

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 3 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 1995

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Carole A. Adams

Cormorants, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Kingfisher, Pelican. Yes, you are reading this right. Yours truly saw a lone Brown Pelican off the Fire Island coast on Sunday, October 1st. The Pelican sighting was the icing on the cake for the Audubon Council Fall Retreat weekend. What a terrific weekend.

Friday started off with a wine and cheese welcome reception at Scully Science Center, with an update on Audubon's Living Oceans Program presented by the program's director, Carl Safina, Ph.D. Many of us also used this opportunity to meet and speak with our new President of National Audubon Society, John Flicker.

Saturday morning, we started off nice and early with a bird walk around Connetquot River State Park Preserve. The morning was cool, with a light mist rising off the river, giving view to several Wood Ducks. We also saw Cedar Waxwing, Mute Swan, Great Blue Heron, and Flicker. John Flicker, that is. Mr. Flicker was right there with us Saturday morning, enjoying the gifts of Connetquot and again affording us the opportunity to get to know him better.

The afternoon was filled with trips all over the Island, arranged by Long Island Audubon chapters participating in the retreat weekend. Our very own Jim Remsen led a walk at JFK Sanctuary, which I understand moved on to the Coast Guard Station, mosquitoes and all. Nancy Frame helped coordinate this group, getting folks from the hotel over to Jim and back in time to get ready for dinner. Betty Borowsky, Porgy Smith, Michael Sperling, and Jonathan Staller enjoyed the trip out to the Pine Barrens led by John Turner, author of Exploring the Other Island. I was joined by Annie McIntyre for the Project Wild workshop. Just give us the chance and we'll tell you all about "Oh Deer."

Saturday evening, Mr. Flicker, keynote speaker at the banquet dinner, presented Audubon's Strategic Plan. Highlights of the plan include decentralization of staff and developing the Audubon Center concept. (If you want a copy of the plan, just let me know. Your input and feedback are critical during the implementation phase.)

NEXT MEETING

Sandy Brenner

DATE: Tuesday, November 14, 1995

TIME: 8:00 P.M. ②

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

Merrick Rd. & S. Ocean Ave.

SPEAKER: Steven G. Goldberg TOPIC: Trinidad & Tobago

Join us this month for a photographic journey to the montane rainforest of Trinidad and Tobago. We will be treated to intimate views of the colorful and often exotic bird life and flora of this beautiful Caribbean island nation.

Steve Goldberg is an active member of SSAS who, along with his wife Amanda, has birded and photographed numerous areas of Central and South America. His life list in the neotropics exceeds 1000 species. Steve is also a member of Freeport Camera Club and appeared on a frequently rerun special bird photography episode of Cablevision's "Family Pet" show.

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

That brings me back to Sunday and my Pelican sighting. We were up bright and early again for breakfast at six. Promptly at seven a.m., Steve from Amboy Bus Company arrived to take us over to the Fire Island National Seashore. Initially the sun was out, but by the time we arrived at Fire Island the clouds were moving in. However, the sun came back out for a perfectly fantastic day. Everybody got to participate in the activities — including our driver, Steve, who is quoted as saying "that's the best run I ever had." Many joined Mary Richard and Michael Brust of T.R. Sanctuary in hawk banding while some went on a tour of the lighthouse. Several folks joined the hawk watch group while others listened and learned at the songbird banding/research study with Paul and Randy. Then we rotated groups.

That was the weekend in a nutshell. A lot was accomplished, a lot was learned, and all of it was enjoyed. On behalf of Betty Borowsky and myself, thank you all for giving us this opportunity to represent you at the Audubon Council of New York State Fall Retreat right here on good old Long Island.

Have a very Happy Thanksgiving and see you out there on the bird walks and at our meetings.

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BROOKSIDE PRESERVE CLEANUP THIS (LAST?) SATURDAY MORNING

On October 28th, starting at 9 A.M., we will be planting wildflowers, installing trail markers, and removing debris from Brookside Preserve. Owned by Nassau County and managed by SSAS, this 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland field area was saved from development by our chapter in 1989. The preserve is located on the Freeport-Baldwin border; meet at the main entrance on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway (turn north at the traffic light that's just east of Freeport High School). ********************************

BINOCULARS, SCOPES, AND FIELD GUIDES

SSAS sells Bausch & Lomb and Bushnell binoculars and spotting scopes plus the Golden Guide to the Birds of North America at competitive prices, year-round. If you're thinking about buying these items for yourself or as holiday presents, please call Joe Lancer at 536-6574 between 7 and 9 P.M. or ask for him at our meetings and walks.



