VOLUME 27, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 1997

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Carole A. Adams

I'm back with a tremendous THANK YOU to everyone for the good wishes, prayers, cards, letters, and calls. Now let's get back to the real business of South Shore Audubon Society. One piece of that business is promoting environmental education. One of the ways SSAS performs this task is by offering Audubon Camp scholarships and funding Audubon Adventures subscriptions. Funding for these activities in part comes from monies raised by our Birdathon. That's where you come in. This year is our tenth Birdathon.

Jimmy and Doreen Remsen have been working overtime getting donations both for our monthly raffles (you miss out on these if you don't come to the meetings) and for Birdathon prizes. Again, that's where you come in. To be in the drawings for some of these great prizes, you need to participate in the Birdathon. You can do this in one of three ways: by joining one of the already existing Birdathon teams, by starting up your own team, or by birding solo. One very important piece is missing, though. You need pledges to be a true Birdathoner. It's the pledges that raise the money; i.e., if someone pledges ten cents a species and you see fifty species, they owe you \$5. Pledges can also be made for a flat contribution, like \$5, regardless of how many species are seen. We take the money any way offered.

The next most important thing is to HAVE FUN. Although we may be members of smaller Birdathon teams, 4 we are all members of the larger team — the South Shore Audubon Society team. Compete with a sense of humor, * keeping in mind that we are all working toward the same goal, raising funds for South Shore Audubon.

So start working on those pledges and have fun. The Birdathon is just around the corner (May 9th & 10th; see 4 inside). I've been preparing by thumbing through my field guides, listening to birdsong tapes, cleaning up my bin- 4 oculars, practicing bird identification in my backyard, running my National Audubon Society Interactive CD-ROM

NEXT MEETING

Sandy Brenner & Steve Goldberg

DATE: TIME:

Tuesday, April 8, 1997

8:00 p.m. ② (Letter of the Month at 7:30) Freeport Memorial Library

PLACE:

144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)

Tom Vezo SPEAKER:

TOPIC: Antarctica – The Last Unspoiled Continent

Tom Vezo will share his month-long journey on a Russian research vessel as he traveled from Argentina to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, and Antarctica. He will present us with exciting slides of the unique wildlife and landscape of this region, bringing us face-toface with many species of penguins, albatrosses, seals, whales, and more. Tom is a professional wildlife photographer and writer who travels extensively throughout the year, acquiring new images for publication and leading nature photography tours. His work appears regularly in every major bird publication in the U.S. and also has appeared in many books and calendars. Join us!

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE

BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS ********************************

Guide to North American Birds, and letting my family and friends know that I will be asking for pledges again this year.

I look forward to seeing you at our meetings and out on would our Sunday bird walks. Thank you for reading the Skimmer.

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201 *********************************

AUDUBON'S NY ACTIVIST HOTLINE (800) 414-ACTN TAPE-RECORDED UPDATES FROM ALBANY

AUDUBON ACTIONLINE (800) 659-2622

TAPE-RECORDED UPDATES FROM WASHINGTON, DC *********************************

*

FREE SONGBIRD BANDING DEMO FOR SSAS MEMBERS

On **Saturday, April 12th**, from 9:30 to 11:30 A.M., join us at Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary for a demonstration of how the Sanctuary uses banding as a research technique and for a tour of National Audubon's oldest wildlife sanctuary. You will be able to see and photograph common bird species in the hand and learn more about TRS's avian research efforts. The species most likely to be caught in the mist nets are Black-capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice, plus such early migrants as Red-winged Blackbirds. Carpooling is encouraged; bring lunch if you'd like to stay a while longer.

Directions to TRS: Take Route 106 (Long Island Expressway Exit 41) north to the village of Oyster Bay (it's closer than it looks on a map). Make a right turn on East Main Street (at a traffic light in the heart of town) and look for Sanctuary parking signs. The small parking lot is on the right (1-1/2 miles east of Route 106), in front of Young's Memorial Cemetery, site of President Roosevelt's grave. After parking, continue east to the Sanctuary's entrance at 134 Cove Road; we'll meet at the main building, rain or shine.

