-crowned Sparrows; and Barn and Tree Swallows were all present. We returned to Neil's for dinner and a nighttime search for Whippoor-will, but we were unsuccessful.

The next morning after breakfast, we confined ourselves to the grounds and saw Lark, Savannah and Chipping Sparrows, Indigo Bunting, Lesser Goldfinch, Grackles, Curvebilled Thrasher, Scrub Jay, and Cactus Wren.

After my final lunch at Neil's, I left for home feeling very satisfied with my trip to Concan. Good accommodations, good food, good weather, good birding. It doesn't get any better than that.

BIRD SEED SAVINGS DAY

Our first Bird Seed Savings Day this season is Sunday, October 24, 1993, from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. at Tackapausha Museum in Seaford. All preorders should be sent to Paul Butkereit by October 12th (see last month's *Skimmer* for the order form or contact Paul or Michael Sperling to get a copy). HELP IS NEEDED to take orders, sell bird feeders, and carry seed around the parking lot. Call Paul at 623-0843 to volunteer.

EDUCATION

Carole A. Adams

Just a Reminder. The deadline for enrollment in Audubon Adventures is October 22nd. Developed and written by professional educators with a special interest in environmental issues, it is available to educators, scout leaders, librarians, and other group leaders, and covers a wide range of environmental topics. Each enrollment in Audubon Adventures includes up to 32 copies of the Audubon Adventures newspaper, published bimonthly during the school year, a membership card for each of the youngsters, a Leader's Guide with activity ideas, and a certificate of participation suitable for framing. The chapter cost is \$30 per subscription; we therefore ask for a contribution of \$10 for each enrollment to help defray costs and enroll even more groups. Why not show your support and sponsor an enrollment by submitting a check for \$30 with the teacher or group leader's name, school or group name, mailing address, and grade level of the youngsters to South Shore Audubon Society? You can speak to me at SSAS general meetings or call me at 731-4425.

Video Library. I have some environmental videotapes that are available upon request:

- (1) a very short three-minute video of Marvin Gaye singing "Mercy, Mercy Me (The Ecology)," produced by Audubon, Motown Records, and Nitrate Films, showing glimpses of Motown artists and some other celebrities;
- (2) an award-winning four-minute Audubon Earth Day 1990 video of the Grateful Dead's "We Can Run," with outstanding wildlife footage and no footage of the band;
- (3) "What's the Limit," an Audubon video on the interrelationships between humans and the environment; and
- (4) "How to Make a Difference," a 30-minute Audubon video on wetlands (showing Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, if your editor remembers correctly).

Jurassic Ark. Several copies of "Jurassic Ark: If Only Dinosaurs Had Had the Endangered Species Act," Audubon's eight-minute video for children, will soon be available. "Jurassic Ark" emphasizes the success stories of protecting endangered species and urges children to get involved. This video is narrated by 11-year old Lyle Solia-Yates, who founded Pals of Wildlife to save the manatee and other endangered species.



"NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE"

621 Fulton St. (Rt. 109), Farmingdale, NY 11735
Located between McDonald's & Dunkin' Donuts

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marion Yavarkovsky

South Shore Audubon Society wishes to welcome its newest members. It is our sincere hope that you will all become active chapter members. Come to our Sunday morning bird walks, monthly meetings, and special events. Read our monthly Skimmer to become informed about our activities and join in!

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

n . . .

| Baldwin | Mr. Peter Van Ensbroek |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bellmore | Helen Gerauser, Selig & Selig PC |
| East Meadow | A. Goldstein |
| Floral Park | Nancy Belmonte, Anita Heidrich, |
| | Mrs. R. O'Beirne |
| Franklin Square | Brian J. Smith |
| Freeport | Herbert Jurist, Mr. Hank Liebhart |
| Garden City | Mr. George Kane, Marion Stuart |
| Hempstead | Ms. M. Green |
| Hicksville | Nancy Legenhausen |
| Island Park | Hannah Robin Marsh |
| Lynbrook | Ms. E. Podgorsky |
| Massapequa | Martin Farrell |
| Merrick | Gerald M. Fregoe, Irwin A. |
| | Zuckerman |
| Seaford | Erin A. Kern |
| Uniondale | M. Saragnese |
| Valley Stream | Ms. Nan Hansen |
| West Hempstead | Mr. Bill Pietrzak |
| ************** | **************** |

BUDGET 1993-1994

| Audubon Camp Scholarships | 1500 |
|--|------|
| Brookside Preserve | |
| College Scholarship | |
| Conservation | |
| Corresponding Secretary | |
| Donations | |
| Education | |
| Holiday Wildlife Party | 150 |
| Insurance | |
| Library Custodians | 200 |
| Library Donation | |
| Library Overtime | |
| Membership | |
| Miscellaneous | |
| National Audubon Conference Attendance | 1000 |
| Publicity | 100 |
| Refreshments at Meetings | |
| Skimmer | |
| Speakers | 500 |
| T. R. Sanctuary | 1000 |
| Total | |

BIRDATHON RESULTS 1993

James Remsen, Jr.