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

Oct. 29	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 5	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Nov. 12	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 19	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Nov. 26	Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on
	extreme right after going through Throgs
**	Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9:00 A.M.)
Dec. 3	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Dec. 10	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Dec. 17	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Dec. 24	Season's Greetings — No Walk
Dec. 31	Happy New Year — No Walk
Jan. 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Jan. 14	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Jan. 21	Pelham Bay for Owls (9:00 A.M.)
Jan. 28	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner

AX WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AX

Marion Yavarkovsky

Now that fall migration is over, we will settle down to our winter routine. Bird walking every week, meetings every month, and special events will keep our members busy. Now that you are also members of SSAS, please make a point of joining us. You will be glad you did.

[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 P.M., Monday through Friday.]

Astoria	Scott Kincaid	
Bellmore		
Elmont		
Farmingdale		
	Nina Donnelly, James A. Feaster	
Freeport		
	Philip Buffa, Garden City Union	
Garden City	Free School District Business	
6	Office, K. Kenna,	
Hammatand	Kathleen M. Reedy	
Hempstead Hicksville		
HICKSVIIIe		
Table	Suzanne Saramak	
Jericho		
Levittown	Josephine Beaudoin, Steven	
	Bonura, Joseph J. B. Rienti,	
I DI	Mrs. Claire I. Walsh	
Long Beach	Vicki Anne Gartland, John	
	McLoughlin, Rhoda Pollack	
Lynbrook	Diana Clark, Mrs. Christine	
	Hamilton, John Pelkonen,	
	Ms. Jean Sirchia	
Massapequa	Mrs. Gay Ellison, Ms. Pamela J.	
	Jatsko, Mr. Edward Kaercher,	
	George Motz,	
	Mrs. Bonnie A. Worme	
Massapequa Park	- .	
	Roy Solvang, John H. Talbot	
	Jaclyn Gutterms, ? Hessen	
	Ann Mank, Daniel Weissman	
Plainview		
Rockville Centre	Elizabeth Gatz, Ross Gollub,	
	Carol & Sheldon Shocket	
Roosevelt		
Seaford		
Valley Stream	Lisa DiChiara, Jonathan &	
	Andrew Karp, Thomas A.	
	Schoch, Mr. Stanley Schleider	
Woodmere	Mrs. Anna Matathias	

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201		

CONSERVATION NOTES Take a Deep Breath

Betty Borowsky

The most significant event since last month is that the House of Representatives voted against the Department of the Interior budget bill; the proposed budget included some novel ideas to generate income. One of these was the plan to lease parts of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil companies for drilling. Most of the other bills that will damage environmental programs and initiatives that we mentioned last month are either still in committee or are on hold as Congress debates (read "macerates") social welfare bills. I have never followed the workings of government so closely before.

The proposed appropriations bill will involve deep cuts to agencies which carry out environmental programs. President Clinton has said that he will veto any appropriations bill that comes before him which contains significant cuts to these agencies. Nevertheless, I would urge you at this point to write to President Clinton and tell him you firmly support his stance in holding out against this potentially devastating reduction in environmental funding. I would also urge you to write to your Senators and Congressman with the same message, since if Clinton does veto the bill, it will go back to Congress where the potential for an override exists.

Armchair Activist. I am very happy to tell you that we now have over 35 persons signed up for this program. It has become a real thing; Mary Jane Russell spends a few hours each month on mailings, conference calls, follow-ups, and whatever to make sure things get sent out in a timely fashion. However, she views this as a labor of love and can still send out a lot more. Join the Armchair Activist program if you feel you can spare a few minutes to write on important issues to your legislators.