CONSERVATION REPORT Recycling Redux

Belly Borowsky

As you already know, the United States is one of the most wasteful nations in the world, gobbling up natural resources to produce materials, only to throw them into landfills or burn them in incinerators. We produce a heck of a lot more than we need.

Of course, we are already sensitized to the importance of recycling: most of the villages and towns in Nassau conduct a recycling program for newspapers, glass and aluminum containers, and various kinds of plastics. But our heads are not into recycling. In fact, businesses tend to create modular products which are less troublesome (but maybe more expensive) to replace than to repair. So nobody fixes the switch on the clothes dryer anymore; they either buy a brand new switch or give up entirely and buy a new dryer. The other sad part of all this is that this not only wastes resources, but it also keeps lots of folks out of jobs. Anybody can exchange an old switch for a new one, but only someone with special training can repair the thing. In fact, it's hard to find a general repairman (or woman, for that matter) anymore.

That's why I was so pleased to read an article in the March 5th *New York Times* called "New Life for Lowly Pallets." The article describes a business which takes discarded pallets (you know, the wooden platforms used to move bulky machines or packages from shipping containers to trucks to the store; they're always in attendance at our birdseed sales) and creates furniture from them. The pallets themselves are a mixture of hard and soft

woods, but, when taken apart, the hardwoods can be glued together, and the resultant planks cut into boards for butcher-block tables, flooring, and furniture. Pallets are otherwise sent to the landfill or incinerated with other trash. The other great advantage of this idea is that it provides jobs. The business is located in the Bronx, which has a high unemployment rate, so this idea is a win-win-win situation for everybody.

I think that it's important for us as a nation to understand that maybe we shouldn't be *producing* so much stuff. When I lived in Holland some years ago, there were no bags (neither plastic *nor* paper) provided at grocery or other stores. People brought their own nylon mesh sacks when they went shopping. Fruits and vegetables were never wrapped in anything — you were handed the oranges or apples. Can you tell me why we have to make up packages of carrots, potatoes, or whatever? Why not sell all produce by the piece or by weight?

Listen: I know we're not going to win this one for a while. In the meantime, though, with public sympathies and efforts already extended to recycling, we should be thinking of other creative ways to reuse our wastes. If you have heard of any other, similar activities, or if you have any ideas for new ones, call or otherwise get in contact with me; this is an activity we need to pay more attention to. You can reach me by e-mail at borowsky@acf2.nyu.edu, or by FAX or phone at 764-3596.



BREAKFAST ON THE BAY (Saturday, May 31)
Three-hour ecology tour of Jamaica Bay aboard the 96-foot vessel Dorothy B VIII. Cost: \$25 includes homemade buffet. Call Don.

MONTAUK WEEKEND (June 6-8) Extended weekend of natural history exploration. Cost: \$245 covers two nights at Montauk Manor, five meals, five field trips, and two evening programs; optional whale watch. Call Don.

INTERNATIONAL BEACH CLEANUP WEEKEND (September 20 & 21) For information on how to get involved at a beach near you, call Barbara Cohen at (718) 471-2166.

For a complete listing of all local and national field trips, contact: Don Riepe 28 West 9th Road Broad Channel, NY 11693 (718) 634-6467

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 Society. 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, April 5th (10 A.M. to 4 P.M., all ages) — Our Annual Spring Cleanup. Sanctuary staff and friends will be preparing the Sanctuary for spring. We will be performing the various yearly maintenance projects that could not be accomplished without the help of many volunteers. Bring gardening tools! Refreshments will be available. Free.

Sunday, April 6th (2 to 4 P.M., ages 6 to 12) — The World of Birds. Why does a bird sing? What is the biggest bird? How many different kinds of birds are there? The naturalist will use live birds to help answer these questions while teaching about our favorite topic — birds! TRS members free, nonmembers \$5.