The sixth South Shore Audubon Society Birdathon, held on May 8th, was another exciting day of spring migration birding for fun and profit. South Shore members racked up species and donations from their sponsors for each, with the profits going to help the environment on a local and national level. Our chapter's Birdathoners totaled 141 species of birds. The Joe Grupp – Jim Remsen team logged 110 species this year, the Paul Butkereit team 102, and the Elliott Kutner team 75. Several members conducted their own independent bird counts and forwarded lists and pledges, for which we are grateful. These members were Arthur Atlas, Susan Brychcy, Rob Ogilvie, and Joyce Reilly. We thank them for their help and participation.

This year our chapter grossed approximately \$3500 in Birdathon profits, a substantial increase over last year's total. We have placed second in the Northeast Region for a chapter of 1000 or more members and have once again received prizes from National Audubon. (For the record, New York City Audubon placed first and Greenwich Audubon placed third.) South Shore is keeping 50% of the Birdathon proceeds, and the remaining 50% has been evenly divided between the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay and the National Audubon Society's high-priority campaign to preserve wetlands.

Prizes were awarded to our chapter's top fund-raisers and sponsor recruiters at the June dinner. These were: Carole Adams, Leonard and Valerie Chipkin, and Steve and Amanda Goldberg for largest amounts of money raised, and Kenneth and Karen Wenzel for largest number of sponsors recruited. Ken and Karen have won recognition for their outstanding fund-raising in our Birdathons in all six years and are the only participants to have done so! Thanks and congratulations to all of you.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the team leaders, those who went birding on May 8th, and all our sponsors. As you can see, the contributions you bring in, whether a few dollars or hundreds, really add up. In the end, the real winner of the Birdathon is our environment, because the funds raised make our Audubon voice on Long Island that much stronger.

COW MEADOW CLEANUP Saturday, October 16th, 9:30 A.M.

Dolores Rogers

The wetlands and preserve at Cow Meadow Park desperately need cleaning up after a beautiful summer and lots of recreational boating . Please give an hour of your time and also enjoy the fall colors while helping out. The park is at the foot of S. Main St. in Freeport. Trash bags will be provided.

If there's light rain, the cleanup is on. If it's heavy, the rain date is Sunday, October 17th at 1:00 P.M.

HELP!

Michael Sperling

The September Skimmer was brought to the Freeport Post Office by yours truly, who was supposed to be on board the LIRR and on his way to work. Although the bulk mail department doesn't open until 9 A.M., I discovered that the early morning supervisor is willing to accept our sacks of mail as early as 7:30 A.M., which is ...

Bad News & Good News. The bad news is that I still can't do the mailings without stealing time from work. The good news is that now many of you can (I hope)! So please volunteer; I'll bring close to 2000 newsletters in about eight sacks to your home on a Sunday night, and you'll do SSAS and me a huge favor by carrying the mail to the loading dock on Monday morning. The post office is on Merrick Road, one block east of the Freeport Memorial Library.

Openings Available for Writers and Artists. Anyone reading this all-volunteer newsletter is invited to contribute suitable material that will help me fill up space (and hopefully improve the *Skimmer*)! If you'd like to donate some ink to SSAS and see your work (or someone else's copyrightfree work) in our newsletter, please call me at 541-0805, preferably after 8 P.M.

BACKYARD BIRD FEEDING

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a 24-page booklet available from the Consumer Information Center, P.O. Box 100, Pueblo, Colorado 81002, that was published in 1990. For a \$1 service charge, you can order up to 25 different free booklets, including four on outdoor birds.

Backyard bird feeding is a convenient way to enjoy wildlife. According to a recent Census Report, over 65 million Americans, young and old, have given it a try.

Getting Started. No matter where you live, you can put food outside your door, and some creature, feathered or furred, will show its appreciation and make an appearance. That's all it takes. Once you get started, it's hard to stop. Before you know it, you're learning bird names. After awhile, you'll start to recognize individuals and the messages in their behavior and song.

How can you find out which birds to expect? A bird field identification book has pictures of different birds and will help you find the names for the birds you're likely to see. [SSAS's Joe Lancer sells field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes at discount prices; all proceeds go to our chapter, so give him a call at 536-6574 or find him at our bird walks.]

Feeder Selection. When the ground is covered with snow and ice, it's hard to resist just tossing seed out the door, but it's healthier for the birds to get their "handouts" at a feeding station, off the ground. Regardless of the season, food that sits on the ground for even a short time is exposed to potential contamination by dampness, mold, bacteria, animal droppings, lawn fertilizers, and pesticides. It's best, for the birds' sake, to use a feeder.