In case you haven't heard, here's how it works. Eight times a year I receive a letter from the Albany office of the National Audubon Society which describes some environmental issue which needs our attention. The issue might be federal, statewide, or local. The letter provides the background of the problem and what might be done to rectify it, and provides a form letter which you can copy entirely or which can serve as a guide to frame your own letter.

The first time you get one of these, it will be accompanied by the League of Women Voters' "They Represent You" brochure, which will tell you who your representatives are and how to contact them (until I run out). You will be receiving a copy of each month's letter as soon as Mary Jane and I can get it out.

If you are interested in joining, just call me (764-3596) or Mary Jane (766-7397) — there's no charge and the feedback we've gotten is very positive. One correspondent told us that every letter she sent out got some response.

Hey, I know the responses are form letters, but your representatives and senators are listening; I know it because

they tell us so. And if ever there was a time for writing, phoning, and getting them to listen, it is now.

A NOVEMBER MORNING

Morton I. Silver

Freed from all constraints of time and employment, it was possible for me to yield to impulse and seek the peace and solitude of the bay. The day was bleak, cold, blustery, and threatening. Winds off the ocean roiled the waters and demanded obeisance of the flora in the refuge. Reed grass, bluestem, trees, and shrubbery bent to the persistent nudging of the gusts. Only the birds seemed to disregard the goading of the wind.

On a small sandbar in the bay, American Oystercatchers, black and white clowns with bright red-orange bills, stood at

the water's edge like small boys watching the waves. Two imposing Marbled Godwits with long upturned bills rested with their feet submerged in the cold water, and running about between the stilt-like legs of these tall waders, like exuberant children on the



summer's beach, were the Dunlin sandpipers (pictured). How varied the fauna that inhabit and visit New York City's Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge!

The East Pond hosted rafts of hundreds of ducks and geese. Dotting the surface were Brant and Snow Geese, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Common Pintail, scaup, and other ducks, each species moving about in unison, oblivious to its neighbors.

Suddenly the surface of the pond seemed to lift in a great display of beating wings. Turning and wheeling in the darkening gray sky, the birds moved in huge clouds and then after a short while settled back down on the water. A Peregrine Falcon, the prince of the skies, had come rocketing over the pond, seeking his prey from among the flocks. Was he successful? I saw in the distance a puff of feathers gently floating down — the powerful falcon and his quarry. The balance of nature was reestablished and the New York environs had returned to normal ... and the November rain beat down. [Editor's note: the preceding was written and sent to me by SSAS member Mort Silver last November.]

THIS ONE'S FOR THE POST OFFICE

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Due to third-class nonprofit postal restrictions that took effect on October 1st, the following identification statement will appear in all future newsletters:

South Shore Skimmer is published monthly from September through December and February through June by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031

HISTORY OF SSAS, PART FIVE

Michael Sperling

Last December, I started recapping South Shore Audubon Society's 25 years. Here's some more:

At the October 8, 1974 meeting, SSAS's Horty Block presented slides from her trip to the Galapagos Islands. A representative from the newly formed Atlantic Coalition spoke about offshore sludge dumping; SSAS was a founding member of this coalition of Long Island groups and individuals, which sought to eradicate all forms of water pollution.

The second educational field trip run by Linda Schlotterhausen took place on October 19th — a trip to Garvies Point to study geology and visit the museum.

On November 12th, wind-powered generators were discussed by Nassau County's Thomas Darcy and Stephen M. Bernheim. The December 10th meeting featured the Nassau Environmental Council's Chairman Sheldon Shane and the previous June's dinner guest Bill Botwinik discussing environmental problems and plans in Nassau County; coffee and cake were served — the first coffee break in SSAS history.

As the year ended, SSAS joined the Environmental Defense Fund and various Long Island environmental groups as co-plaintiffs in a suit filed against the Environmental Protection Agency and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The lawsuit sought to block federal funding of sewer projects that involved treatment plants that used ocean outfall pipes, and sought a comprehensive study of Long Island's water supply problems and a land acquisition plan to protect groundwater recharge sites.

The SSAS tradition of awarding a full-tuition scholarship to an adult member for the Audubon Workshop in Maine began in 1974–75; the winner among four applicants was chosen at the January board meeting. The January 14th general meeting's program was provided by Al Lemke, who showed slides of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

The February newsletter marked the first appearance of our now-familiar two sheets of 11 by 17 inch paper, folded twice (replacing four sheets of 8-1/2 by 11, stapled together and folded once), but some future issues were six or ten pages long. February 11th's meeting featured another film by Elliott Kutner, on tundra dwellers — southward bound.