Saturday, April 12th (9 to 10:30 A.M., ages 6 to 12) — Bird Banding for Children. A program for the young that teaches how and why we catch and tag wild birds. Binoculars will be provided so children learn how an ornithologist does research. TRS members free, nonmembers \$5.

Wednesday, April 16th (7 to 8:30 P.M., adults) — The Migratory Bird. A program must for the bird lover. The Sanctuary's Director will discuss our conservation efforts and explain in detail one of the animal kingdom's greatest feats. TRS members free, nonmembers \$7.

Monday to Thursday, April 21–24 (9 A.M. to 1 P.M., grades pre-K to 6) — Spring Nature Camp. This is a fun, exciting, and interesting way for your child to spend the school break. Children can come for a day or all week. Each day a different natural topic will be explored. Participants can touch an owl, see the birth of spring in a northern forest, learn to identify the wild signs of the area, and learn to respect the natural environment while making new friends. TRS members \$30/day, \$100/week; nonmembers \$35/day, \$110/week.

Friday to Sunday, May 2–4 (begins 4 P.M. on Friday) — Mashomack Preserve, Shelter Island Birding Weekend. Join our expert naturalists for the peak of spring migration. Participants can see over 25 warbler species; take a Sunday day-long trip out on the ocean to watch seabirds; observe endangered nesting birds; attend an owl prowl, bird banding demos, and natural history lectures; and learn the basics of bird-watching or discover finer points of recognizing birdsong. Saturday's options include birding on the North Fork, South Fork, or at the Nature Conservancy's 2000-acre Mashomack Preserve. Transportation, meals, your room at Mashomack's manor house, and five guides are all provided at the low cost of \$250 for the weekend.



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

March 23	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
March 30	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
April 6	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
April 13	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
April 20	Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first	
_	lot south of Southern State Parkway)	
April 27	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
May 4	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
May 11	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
May 18	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	



ZOO TRIP REMINDER



At press time, there was the possibility that a second busload of South Shore Auduboners and friends would be visiting the Bronx Zoo for docent-led tours on Saturday, April 5th. If you haven't signed up yet, call Diane Singer at 561-6118 (between 5 and 8 P.M. if possible) to inquire about the second school bus (SSAS doesn't subsidize these \$12 bus trips, so it's iffy). If you've already reserved a seat on the first bus and are unable to attend, please let Diane know so she can offer your seat to someone on the waiting list.

The bus(es) will leave from the Merrick Road Park Golf Course parking lot in Merrick (just east of the Meadowbrook Parkway; the entrance is on the south side of Merrick Road) at 9 A.M. and return there at about 4:30 P.M. Bring money for admission (\$6.75; \$3 for seniors) and a fast-food zoo lunch (or bring your own lunch).

SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

SSAS Post Office Statement — 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.

DUR ANNUAL DINNER

South Shore Audubon's 26th annual dinner will be held at Pompei Restaurant and Catering in West Hempstead (as usual) on **Tuesday**, **June 10th**. Save the date for this always exceptionally well-attended and modestly priced event, which this year includes the awarding of Birdathon prizes (binoculars, books, tee shirt, sweatshirt, birdseed, cassette tape, compact discs, CD-ROM, a bird print, etc.) to at least ten lucky winners.

SSAS TENTH ANNIVERSARY BIRDATHON

Jim Remsen, Jr.

This year, SSAS will conduct its tenth annual Birdathon in conjunction with our Tenth Anniversary Birdathon Sweepstakes. SSAS raises funds through the Birdathon by having members get cash pledges for each species of bird identified during a 24-hour period in May, when the spring migration is at its height. If you can raise as little as \$25 in pledges this year, you will be entered in a drawing for some spectacular prizes. (See the December/January Skimmer for full details; all of the prizes listed there will be awarded PLUS more that are still coming in!)

Mark the dates on your calendar, **Friday, May 9th** from 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 10th** at 5:00 P.M., and join one of our intrepid leaders (or go it alone, in which case you choose the turf). Our schedule of starting places and leaders is as follows:

Friday, May 9th at 5:00 P.M.: Meet Carole Adams at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore; Paul Butkereit at Jones Beach Coast Guard Station; or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot).