You can start simply with a piece of scrap wood, elevated a few inches above the ground. Add a few holes for drainage and you've built a platform feeder. It won't be long before the birds find it.

Whether you buy one or build one, eventually you'll find yourself looking at commercially manufactured feeders. There are literally hundreds to choose from. How do you make the "right" choice? What makes a feeder "good"?

First Consider Placement. Where do you want to watch your birds — from a kitchen window, a sliding glass door opening onto a deck, or a second story window?

Pick a location that has year-round easy access. When the weather's bad and birds are most vulnerable, you may be reluctant to fill a feeder that isn't in a convenient spot near a door or accessible window. Also consider the "mess" factor. Pick a location where discarded seed shells and bird droppings won't be a cleanup problem.

Put your feeder where the squirrels can't reach. Those cute little rodents seem to like sunflower and peanuts as much or more than acorns. Squirrels become a problem when they take over a bird feeder, scaring the birds away and tossing seed all over. What's worse, frustrated squirrels have been known to entertain themselves by chewing right through plastic and wooden feeders.

In the long run, a squirrel-proof feeder or any feeder on a pole with a baffle is the least aggravating solution. The most effective squirrel-proof feeder is the pole-mounted metal "house" type. If you must hang a feeder, select a tube protected with metal mesh. Most plastic "squirrel-proof" feeders, despite manufacturers' claims, may eventually succumb to rodent teeth.

If you have the "right" situation in your yard, a pole with a baffle should suffice. Any wood or plastic feeder can be effective when mounted on a pole with a plastic or metal baffle, if the pole is at least 10 feet from a tree limb or trunk.

Once you've determined where you're going to put your feeder, you're ready to go shopping. In addition to good looks, think about:

- how durable is it?
- will it keep the seeds dry?
- how easy is it to clean?
- how much seed will it hold?
- how many birds will it feed at one time?
- which species will use it?

Durability. There seems to be no end to the materials used in making bird feeders. You can buy "disposable" plastic bag feeders; feeders made of cloth, nylon, vinyl, and metal netting; clear, lexan, colored, and PVC plastic tubes; ceramic

and terra cotta; redwood, western cedar, birch, pine, and plywood; sheet metal and aluminized steel; glass tubes and bottles. How long a feeder lasts depends on how much effort you put into maintaining it, the effects of weather, and whether squirrels can get to it.

Dry Seeds. Water can get into any feeder, regardless of how careful you are to protect it. Seed will spoil when it gets damp or wet. Cloth, vinyl, nylon, and metal netting feeders are inexpensive, but they do not protect your seed. You can improve them by adding a plastic dome.

Most wood, plastic, ceramic, and solid metal feeders will keep seed dry, but water can get into the feeding portals. Look for feeders with drainage holes in the bottoms of both the feeder hopper and the seed tray.

Even bowl-type feeders and trays with drainage holes will clog with seed and bird droppings. Add rainwater and you have an unhealthy broth. Look for shallow platelike seed trays. The purpose of a tray is to catch dropped seeds while allowing spent seed shells to blow away.

Cleaning. Any zookeeper and cage bird owner will tell you that when you feed birds in a confined area, you have to expect bird droppings, feathers, an occasional insect or two, and leftover food mess.

While you don't have to wash the feeder daily, you should clean it regularly. Diseases like salmonella can grow in moldy, wet seed and bird droppings in your feeder tray and on the ground below. It's a good idea to move your feeders (just a foot or so) each season to give the ground underneath time to assimilate the seed debris and bird droppings.

Keeping your feeders clean should not become a major undertaking. The degree of maintenance required is directly related to the types of birds you want to attract.

A thistle feeder for goldfinches should be cleaned about once a month, depending on how often it rains. Feeding hummingbirds requires cleaning at the very least, weekly, preferably more often — two or three times a week. Sunflower and suet feeders may need to be cleaned only once a month

Feeders made of plastic, ceramic, and glass are easy to clean. Wash them in a bucket of hot, soapy water fortified with a capful or two of chlorine bleach, then give them a run through your dishwasher. Use the same regimen with wood feeders, but substitute another disinfectant for the bleach so your wood won't fade.

How Many Birds. If too many birds at your feeder becomes a problem, you can control their numbers by putting out smaller amounts of seed, by using specialty seeds, or by using restrictive feeders. If you fill your feeder only when it's empty, the birds will look for food elsewhere. They'll return as long as you continue to fill it.

You can virtually eliminate visits by birds you'd rather not see by offering seeds they won't eat. Be selective in your choice of seeds. If you use more than one type of seed, put them in separate feeders. This will reduce wasted seeds, as birds will toss unwanted seeds out of a feeder to get to their favorites.