At the March board meeting, the continued absence of a symbol and name for our newsletter was discussed, as an appeal in the January issue had failed to produce a solution; Al Lemke suggested loon and *The Loonatic*, respectively.

The March 11th general meeting starred Guy Coheleach, who showed a movie of himself and the Bald Eagles he was painting; the attendance was described as SSAS's largest turnout to date (estimated at 200), with 40 new members joining that night after having been reached by the Long Island chapters' poster- and brochure-distributing membership drive. Through a special grant, National Audubon offered \$500 and \$1000 prizes to those chapters that showed the largest numerical or percentage increases in members

during the first half of 1975. In February and March, the Long Island chapters gave away one or more of Mr. Coheleach's donated prints to all new members and to old members who recruited at least two new ones. The prints had to be picked up in person at an SSAS meeting; at the March meeting, the artist signed prints for anyone in attendance. Prior to the membership drive, SSAS's membership had been decreasing for several months after steadily growing to 900 since the chapter's founding. By May, membership was up to 1100 and SSAS was six members short of winning \$1000 for highest numerical increase in the Northeast Region (we didn't win). By June, SSAS was the second largest chapter on Long Island and the third largest in New York State.

The April newsletter as usual included Pat Davis's monthly conservation column, this time filling two whole pages with information on aerial wolf shooting in Alaska, strip-mining reform legislation that had been vetoed by President Ford, and the Interior Department's offshore drilling hearings in Trenton that she, Linda Schlotterhausen, and four other SSAS members attended. Also included was an unprecedented full-page message from another organization (Friends of Animals), which the SSAS Board had sought to insert; it promoted a tuna boycott with the headline "Would you kill Flipper for a tuna fish sandwich?" On April 8th, SUNY Farmingdale Professor Rodney Dow discussed the interpretation of bird songs and calls.

The Education Committee ran three field trips — a barrier beach walk at Jones Beach parking field #6 on March 15th, a study of marsh plants at JFK Sanctuary in Tobay Beach on April 26th, and a study of woodland plants in Muttontown Preserve on May 17th.

The January and April newsletters included a notice from Miriam Raynor that the June issue would be her last and that a successor was needed. By the May issue, the notice became a little more direct: "Do we want a newsletter next year? If so, we must have someone to take over for the September issue. June will be the last issue otherwise." The job required "an ability to type" and came with an SCM electric typewriter; Pat Davis volunteered and her successor as Conservation Chairman was Paul Butkereit. The typewriter wasn't needed by Pat, so it was forwarded to Membership Chairman Dorothy Lovering.

At the May 6th Board meeting, Asa Starkweather successfully proposed that SSAS rent a post office box in Freeport; after a short stint on a waiting list, we were awarded our now-familiar P.O. Box 31, which replaced Miriam Raynor's home as the newsletter's return address in September. The position of Hospitality Chairman was created that night, with \$150 allocated to buy a year's supply of coffee, tea, Sanka, cake, etc.

The May 13th meeting featured Trevor Gunton from England's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, whose program described European bird-watching spectaculars. On May 18th, an Arts, Crafts, and Hobby Show was held at the Calvary Temple, again organized by the Fischers and

including Elliott Kutner's films. The annual election of officers installed Fritzie Lemke as a new Director.

On June 3rd, the Board of Directors finally voted on a name for the newsletter — South Shore Skimmer. The chapter had \$3,814.01 in its checking and savings accounts; the first ever budget committee was created on that historic night. Also on that night, Recording Secretary Laura B. Friedman requested permission to discontinue her three-year practice of taking minutes of every general meeting in the Freeport Memorial Library, since "not one has ever been read or referred to." Twenty years later, your present editor, having read all 51 pages of handwritten minutes, is grateful that they were available to help write this history; there's no such paper trail for the 162 general meetings we've had since then.