Saturday, May 10th: Meet Elliott Kutner and Carole Adams at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8:00 A.M.; Paul Butkereit at Hempstead Lake State Park at 6:30 A.M.; or Jim and Doreen Remsen at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore at 5:45 A.M. If you need directions to any meeting place, call Jim or Doreen Remsen. Also please try to notify the team leader of your choice so that they will know how many people to expect (all phone numbers are on the back page of this newsletter).

If you aren't going with a team, why not try your own Birdathon? Do a variation on the usual theme of seeing as many species as you can during the count period. Use your imagination. Limit yourself to your backyard, a favorite park or preserve, or even a "couch potato" Birdathon. (For this one, you count as many bird species as you can

on television during the 24 hours. Yes, people have really done it, but we suggest you make it clear to your sponsors if you decide to give it a try!)

Sponsors are the heart of the Birdathon. These are people who agree to give you 25¢, \$1.00, or any amount for each species you see (they may also give you a flat

pledge not based on number of species). The more money you raise, the more chances you get to win sweepstakes prizes... so get lots of sponsors. And remember, if you raise money for the Birdathon but don't actually go out birding, you still get chances in the sweepstakes.

Pledges are due no later than Monday, June 9th to be eligible for prizes, which will be awarded at our annual dinner. You can submit them to us on bird walks, or mail them to us. If you have questions, call us or speak to us at meetings or bird walks. If you need extra pledge forms, we can supply them, too. Let's make the tenth Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

Birdathon Chairpersons: Doreen Remsen (865 1-2B Broadway Avenue, Holbrook, NY 11741; phone 472-6830) and James Remsen, Jr. (3264 Park Avenue, Oceanside, NY 11572; phone 764-5168 after 8:00 P.M.)

EAGLES IN NEW YORK? NO WAY

Jonathan Staller

I've been bird-watching seriously for about five years now, and when I had the opportunity to see Bald Eagles in New York, I couldn't give up that chance. Besides being active with SSAS, I'm also a member of the Alley Pond Environmental Center in Douglaston, Queens. When I received their newsletter, I saw they were running a trip to the Delaware Water Gap to see our nation's bird. Now, that's one trip I couldn't miss, so I signed up for it.

In February, we left Queens in our caravan of five cars and headed for the Delaware River. About an hour and a half later, we arrived at our destination, Hawk's Nest Road. What beautiful scenery; the river below cutting its path through the valley, while we're on a snakelike road halfway up the mountain. Like I said, beautiful scenery, but no eagles!

After taking pictures from all different angles of the spectacular views, I finally saw what I had come to see: Bald Eagles!! During the next hour, we saw nine all to-



gether. Three adults and six immatures were seen. I saw one grab a fish in front of me (like the Ospreys we see at Massapequa Preserve). Now, I'm no expert when it comes to telling the ages of the immatures, but there was one whose head was almost fully white — definitely a four-year old bird (it takes five years for a Bald Eagle to get its adult plumage).

The other young birds were fully brown, with some white specks molting in.

This is a trip that I recommend other birders take, but don't wait for the weather to get warmer. You see, these eagles are from Canada and they spend their winters here. Would you believe that there are eagles in New York? I do!

BROOKSIDE CLEANUP ON APRIL 20th

Brookside Preserve is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland field area owned by Nassau County and managed by SSAS. Our annual spring cleanup will begin at 1 P.M., rain or shine. Bring gloves, rakes, bags, and friends (young and old). If you'd like to wade into Milburn Creek and help remove debris that has accumulated at the base of the recently rebuilt bridge, please dress for the occasion! The Preserve is located on the Freeport–Baldwin border; park 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).

Mike Higgiston

I've written so many times of successful birding trips that I may have given the impression that all one has to do is show up at the spot where the rare bird had been reported and you'll be sure to see the bird immediately. That's not always the way it is. Sometimes it can be extremely frustrating and irritating.

