





## MASSAPEQUA PRESERVE BIRD LISTS WANTED

Veteran *Skimmer* columnist Mike Higgiston is trying to compile a checklist of birds found at Massapequa Preserve. If you have any information about what you've seen in the preserve (and during which month or season), please call him at 538-8376.

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## HOLIDAY WILDLIFE PARTY THANKS

*Michael Spelling*

Our annual Holiday Wildlife Party at Tackapausha Museum drew over 400 people on December 13th. Volunteers spotted by yours truly were SSAS members Alice Blaustein (with friend Carole Jacobelli at the refreshments table), Betty Borowsky, Pat Eagen and Judy Schoenberger (at the popcorn stringing table), Danny Gottlieb, Betsy Gulotta, Bill Hollweg, Annie McIntyre, Doris Pirodsky and Valerie Rizzuto (with 15 pounds of peanut butter that joined birdseed on pinecones), Doreen and Jim Remsen, Jonathan Staller (with the chapter's display boards), and Tom Torma (aka Santa Claus). We'd like to thank everyone who helped out at the party, including TR Sanctuary's Mike Brust and his live raptors.

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## CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN ESTABLISHED, VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

*Betty Barowsky*

I am very happy to announce that SSAS has established the Roger Tory Peterson Camp Scholarship Program for disadvantaged children. While most of Nassau County's residents enjoy middle-class lifestyles, there are thousands of people who are living in low-income communities, many below the federally defined poverty level. Children of these families would not normally have an opportunity to attend any day camp, let alone one which would allow them to learn about and experience the natural Long Island environment.

This year the scholarship will send nine children from the Franklin School in Hempstead to the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary's Day Camp for one week each. Children will be selected based on teachers' judgment that they will benefit from and enjoy such an experience and the children's families' eligibility for Medicaid. We are especially grateful to the Old Navy Company, who has agreed to bus the children from the school to the camp and



back. The company's only requirement is that there be an adult on the bus. That's where you all come in. *We need one adult to accompany the children to and from the camp each day.* If you are free any or all of the mornings of the week of July 6th, please call me (764-3596). You will also be able to enjoy a morning at TRS.

South Shore Audubon is committed to disseminating conservation education to everyone, but recognizes the special importance of educating children. The surest way to provide this education is by having the children develop a love of the environment by spending time in it. There is no better way to impart a commitment to the environment than to come to enjoy it. And we know that this is much easier to do when you are young — when you can still do without your hair dryer; when the damp and dirt are still so unimportant that you can concentrate your full attention on the miracle of a tadpole, or a feather, or a firefly in a jar.

We want to give this to as many children as we can. Please help us do this: call me at 764-3596.

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## AUDUBON CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

SSAS will as usual be awarding two full scholarships, one to an adult and one to a child age 10-14, to attend an Audubon camp this summer. Applicants or their parents should be members in good standing and be interested in sharing their camp experiences with fellow members, the community, and/or schools; we typically get only a few applicants, so apply! Financial need is not a basis for receiving a scholarship; the winners must provide their own transportation to Maine. Please contact either our Education Chairperson, Suzanne Lancer (536-6574 between 7 and 9 P.M.), or Doreen Remsen (472-6830) for details; the deadline to apply is **March 1st**. The following descriptions come from the Audubon Ecology Camps & Workshops catalog.

The Maine camp occupies the 333-acre Todd Wildlife Sanctuary on Hog Island in Muscongus Bay. The primary aim of Audubon's Youth Ecology Camp is to instill a love, respect, and sense of stewardship for the natural world. Participants learn by doing — if we talk about something, we'll also see it, feel it, touch it, experience it. Fifty young campers, led by ten instructors, hike through cathedral-like spruce-fir forests, search for organisms in tide pools, and learn about seabirds, seals, and other wildlife. The evenings are filled with night hikes, stargazing, special guests, and songfests. The Youth Ecology Camp will be offered from July 30 to August 9 and August 12-22.