June 8th saw Elliott Kutner lead another pelagic boat trip, which departed the Freeport Boatmen's Association's dock at 7:30 A.M. Al Dowd's Steak House at the Holiday Inn in Rockville Centre was the site of the Annual Dinner held on June 10th; it cost \$7.50 with a one-item menu (sliced top sirloin, although an unidentified fish was ultimately provided as a substitute) and was arranged by Alvin Friedman.

BACK DOOR ATTACK ON ARCTIC REFUGE

[Editor's note: National Audubon Society Vice President Liz Raisbeck sent the following to chapter newsletter editors just after the last *Skimmer* went to the printer. As mentioned in Betty Borowsky's article, the House of Representatives Budget Committee followed the Senate's lead.]

The Senate Budget Committee has broken new ground by including revenue from oil production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in the pending federal budget. This back door tactic to open the refuge buries efforts to ruin this pristine area in a budget quagmire. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which has been called America's Screngeti, is our country's largest wildlife preserve and is home to caribou, grizzly bears, wolves, foxes, musk ox, and more than 130 species of shorebirds, loons, songbirds, and geese. In May, Senators in favor of drilling tied opening the refuge to the pending federal budget bill, making it more difficult to debate and vote on this crucial issue. President Clinton has pledged not to permit drilling, and needs to hear that he should veto a budget bill that allows development in the Arctic.

Opening the Arctic Refuge would mean offering 1.2 million acres of pristine coastal plain along the Beaufort Sea for energy exploration. Although this is only one-tenth of the refuge, the coastal plain is the most important calving ground for the Porcupine caribou herd and is considered the biological heart of the refuge. Oil exploration and drilling will also unalterably change the wilderness character of this arctic ecosystem.

Action: Write or call your Senators [and Representative] and ask them to oppose the inclusion of oil production revenues from the Arctic Refuge in the pending federal

budget. Such a sweeping policy decision should be thoroughly debated in full view of the American public, not buried in a budget bill. Let your Senators [and Representative] know you support full protection for the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Call the White House Hotline (202-456-1414) and ask the President to veto a budget bill that opens the Arctic Refuge or rolls back other environmental protections. Contact: Evan Hirsche, National Audubon Society, 202-547-9009 (ehirsche@audubon.org).

Michael Sperling

Here's the fifth installment of favorite entries from A Dictionary of Environmental Quotations, compiled by Barbara K. Rodes and Rice Odell (published by Simon & Schuster, copyright © 1992):

"How can this generation justify tearing up 'America's Serengeti' to create a sprawling industrial-pollution factory when a mere two-mile-per-gallon increase in the efficiency of new U.S. cars would save more crude than the oil industry hopes to find in the unique wildlife refuge?" — Gaylord Nelson, opposing opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling, letter, Wall Street Journal, September 11, 1990

"The United States invented the national park. Have we so lost our way a century later that we are prepared to sacrifice a one-of-a-kind wilderness for a shot at a small and temporary supply of oil? Similarly, are we so desperate for a fast buck that other natural treasures in Alaska are for sale to the highest bidder?" — Jimmy Carter, Los Angeles Times, December 1, 1990

As mentioned in the last two Skimmers, South Shore Audubon Society and Osprey Tours, Inc., are joining hands again to return to Costa Rica. Our first trip in 1994 was so successful and fun that we are going to visit a different part of this small rich country so we can see new flora and fauna. Our birding and natural history trip is scheduled for January 11–21, 1996. Call Betty Borowsky at 764-3596 for information.



"NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE" 621 Fulton St. (Rt. 109), Farmingdale, NY 11735

Located between McDonald's & Dunkin' Donuts

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.

Every Saturday & Sunday (2 to 3:30 р.м.) — Due to increased visitation, we have added weekend wildlife shows. The programs are for families and will cover various topics. They will include live animals and a hike. Programs include Birds of Prey, Reptiles, and Rainforests. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

Thursday, November 9th (7 to 9 P.M., ages 12 and over) — Owl Prowl. You'll see six live owls and learn about their behavior, adaptations, and natural history. We will walk through the woods calling for wild owls and are likely to see or hear a Screech Owl. TRS members \$5, nonmembers \$7.