Last November, there was a report of an Amazon Kingfisher in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. This kingfisher is three inches larger than the more familiar Green Kingfisher of South Texas. They look remarkably alike; the Amazon Kingfisher has a crest and is bulkier; the Green Kingfisher has more white in the wings and tail. There had also been reports of a Greater Flamingo at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and my latest nemesis bird, the White-collared Seedeater, had been reported in the town of Zapata. I had some use-or-lose vacation time, so I rolled the dice and went.

After checking in at the hotel, I went to the Amazon Kingfisher site. I had to walk through a private yard to get to the resaca, an elongated pond with an island in the center, where the bird had been seen. I also had to fend off a herd of curious emus that populated this yard. The emus liked to follow people around and it could be quite disconcerting to scan an area with binoculars for a few moments and sense a presence next to you where there was nothing before. I saw no kingfisher, but met two birders who told me that they had seen the flamingo earlier that afternoon. I left immediately for Laguna Atascosa NWR, about a 45 minute trip to the coast.

I arrived with plenty of daylight remaining and proceeded to drive the loop where the flamingo had been seen. I came upon a couple searching for the bird and we joined forces. We continually scanned the area where the flamingo had been reported, but with no luck. We drove the entire loop to see if there were other vantage points to view the area, but no flamingo was sighted. We made plans to meet the next morning at dawn to continue our search.

Sunrise saw me driving east to the coast, and my new friends were there as they promised. We continuously

scanned the area, but could find no flamingo. It wasn't until about 10 A.M. that we spotted the flamingo about a mile away. The shape of the bird and its feeding techniques were unmistakable, but the heat waves rising from the water made the viewing somewhat less than optimal.

Now I had the rest of the day and all the next day to pursue the other two birds. I decided to go to Zapata, about a three hour drive from the coast, and search for the White-collared Seedeaters. This was my third trip in my attempt to see these birds, small finches that inhabit weedy places and tall grass. They are usually found in Zapata along the river in canebrakes (thickets of cane) or behind the library in Salineno, also in canebrakes. I've

tried both places and have been shut out. I spent most of the day along the river in Zapata searching for the birds. I found two Plain Chachalacas, far from their usual haunts downriver, but nary a seedeater. I finally surrendered and returned to the hotel.

The next morning found me examining the many ponds in the general area of the resaca where the kingfisher had originally been sighted. I returned to the resaca finally and continued searching, but found nothing of note. I noticed other birders in the area and was pleasantly surprised when I met Greg and Ted from Orlando, whom I had met on a previous birding trip. Their company was surely welcome, but they had the same luck that I had. We compared notes of what was in the area and I told them of the flamingo and they went to search for it. We had dinner that night and talked over past triumphs and disappointments and future plans. They both tried to talk me into coming to Florida the very next weekend (Thanksgiving weekend, I might add) to see a White-cheeked Pintail, a Caribbean species, that had taken up residence at Merritt Island NWR. Although quite enticing, I also did not want to find all my belongings at the curb when I returned, if I did go. So I turned down that offer and returned home, waiting for the next opportunity and challenge to present itself.

NOMINATIONS FOR 1997–1998 OFFICERS

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 13th, 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, chaired by Dolores Rogers, has recommended the following candidates:

President — Doreen Remsen
Vice President — Michael Sperling
Treasurer — Nancy Frame
Recording Secretary — Christine Schmitt
Corresponding Secretary — Doris Pirodsky
Director (to 6/00) — Michael Higgiston
Director (to 6/00) — Judy Hoyer



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

** WELCOME NEW MEMBERS **

Marion Yavarkovsky

SSAS is just "abloom" with new members! Spring is the perfect time to become active in our chapter. Please join us for a Sunday morning bird walk, a monthly meeting, a trip, or a cleanup. We are certain you will be happy that you did.

[To receive an application for membership in National Audubon Society and SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Marion Yavarkovsky, at 379-2090. The best time to call is after 4 P.M., Monday through Friday. Introductory membership is \$20 (\$15 for students and senior citizens).]