The Maine Coast Field Ecology Workshop's daily classes explore island, pond, forest, and estuarine ecology in one of the most pristine maritime environments in the East. You'll not only see marvelously diverse life-forms — you'll come to know their habitats and ecological roles. The Field Ecology Workshop for adults will be offered from June 27 to July 3, July 4-10, and July 11-17. In addition to the SSAS scholarship, National Audubon's Carl W. Buchheister Scholarship is offered to professional classroom teachers, educators, and/or chapter activists interested in the Ecology Workshop; applications are available from SSAS and are due by March 18th.

National Audubon offers camps and workshops in Minnesota, Wyoming, Vermont, and Connecticut, too.

**SSAS TELEPHONE CHAIN**

*Mary Jane Russell*

As *Armchair Activist* Chairperson, I am occasionally notified of an issue that must be acted upon immediately — writing a letter will take too long and the issue would be missed. Making a phone call to the appropriate person (congressman, senator, governor, or president) will let our representatives know of our concerns quickly (and calls to Congress are toll-free).

Alice Blaustein has volunteered to be our telephone coordinator. If you would like to be a part of this program, please call Alice at 221-1870 or me at 766-7397.

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



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**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.

- Jan. 25 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Feb. 1 Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Feb. 8 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Feb. 15 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Feb. 22 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Mar. 1 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Mar. 8 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Mar. 15 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Mar. 22 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Mar. 29 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner

**NAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE NEEDED**

National Audubon Society's 36-member Board of Directors includes representatives elected by the chapters. The current Northeast Region rep, Norman Shapiro, is not seeking a second term; he defeated two other candidates in 1995. SSAS can nominate a candidate by February 28th, who "should be willing and able to help set overall National Audubon policies and budgets; articulate the issues and concerns of our region; communicate board matters with all chapters in our region; participate in fund-raising and maintain the financial integrity of NAS; fill the position for the next three years, beginning December 1998; and attend four board meetings per year, each 3-4 days in length (travel expenses can be reimbursed)." Let us know if you're interested.

**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.*

**WILDLIFE POISONING HOTLINE (800) 356-0560**

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



*Explore the coast with the*  
**AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY**

**MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND** (Feb. 6-8). Cost: \$245 includes 2 nights at luxurious Montauk Manor (indoor heated pool, sauna, jacuzzi, spacious lobby), 5 meals, 2 evening programs, 5 guided hikes during peak winter birding time. See thousands of scoters, eiders, loons, and oldsquaw, and visit harbor seal haulout sites. Free pickup at LIRR station. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe, and Rob Villani. Call/write Don for reservation and info.

**NEW YORK AQUARIUM "BEHIND THE SCENES" TOUR** (Saturday, March 28). Meet 10 A.M. at the Aquarium entrance for a 2-1/2 hour special tour. See beluga whales, walrus, sea otters, and sharks. Cost: \$15 (kids \$10). Call Don.

**ASSATEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND** (April 23-26) Explore beaches and wetlands of Assateague National Seashore and Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge. Cost: \$245 includes three nights at Refuge Motor Inn, safari bus tour to the refuge interior, boat cruise through marshes, guided hikes, and a seafood buffet.

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



## MONTAUK BIRDING

Mike Higgiston

One often wonders what to do early on a cold, blustery, winter-like day in December. Should one stay in and write Christmas cards? Perhaps cuddle up with a book and a cup of hot cocoa on the side? Maybe add the finishing touches to that woodworking project? That's what sane people would like to do. We would prefer to watch birds at Montauk Point until we can no longer feel our toes, which is where we were on the first Sunday in December.

The calendar showed that winter was still almost three weeks away, but you would get some hearty arguments to the contrary that morning at the point. Unless, of course, you didn't hear those arguments as everyone was so bundled up to keep the cold away. But we had some great looks at Common Eider, Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebe, White-winged and Surf Scoters, Northern Gannet, and a few King Eider females. We spent much of our time there trying to turn two Bonaparte's Gulls into a Red-legged Kittiwake and a Black-headed Gull. However, all dreams of rare bird alert glory were quickly dashed by cooler heads (the ones without hats). But the Bonaparte's Gulls were beauties and it shows that the ordinary and common birds should be looked at a little more closely.

