

VOTE NO ON ELECTION DAY

The Audubon Council of New York State, representing the 32 National Audubon Society chapters in our state, unanimously passed the following resolution at its annual fall meeting on October 5th:

Whereas, the Constitution of the State of New York provides for the possibility of a Constitutional Convention every 20 years, to be determined by the electorate, and

Whereas, 1997 is a twentieth year, and the question of holding such Constitutional Convention will appear on the ballot at the General Election in November, and

Whereas, a Constitutional Convention is a matter of substantial expense (estimated at fifty million dollars) and there appear to be no current issues which require a constitutional revision, and

Whereas, another, less expensive, procedure for amendment of the State Constitution exists, should such issue arise, and

Whereas, proponents of the Constitutional Convention want to remove historic environmental policies such as Article 14 — the forever wild clause for the Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks and Catskills, and

Whereas, the history of the last Constitutional Convention is that the electorate rejected the changes proposed by that Convention, and

Whereas, a coalition of environmental, labor, education, and civic organizations are opposing the Constitutional Convention based on lack of need, cost, and threat to environmental policies of the State,

Now Therefore, the Audubon Council of New York State resolves to oppose the calling of a Constitutional Convention in New York State, and

Therefore, the National Audubon Society of New York State [NAS's Albany field office] and the Audubon Council of New York State urge all New York voters to vote "no" on the statewide ballot question for a Constitutional Convention.

GARDEN CITY BIRD SANCTUARY

Robert Alvey, the Chairperson of the Garden City Environmental Advisory Board's Land Use Committee, will provide a fact-filled and entertaining slide presentation on the development of GCBS at a free public meeting sponsored by the Garden City Western Property Owners' Association. The **November 5th** meeting will begin at 8 P.M. at the Homestead School auditorium on Homestead and Stratford Avenues.

As a result of continuing reclamation work begun by the Land Use Committee with help from community groups in 1995, a five-acre sump along Tanners Pond Road was dedicated as Garden City Bird Sanctuary last year under a management agreement involving SSAS and Nassau County — the first wildlife sanctuary sump in our county. For more information, call Rob at 326-1720.

BROOKSIDE PRESERVE CLEANUP

Brookside Preserve is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland field area owned by Nassau County and managed (and rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. With help from a state grant, we have published an adult trail guide and an educational freshwater wetland guide, and we continue to add plantings for wildlife and have night-time committee meetings (next one is/was October 28th in Merrick; call Betsy Gulotta at 546-8841 for info).

Our annual fall cleanup will begin at 1:30 P.M. on **Sunday, November 2nd**, rain or shine. Bring gloves, rakes, bags, and/or friends (young and old). If you'd like to wade into Milburn Creek and help remove soggy debris, please dress accordingly! 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).



MORE NEWS ON HORSESHOE CRABS

On October 8th, the National Audubon Society joined a lawsuit aimed at protecting declining populations of horseshoe crabs and migratory shorebirds.

The lawsuit seeks to overturn a recent decision by the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council that could devastate the horseshoe crab and shorebird populations.

"The Fisheries Council decision on horseshoe crab fishing sets the stage for multiple disasters, both environmental and economic," said John Flicker, President of the National Audubon Society. "Their shoot-all-the-buffalo mentality would eliminate the horseshoe crab, wipe out the food source for millions of birds in the largest bird staging area in the lower 48 states, and destroy a \$31 million birding industry."

The Fisheries Council rejected regulations that would have limited the take of horseshoe crabs by fishermen. These regulations were issued by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection at the urging of Governor Christine Todd Whitman. Data compiled showed a precipitous decline in both horseshoe crab and migratory shorebird populations in the Delaware Bay area.

"Governor Whitman's courageous actions to protect the horseshoe crabs and shorebirds will be nullified by the Fisheries Council," said Flicker. "It appears that the Fisheries Council focused only on the short-term needs of a few commercial fishermen, ignoring both scientific data showing declining horseshoe crab and bird populations and the economic impact of that decline on New Jersey tourism."