Birds that visit your feeder have very specific preferences. Most prefer sunflower. Some prefer millet. A few prefer peanuts. None seem to prefer the other grains used in the mixes: corn, milo, red millet, oats, wheat, and canary seed.

If you want to feed only cardinals, doves, and whitethroated sparrows (shown here), switch from black oil sun-

flower to safflower. If you want only finches and an occasional dove and white-throated sparrow, try niger thistle. If you want only jays, titmice, and white-throated sparrows, try peanuts.



Another way to discourage unwanted birds is to use specialty feeders that for the most part allow only "select" birds to feed. The most nonselective feeders are the tray, platform, and house feeders.

You can encourage small birds with feeders that restrict access. Wood feeders with vertical bars and feeders covered with wire mesh frustrate the larger birds. Tube feeders without trays also restrict access to small birds. Remove the perches and you've selected only those birds capable of clinging — finches, chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers. Add vertical perches to tube thistle feeders, and you'll limit accessibility primarily to the goldfinches.

If starlings are a problem at your suet feeder, you can discourage them by using a suet feeder with access only at the bottom. Starlings are reluctant to perch upside down. Chickadees and woodpeckers don't find that a problem.

Species Variety. The species you attract is determined primarily by the seeds you offer [and by what birds are found on L.I. — the lists below include species rarely seen here.]

Black oil sunflower is the hands-down favorite of all the birds that visit tube and house-type feeders. White proso millet is favored by birds who visit platform feeders (doves and sparrows). Ducks, geese, and quail will eat corn.

Many of the cereal grains (corn, milo, oats, canary, wheat, rape, flax, and buckwheat) in mixed bird seeds are not favorites of birds that visit tube feeders. Watch a feeder filled with a seed mix and you'll see the birds methodically drop or kick out most of the seeds to get to their favorite — sunflower. [The birds on the ground below won't be as choosy.] Seeds that wind up on the ground are likely to be contaminated by dampness and bird droppings. If the birds don't eat them, rodents will.

The most effective way to attract the largest variety of birds to your yard is to put out separate feeders for each food: a starling-resistant suet feeder, a house feeder for sunflower, a wire mesh cage feeder for peanuts, a nectar feeder, a tube feeder for thistle, a stationary or tray fruit feeder, and a house or platform feeder for millet.

Tube Feeder With Black Oil Sunflower: this may attract goldfinches, chickadees, woodpeckers, nuthatches, titmice, redpolls, and pine siskins. Adding a tray may also attract cardinals, jays, crossbills, purple and house finches [my house finches don't need a tray], and white-throated and

white-crowned sparrows. [In my backyard, a hanging tube feeder with a tray attracts house finches, more house finches, black-capped chickadees, blue jays, tufted titmice, brave cardinals, mourning doves and rock doves (pigeons) who enjoy a challenge, house sparrows bored with my mixed seed, and the occasional downy woodpecker or American goldfinch; my white-throated sparrows stay on the ground. I highly recommend trying a plastic tray feeder attached to an upstairs window that's near protective cover and within sight of your other feeders; mine are filled with sunflower hearts or striped sunflower; almost any bird that feeds above ground will visit your window if it's hungry enough, especially if you put something special in the feeder.]

Tray or Platform Feeder With Millet: doves, house sparrows, blackbirds, juncos, cowbirds, towhees, chipping sparrows, field sparrows, tree sparrows, white-throated sparrows, and white-crowned sparrows.

Tray or Platform Feeder With Corn: starlings, house sparrows, grackles, jays, juncos, bobwhite quail, doves, ring-necked pheasants, and white-throated sparrows.

Platform Feeder or Tube Feeder and Tray With Peanuts: cardinals, chickadees, grackles, house finches, titmice, house sparrows, starlings, mourning doves, white-throated sparrows, jays, and juncos.

Niger Thistle Feeder With Tray: goldfinches, house finches, purple finches, redpolls, pine siskins, doves, chickadees, song sparrows, dark-eyed juncos, and whitethroated sparrows.

Nectar Feeder: hummingbirds, orioles, cardinals, tanagers, woodpeckers, finches, and thrushes.

Fruit: orioles, tanagers, mockingbirds, bluebirds, thrashers, cardinals, woodpeckers, jays, starlings, thrushes, cedar waxwings, and yellow-breasted chats.

Hanging Suet Feeder: woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees (shown below), nuthatches, kinglets, thrashers, creepers, cardinals, and starlings.

Peanut Butter Suet: woodpeckers, goldfinches, juncos, cardinals, thrushes, jays, kinglets, bluebirds, wrens, and starlings.

Hanging Peanut Feeder: woodpeckers, chickadees, and titmice

Coming Next Issue, Space Permitting: how to handle uninvited guests at the bird feeder, plus some questions and answers.



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

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