After leaving the point, we began a slow westward journey through the East End, stopping at various hot (?) spots. The horse farm on Route 25A gave us a Killdeer in the field and a flock of Snow Geese overhead. There was a Great Blue Heron in the marsh on the way to the Montauk jetty, where we saw Oldsquaw, Common Loon, and a Purple Sandpiper, courtesy of Eagle Eye Bill the Birder Hollweg. After stopping at a deli for hot drinks and another necessity, chocolate chip cookies, we visited the pond in town. We found the largest flock of Canvasback (pictured) we've ever seen, some 30 or so, with Redhead,



American Coot, and Pied-billed Grebe. A White-throated Sparrow in a thicket responded to some pishing to show himself. The Montauk dump gave us a Song Sparrow and a Black-capped Chickadee, which sly Hughie McQuillan tried to turn into a Carolina Chickadee. Such irresponsibility can simply not be tolerated; as a punishment, he was not allowed any more cookies. We traveled north to the sound and saw a small flock of Common Goldeneye, but the best sighting had to be an American Kestrel on a telephone wire with a mouse hanging from his claws.

Hook Pond, always a necessary stop, gave us Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, and a Red-tailed Hawk surveying the pond in a tree on the far shore. We ate lunch at Meghans Restaurant in Water Mill, another regular component of our Montauk trips. We visited Shinnecock Canal but failed to turn up a Razorbill or unusual gull. We did meet a group from Great South Bay

Audubon for the third time that Sunday and compared notes. Then it was off for a long slow drive along Dune Road. Unfortunately, there were no Snowy Owls on the dunes and the tide was high, covering the mudflats, which removed the possibility of shorebirds to be added to our list. We did see a large flock of House Finches on the beach and then a flock of Snow Buntings flew in. There were also Sanderlings on the shoreline. We continued west on Dune Road and finally notched our 50th sighting of the day, a Great Egret just a few feet from the road. A Montauk trip is always a successful one and we may plan another for the middle of the winter. Maybe Ross' Gull next time.

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## THE AUDUBON ADVISORY

The *Audubon Advisory* is National Audubon's weekly policy report, available for free via e-mail (send a message to [mssperring@compuserve.com](mailto:mssperring@compuserve.com) for info or check [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)). After Congress adjourned, this wrap-up appeared in the final 1997 *Advisory*:

Audubon will face significant legislative challenges in the year ahead. Strong anti-environment forces were very active in the first half of the 105th Congress. Indeed, these forces have become more dangerous than they were in the previous 104th Congress. Camouflaging themselves in consensus rhetoric, foes of the environment are striving to appear reasonable to the general public and in the media. Yet careful examination continues to expose a legislative and political agenda that is destructive to birds, forests, wetlands, and the environment generally.

There is one vital constant in the legislative battles that have been taking place and will take place in Washington — Audubon Activists! It is your phone calls, letters, and e-mails that make a difference. There simply is no political substitute for contacting your Member of Congress or Senator. We need your voices to continue to make a difference in our effort to protect birds, habitat, and the environment.

*Population Assistance Funds Approved Without Restrictions.* We had a significant victory in February when the House released population assistance funds. This victory was followed by a similar vote in the Senate.

In November, we overcame determined efforts in the House to restrict international population assistance which would make family planning programs ineffective. In a final showdown that lasted for several weeks, congressional opponents of population assistance caved into the Administration's veto threat and population funds were preserved.

*A Clear Mission and Significant Boosts in Funding for Refuges.* For the first time in history, the Refuge System finally has a clear mission to conserve wildlife first. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, signed by President Clinton in October, solidifies this mission as law. Audubon played a key role in forging the compromise that led to the final legislation.

Audubon lobbied for significant Refuge Operations and Maintenance funding increases. The refuge system desperately needed more funding, with many refuges closed to the public because of the shortfalls. With the Interior Appropriations bill's passage came a major \$42 million increase in Refuge Operations and Maintenance to \$221 million.

*Land Acquisition Victories.* In an unprecedented action, Congress approved a one-time \$869 million for priority land acquisitions. These funds will purchase parts of the Headwater Forest, the largest unprotected stand of Redwoods in the world, and the New World Mine, which threatens to pollute Yellowstone National Park. Furthermore, 22 Audubon chapter-nominated land acquisition priorities received funds for selected priority purchases (including \$8.5 million for Sterling Forest and \$2.29 million for LI's Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge). Achieving this many priorities was a direct result of strong grassroots support.