"I commend Governor Whitman for her strong stand on this issue. We hope the courts will agree," said Flicker.

A court decision is expected within the next several weeks.

BIRD WALKS
Elliott Kulner

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. 26 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 2 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Nov. 9 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Nov. 16 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Nov. 23 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 30 Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Dec. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Dec. 14 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Dec. 21 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)

Seed - Feeders (516) 694-2180
Houses - Baths
Books - Gifts



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Located between McDonald's & Dunkin' Donuts

NYS AUDUBON FALL COUNCIL MEETING

Mary Jane Russell

An educational and fun time were had by Michael Sperling, Nancy Frame, Betty Borowsky, and yours truly from October 3-5 at the New York State Council meeting at the Taconic Outdoor Education Center in Putnam County's Fahnestock Memorial State Park. The food and company were great!

Five biologists from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation talked with us and representatives from 22 other NYS Audubon chapters on Saturday morning. Large and small mammals, biodiversity, and endangered species in our state were discussed. We learned that New York now has an estimated 50-60 moose, 5000-6000 black bears (which are often attracted by bird feeders), and 90,000 beavers.

After a delicious lunch, we could choose to either hike a few miles in the densely wooded park or canoe at Audubon's Constitution Marsh Sanctuary.

Bernadette Castro, Commissioner of NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, was our dinner guest speaker. She welcomed Audubon's interest in environmental issues, including the Bethpage golf course proposal that our chapter (with help from the council and

Audubon field office) successfully campaigned against. State Senator Vincent Leibell made a cameo appearance. Fahnestock State Park is about two hours away, off the Taconic Parkway. It consists of 11,000 acres of land and is in a proposed Important Bird Area.

The Education Center is only open to school and environmental groups. The accommodations are not plush [Editor's interruption: you just read one of the greatest understatements in my 66-issue *Skimmer* career; they're "rustic" cabins with a separate building for running water (I'm quoting Moriches Bay Audubon's Dian Mathews, who successfully asked Great South Bay's Ginny Fields to bring both of us soap from her hotel room)], but the food is great (chef is from the Culinary Institute of America)



An SSAS Weekend? If we can gather at least 35 people, we could plan an enjoyable and fun-filled weekend for less than \$90 per person. Let me know if you would be interested in such a trip (766-7397). Spring would be a beautiful time to visit the park.

CHAPTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Each year, SSAS returns the Chapter Financial Report form sent to us by National Audubon Society. Our volunteer accountant (all our board members are volunteers, too), Ben Borowsky, calculated the following numbers:

<i>Assets</i>	
☞ Cash (Checking, Savings, etc.).....	\$8,440
☞ Investments (Stocks, CDs, etc.).....	76,840
Total Assets as of 6/30/97	85,280
<i>Revenues</i>	
☞ NAS Chapter Dues Share	8,886
☞ Grants/Contributions	1,900
☞ Educational Events	175
☞ Fund-raising Events	11,126
☞ Interest and Investments	4,373
☞ Sales	1,753
☞ Other	4,833
Total Income	33,046
<i>Expenditures</i>	
☞ Administration	6,988
☞ Newsletter/Postage/Mailing	6,324
☞ Educational Programs and Events	1,408
☞ Fund-raising	3,425
☞ Contributions to National Audubon	1,846
☞ Scholarships	2,875
☞ Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary	3,850
☞ Other (Binoculars, Brookside, Donations, etc.)	6,631
Total Expenditures	33,347
Net Decrease in Operating Funds	\$301

DOODLETOWN ROAD

Mike Higgston

Once the height of spring migration is over by the end of May, you begin thinking about the birds you missed and the ones you might find on their breeding grounds. And what better place to find exciting birds nesting close to Long Island than the Doodletown Road area of Bear Mountain. There is a wide variety of habitats included in the 51,000 acres of Bear Mountain State Park and the 80 square miles of adjoining Harriman State Park. Hundreds of miles of trails intersect in parkland and about 100 birds nest here. The biggest attractions are the many warblers that nest in the area.