Baldwin	Mrs. Bonnie Earnest, Peter Robinson
Bayside	Derek L. Miles
	Robert Allen, Mr. Charles Beck, Susan Gilmore, Susan E. Gunnarsson
Bethpage	Mrs. Ada Desposito
Deer Park	Gerard & Tara Tambasco
East Meadow	James G. Crawford,
	Mrs. Alice Cuffe
Elmont	C. Fucci
Farmingdale	Miss Rosalie Anselmo, Carl
門子	Calderone, Daniel Donza, Miss Doris Ferraro, Mr. & Mrs. John Mace, the Monico family, Brian Moran
Floral Park	Angela Goodyear.
	Eileen Whidden
Franklin Square	Rose Ferraioli.
•	Ms. Barbara Shilkret
Freeport	J. I. Rindler, Joyce Ruger
	H. Calandrino, Dr. Piero M.
•	De Luise, Marion Hamilton,
	Jim Werner
Hempstead	Mr. Gustav Sherman
Inwood	Mr. Tony Pandolfo
Jamaica	Barbara Hausman
Lawrence	Stuart Weinerman

Levittown Ms. Patricia J. Nussey,
Mrs. Dorothy Prato,
Mrs. Sybil Rosenblum
Long Beach Mr. Don Axelrod, Mr. Eugene
Fahrer, Francine Fleishman,
Jennifer Hemmers, Ms. Therese
D. Sinacori, Irvin F. Witcosky
Lynbrook Robert Wagner
Malverne J-O-J Donaldson
Massapequa Wilma Diehl, Joan Jungbluth,
Peter Murdock, Courtney Olsen,
Ann M. Timinelli
Massapequa Park Barry Goldfarb, Jerry Kearney,
Eileen Kennedy,
Ms. Rosanne B. McAward
Merrick Ellen Olson, Angela O'Rourke
Oceanside Guy F. Livingston
Old Bethpage Erica Lapidus,
Mary Ann Rosenfeld
Plainview David Balk, Ms. Diane Weiss
Rockville Centre Maureen Gibbons, Leonard Klein,
Arthur Smith,
Ms. Rhonda E. Strassman
Seaford P. Konitzer, Mr. Louis Pike
Valley Stream Mariana Manzo,
Mr. Robert A. Rowsell,
Mr. Saul Straussberg & family
Wantagh Robert Greene, Carol F. Moore,
J. M. Nicoletti, Laura Nolan
West Hempstead Mrs. Lillian Lang

POPULATION & HABITAT

As advertised in last month's President's Message, SSAS Treasurer Nancy Frame did represent SSAS at Audubon's Population and Habitat Campaign Lobby Week in Washington, D.C. Nancy met with her Congresswoman. Carolyn McCarthy, and aides of other legislators whose districts include South Shore Audubon members. The immediate purpose of the lobbying was to get Congress to release already appropriated international population and family planning assistance funds (none of which is for abortions). Last year, as detailed in National Audubon's February 1997 Armchair Activist Letter of the Month (call Mary Jane Russell at 766-7397 to sign up; it's free to SSAS members), Congress cut these funds by 30% compared to the previous Congress and blocked the remainder's distribution. In the first environmental votes in the new Congress, the funds were released by 220-209 in the House and 53-46 in the Senate.

The New York Vote. Alison Heaphy, recently hired as the first Habitat and Population Organizer by Audubon's New York State Field Office in Albany, sent your editor the voting records on the resolutions to release international population assistance: Senator Alfonse D'Amato voted no; Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan voted yes. In the House of Representatives, 22 of NY's 31 Congresspersons voted yes (16 of 18 Democrats and 6 of 13 Republicans); South Shore Audubon's Peter King voted no, while our Carolyn McCarthy voted yes; northern Nassau's Gary Ackerman and western Suffolk's Rick Lazio voted yes, but eastern Suffolk's Michael Forbes voted no.

The rest of this column is taken from National Audubon's latest **Fact Sheet on Population & Habitat**.