*Largest Agricultural Environmental Incentive Programs Survive.* Farmland in America has not looked as good for wildlife for 60 years. Through preservation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and several other conservation programs, farmers are provided incentives for environmental practices on cropland. The CRP pays farmers to plant grass or trees or restore wetlands on environmentally sensitive lands, while the WRP pays for short- and long-term wetlands easements. Together, these two programs have protected nearly 37 million acres of wildlife habitat.

*Endangered Species Act Emerges Unscathed.* Efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act (ESA) were delayed, even though most proposals had significant support from key decision makers.

A rider to a flood relief aid bill would have granted broad ESA waivers to farmers and developers. Moderate Republicans, teaming with Democrats, significantly amended and narrowed the rider.

In the Senate, a powerful group of Senators from both sides of the aisle attempted to pass an unacceptable Endangered Species Act reauthorization bill. So far, S. 1180 has failed to gather steam.

*Audubon Fights Garrison.* In early 1997, Audubon worked to defeat a \$1.6 billion proposal to resurrect the Garrison Diversion Water Project. Throughout the year, we worked hard to oppose efforts to bring the project back and to defeat other water development efforts that would destroy prairie pothole wetlands. Another Garrison proposal has been introduced by the North Dakota delegation and it will be the subject of debate in 1998.

*Road Development Kept Out of Our Wilderness.* The "Pave the Parks" Rider, attached to the flood relief aid bill, also failed, when the President refused to sign the bill with the rider attached. The rider would have allowed developers to pave roads in pristine wilderness areas.

*Environmentally Dangerous Trade Bill Stalls.* The con-

troversial trade proposal called "Fast Track" derailed after significant opposition from labor and environmental groups kept a vote from happening in the House. The Audubon Board voted to support Fast Track legislation, but only those proposals that put the environment in the forefront of trade negotiations.

*Setbacks.* Congress attacked forests across the country with proposals that grant unjustified road building subsidies, allow trees from the Pacific NW to be shipped overseas, and encourage poor forest management plans.

Also, Congress approved funding for an outlet to be built on Devils Lake, ND which will only exacerbate environmental flooding problems.

Takings proposals made significant headway in the House and Senate. If they ever become law, these takings proposals would effectively dismantle the vast majority of environmental laws in the US by requiring compensation for people to act reasonably and responsibly.

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## THE ARMCHAIR ACTIVIST PROGRAM

Mary Jane Russell

About four or five times a year, the *Armchair Activist* coordinators are invited to participate in a conference call to discuss pertinent state issues and arrive at an *Armchair Activist* letter for the month. The last call took place on December 11th from 8:30 to 9:30 P.M.

Six coordinators and two Audubon professionals (NY Forest and Wetland Program Coordinator Graham Cox and New York State Field Office Executive Director David Miller) were involved in the call. We discussed four issues:

- ① cormorant control on Lake Ontario;
- ② the purchase of available properties in the Adirondacks;
- ③ the future of the Bridgehampton Race Track;
- ④ exotic animals "for sale" in local pet shops.

The cormorant issue was chosen for the January letter. Our position is that a scientific study is necessary for us to understand population control. Shooting the birds is not an option.

The exotic animal issue is being passed onto the National Audubon Society for a possible future national letter.

The Adirondack land issue may be the subject of the March or April letter, and Bridgehampton needs more background research.

**If you would like to be a part of the free *Armchair Activist* (ACA) program, please call me at 766-7397.**

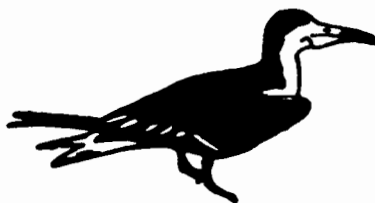
Our letters do count. The more a representative receives, the more he or she is likely to listen to our views. Recently, the dozens of SSAS *Armchair Activists* received sample letters and background information on New York State's Open Space Conservation Plan, the Endangered Species Act, saving 7000 acres of state-owned land near Stewart Airport, the U.S. Land and Water Conservation Fund, and establishing a NYS bird conservation area program.

**1997-1998 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

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