We headed to Bear Mountain the last Saturday in May and happened upon a Ruffed Grouse standing in the road. As we approached the parking area, we had the good fortune to meet a friend of mine, Paul Keim, President of the Brooklyn Bird Club, who was leading a trip for NYC's Linnean Society. We parked on the side of Route 9W and crossed the road to a trail that leads up into the park. It wasn't long before we began seeing birds. American Redstarts, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Veery (pictured), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow and Hooded Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Pewee and Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, and Red-tailed Hawk were all seen from the trail. A Pileated Wood-



pecker flew by. A Wood Thrush's call echoed in the forest. A Blue-winged Warbler was found. But the greatest excitement was the tracking of a Cerulean Warbler. It's not a bird that one sees often on migration and I've found that to see the bird at all I need to visit its breeding grounds. That doesn't make the bird a sure thing. The warbler moves quickly and blends in so nicely with the background greenery that it takes work to get good looks at this bird. What made it somewhat more difficult was that there were two Ceruleans in the area chasing each other and doing battle over nesting areas.

There were Indigo Buntings, calling Chipping Sparrows, a circling Turkey Vulture, Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Barn Swallows, an Eastern Towhee, Northern Flicker, and a croaking Northern Raven. A Scarlet Tanager pair was sighted. The presence of another warbler sent a ripple through the group: Kentucky Warblers nest in this area and I have seen them here before. But a look at a singing male Kentucky is a sight to be savored. We heard the call and hastened down a trail to pinpoint the warbler. It took some time because the Kentucky's voice has an almost ventriloquistic quality to it. But with everyone searching, we finally located the bird some 50 yards away singing his heart out. He was in the open and everyone had long, clear, satisfying looks at the warbler.

We returned to the car after lunch and scanned the marshy area on the other side of Route 9W. A Song Sparrow, Canada Geese, Red-winged Blackbird, and many American Goldfinches were in evidence. This portion of Bear Mountain at Doodletown Road never fails to provide us with many birding thrills. We'll just have to go back there next year.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT QUOTATIONS

These are taken from *A Dictionary of Environmental Quotations*, compiled by Barbara K. Rodes and Rice Odell, published by Simon & Schuster, ©1992.

"It is the sense of the scientific community that carbon dioxide from unrestrained combustion of fossil fuels potentially is the most important environmental issue facing mankind." — U.S. Department of Energy report, April 2, 1979

"This is not a disaster, it is merely a change. The area [Bangladesh] won't have disappeared, it will just be under water. Where you now have cows, you will have fish." — J. R. Spradley, quoted in *Environmental Forum*, November-December 1990

SSAS MEMBER TO READ POEMS

Max Wheat

Enjoying Winter on Long Island is the subject for a poetry reading by long-time South Shore Audubon Society member Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr., at 4 P.M. on Sunday, November 16th at Borders Books & Music Store, 1260 Old Country Road, Westbury. The reading, sponsored by the Performance Poets Association, features poems about Snowy Owls, Harbor Seals, Montauk Point, and bird feeders. An open reading follows.

Editor's note: When I was editing my first *Skimmer* back in the summer of 1990, SSAS President Joan Butkereiit asked Max to submit some of his poems. Here's one that I'm finally putting to use, entitled "Procession":

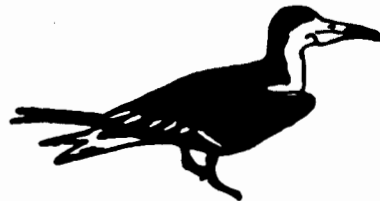
*I stand lookout for them in autumn
hawks massing out of Canada and New England
advancing down the barrier beaches
foraging as they come —
Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks
racing over the dunes,
merlins, small dark explosions of headlong speed
kestrels hovering on beating wings
marsh hawks dropping over prey like shadowy cloaks
But always, I wait for the rare one
the endangered one, the peregrine falcon
catapulting out of the horizon into the swallow flock
monarch of this pilgrimage of predation*

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
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