Why International Population Assistance is America's Best Option for Helping End the Global Decline of Birds and Other Wildlife. The rapid growth of Earth's human population is decimating populations of our fellow creatures worldwide. This loss of our planet's living treasure is occurring largely through the degradation and destruction of natural habitats. Until our own numbers exploded in this century, these natural habitats provided safe and healthy homes for the birds and wildlife with which we lived in harmony.

- ♠ At current rates of growth, in less than 50 years we will add more humans to the face of the Earth than in all of the previous 500,000 years of human history.
- ♣ In the next decade our human population will grow by another 1 billion — nearly the equivalent of today's combined populations of South America plus Africa.
- In the past 40 years, while our global population doubled, we destroyed 1/5 of the world's topsoil and consumed 1/3 of the forests that existed in 1950.
- ★ We are currently causing the extinction of 50,000 species of life per year most of them undescribed and could lose 2/3 of all Earth's species in the next century.

This situation carries the gravest consequences for every one of us, because we, too, are a part of Creation. We share with every other living creature the same fundamental needs for a clean and healthy environment of air, water, vegetated soil, and stable climate. Every loss of a species is a warning to us about an environmental change that ultimately threatens our own survival. Since no species demands as much from Earth's environment as we do, any habitat that can no longer support some other species is ultimately far more perilous for the human family — even when the underlying cause is our own crowding of the planet.

It is no surprise, therefore, that our concern for the future of humans and wildlife has caused the National Audubon Society, along with millions of concerned Americans, to adopt as a top priority the protection of habitats for birds and other wildlife through international population assistance.

Our Disappearing Birds. In addition to their multitude of other values — from beautifying our world to benefitting us economically as controllers of insect pests — birds are excellent indicators of our environmental health. In particular, migratory birds — which account for 2/3 of North America's bird species — warn us of environmental hazards beyond our borders, even as we lose birds to those hazards. Like a giant hemispherical barometer, the annual migration of millions of birds to Latin America tells us by

their returning numbers about conditions abroad that will ultimately affect us at home. The trends that we see are alarming: At least 1/2 of all species migrating to Latin America have exhibited significant declines in recent years, while that region has experienced an unprecedented growth in human numbers, more than doubling in just 30 years.

Overwhelmed by Population Growth: Mining the Resource Base. Over 95% of the world's population growth is occurring in the developing world, where it outstrips the growth in jobs and per capita income. Ill-equipped to deal with such an explosion in demand for public services, jobs, and national infrastructure, these developing economies are selling off their natural resources for cash, while they borrow the rest of what they need from the developed world.

Caught in a seemingly hopeless cycle of swelling population and crushing debt, these high-birthrate nations understandably feel compelled to exploit their natural wealth, even though they are consuming their capital and the best hope for their future well-being. Because of the need for foreign credits, resources are typically sold off cheaply to foreign enterprises, with little attempt to regulate environmental impacts. Industrial agriculture and mining, and commercial forestry and livestock production, have contributed significantly to massive deforestation and destruction of wetlands and grasslands worldwide, along with intensive application of pesticides and herbicides, some of which are banned in our own country. These practices are how Mexico is able to make its massive debt

payment to the U.S. and why Guyana, struggling with enormous unemployment, is willing to sell off its forests to a foreign corporation.

Overpopulation: A Problem that We Can Solve. Contrary

to what many people think, population growth is a manageable problem. Equally important, it is a problem that the people in the developing world want to solve. Stabilizing the world's population is something that we can help bring about with a relatively small investment of money. Over 100 million women in the developing world who desire family planning lack access to the necessary services. All they need is the financial assistance for population programs that their own strained economies cannot provide.

We have a choice as to how we invest our current wealth. If we choose reduced funding for overseas population assistance, we make a conscious choice for accelerated rates of species extinctions, for much greater environmental costs in the future, and for a severely impoverished world for our children. By opting to do everything we can to stabilize world population growth, including assistance to people who need our help, we take the single most important step toward ensuring the continued survival of our magnificent flights of birds and the myriad other species of wildlife and plants whose survival is linked to theirs — including ourselves.

1996-1997 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

•		
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