Saturday, November 11th (9 to 11 A.M., ages 12 and over) — Hawk Banding. We meet at Field 5 of Robert Moses State Park and observe migrating raptors and other songbirds. You'll take a nature hike, visit our banding research station, and see how and why we do it. TRS members \$5, nonmembers \$7.

Sunday, November 19th (9 A.M. to 3 P.M., adults/educators) — The State of Our Ocean Fisheries. Many commercial and game fishes are in big trouble in the North Atlantic and across the world. Come hear guest speakers, get educational materials, and learn about this disastrous environmental problem. Free.

Wednesday, November 22nd (8 to 9 P.M., adults) — Venezuela. We will present a slide show on the wildlife of the rainforests and wetlands of Venezuela. This program is geared for people interested in traveling with us there in March. Free.

Saturday, November 25th (2 to 4 P.M., ages 5 to 10) — Native Peoples. Children can come learn about the Matinecock tribe that inhabited this area long ago. We'll study and use the tools they did. We'll walk through the woods, learning what wild plants they ate. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

Wildlife Festival & Environmental Fair at Planting Fields Arboretum. November 4 & 5 are the dates for TRS's annual weekend of guided nature walks, live animal presentations, hands-on crafts, games, face painting, children's activities, food for sale, TR Sanctuary gift shop, environmental displays, and arts & crafts for sale. The festival runs from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M., with hourly live shows starting at 11 (on feathered hunters) and continuing with rare & beautiful animals, Long Island's wild side, journeys into flight (flight demonstrations), jewels of the tropics, and creatures of the night. SSAS will have a table, as usual. On

Sunday, the Andean Condor that starred in last year's festival is scheduled to return — your chance to see one of the largest birds in the world flying free over a Long Island lawn. Parking is \$3; admission is \$15 per family or \$5 for adults and \$3 for children (under age 3 is free).

Trip to See Birds, Butterflies, and Colonial Mexico. Been to Mexico City? Acapulco? Think you've seen Mexico? Not by a long shot. Get away from the noise, the smog, and the tourists. See old Mexico in peace and quiet. See historic Guanajuato and San Miguel de Allende. Tour with USA guides. Stay with USA families.

Visit the ancient pine forests of Michoacán and see millions of monarch butterflies in their winter quarters. See ten species of hummingbirds, plus Crested Caracaras, Black-vented Orioles, Phainopeplas, roadrunners, Painted Redstarts, Harris's Hawks, and many other Mexican specialties. We can't guarantee them all, but you'll see something different from your feeder birds.

Make your plans now. The trip dates are February 17–25, 1996 and the trip is limited to 16 persons. The cost is \$1810, all inclusive (airfare, meals, rooms, transportation), a bargain for a nine-day trip. The host is the Audubon Society of San Miguel de Allende. Local contacts are Huntington Audubon Society's Tonia Hysko (427-9790) and Bill McAneny (427-1496), or TRS.

A THANK YOU EVEN FOR YOU

Jonathan Staller

Belonging to SSAS does more for me than bird-watching and I would like to share with you my feelings of what it means to me.

During the past summer, I had the privilege of going to the Audubon Camp in the Rockies. Not only did I have a good time, I learned about the western environment and I saw some nice birds. The thing that we did that I will always remember is sitting around a bonfire and singing songs with others, like a family (all strangers to me five days earlier). This really touches me because whenever I'm singing a song on the car radio, I think of that night! Sometimes even a tear appears in my eye.

Anyway, I would like to thank the members of SSAS because every time I go on a bird walk or attend a monthly meeting and see you, it's like I see the fire and we're all sitting around it. When I'm on a bird walk, it's alright to see a minimum amount of birds. Just walking with people like you makes my days go by and the memories last forever. Thank you once again to my fellow members for being there each week.

BALD EAGLES IN THE ADIRONDACKS, AUGUST 1995

Betsy Gulotta

He flew in silently against the tops of the trees edging the lake, perhaps trying to conceal himself from us as we watched from our little boat on the lake. We had been waiting for him, however, and instantly spotted his brilliant white head and tail, glistening in the sunlight. He rose and landed at the top of a tall spruce tree, not far from the nest. Against the clear blue sky, his large dark body, pure white head and tail, and yellow beak and feet proved true to our image of this majestic bird of prey, the Bald Eagle.

My family and I had rented a small cabin in the woods on the shore of Union Falls Lake. It was an unexpected streak of luck to learn that a family of Bald Eagles lived a couple of miles south of us on the edge of the same lake. The eagles were there because of the efforts of the Department of Environmental Conservation to reintroduce Bald Eagles into New York State. A small area of the lake surrounding the nest had been roped off to keep people and boats from disturbing the nesting process.

We anchored our boat a short distance from the roped-off nesting area and sat quietly observing the eagles and beautiful surroundings. Protected state forest lined the lake on one side and a carefully managed timber company-owned forest on the other. No lakefront homes were visible. Spruce, red and white pine, and birch trees composed the majority of the forest where the eagles had chosen to live. Their nest was a platform of sticks positioned nearly at the top of one of the spruces. We watched the birds under a clear blue sky as the sun, slowly sinking behind us, shone on them, creating a perfect photographic setting.

Soon after the adult eagle landed, a noisy calling began nearby from a young eagle as it flew unsteadily into the area, landing on the nest in a heap of ruffled feathers. The juvenile continued to call persistently, which we later realized was always done in the presence of an adult, probably a pleading for food or attention. A second juvenile appeared and landed on a dead branch nearby. The young were larger than their parents and still bore fluffy down feathers, giving them a disheveled appearance of blacks and tans. They had fledged just a few days prior to our arrival. Each day we watched them gain strength and confidence in their short trips from the nest.

My husband had been told that if he caught a fish and tossed it back into the water near the nesting area, the adult eagle would swoop down for it right in front of our boat. It worked. Within 100 feet of the boat, the adult scooped up the fish and carried it up to the nest, where the young were waiting. She plucked at it several times and then flew off to another tree, leaving it for the babies to finish. I was amazed that a wild bird such as the Bald Eagle, known for its elusiveness and preferred distance from mankind, had allowed itself to participate in this human game.

Each evening, around five or six o'clock, we visited the eagles by boat to watch them and fish for them. Sometimes

we were joined by another curious observer who also had discovered this rare opportunity. Always it was quiet and peaceful and beautiful. Each day the young eagles appeared a little bolder and stronger. One was more advanced and made longer trips away from the nest and out of sight. The other juvenile was less adept and only took short flights between the nest and nearby trees. Once, this juvenile left the nest and apparently flew too low, unable to get enough lift to get back up to the nest. He crash landed on the shore and fumbled around from tree stump to tree stump. The parent birds appeared concerned and watched him intently from their high perch in the spruce. They did not go for the fish we threw to them that evening.

On each of our daily visits to the nest, the two young were seen and one or both adults made an appearance. On our final visit we watched the lesser advanced juvenile alone in the nest for a while. My husband caught a fish and threw it toward him into the water. The action motivated the bird to leave the nest and perch on a dead branch closer to the water. Then one adult eagle flew in and landed on a treetop some distance from the nest, causing a noisy welcome from the young bird. The adult did not go for the fish. We guessed that it might be training the young to hunt on its own. We waited and threw in another fish. The young bird suddenly ruffled its feathers, made a loud commotion, took off circling the lake around the fish, and returned to his perch without diving. He soon made a second attempt and again returned without going for the fish. The adult sat and watched. A few minutes later, we heard a call from behind the trees and the older fledgling flew in, landing on the nest. His arrival stirred the other young such that he immediately lost interest in the fish and returned hastily to the nest, noisily greeting his sibling. It was like old-home week — the two juveniles interacting as though they hadn't seen each other in a month. Or was younger brother soliciting help from his older sibling in getting the fish? The adult eagle acknowledged the arrival of its second offspring with a few short calls and remained on its perch. It watched as the two young finally settled down and nestled close together in the nest. When all was quiet and the sun set behind the mountains, it took off and flew beyond the trees out of sight. The fish would have to wait until tomorrow.

And so ended our adventure observing Bald Eagle behavior in the Adirondacks. We left the eagles in the same quiet and beautiful surroundings as we had found them, and returned to our cabin across the lake. We said goodbye to another picturesque sunset. Our week in the Adirondacks had been blessed by a very special experience.



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

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