# OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 5 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 1998

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Doreen Remsen

My alarm went off promptly at 5:45 a.m. The sky was still dark, yet off to the east the deep midnight blue was beginning to lighten. As I made a brown bag lunch and searched around for a pen, notebook, and binoculars, the weatherman gave the forecast: Current temperature 51 degrees. Partly sunny skies with light winds and a guaranteed high between 58 to 60 degrees! Almost sounds like the start of our Birdathon, doesn't it? The date was Saturday, January 3, 1998, and I was off to join Joe Grupp, Jim Remsen, and company on their ninth winter season duck survey.

The sunrise at Silver Lake was spectacular. The clouds were illuminated in shades of rose, pink, and gold, and silhouetted against that backdrop on the trunk of a maple tree was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, who announced his presence loud and clear. I was very impressed: Joe and Jim certainly know how to "hook" first-timers! Our group was seven strong: Mary Jane Russell, a non-first-timer and gull counter par excellence; Chris and Mike, first timers who attend Uniondale High School and are "duckmen" extraordinaire; and "dad," who had to leave us at some point due to a family commitment. I volunteered to be the scribe and was entrusted with THE MEMO PAD, Joe's pride and joy, the one "I'd kill for." I was given detailed instructions on the how-tos of logging location, time, number of individuals, brackets for averaging estimates, plus signs for additional individuals not in the first count given, and then the real initiation into surveydom: abbreviated duck lingo! For example, Hooded Mergansers are Hd Mergs, Mallards are Mlds, Northern Shovelers are Shvirs, Black Ducks are Blk Dks, and my personal favorite, Pntil. (If you were able to identify that species as Common Pintail, you belong on the survey team!)

The day was full of fun, education, and surprises. At Lister Park in Rockville Centre, we observed an adult Peregrine Falcon feeding while perched atop the water tower. All the ducks were in full breeding plumage, the

### **NEXT MEETING**

Sandy Brenner

DATE: Tuesday, February 10, 1998

TIME: 8:00 p.m. ②

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

144 W. Merrick Rd. (at 5. Ocean Ave.)

SPEAKER: Richard Borowsky
TOPIC: Cave Fish of Thalland

Northwest Thailand and the Golden Triangle have certain associations for us, but to Richard Borowsky, the real interest of this area is cave fish. Join him and his companions on a trip to the longest caves on the Southeast Asian mainland in search of these strange animals. Travel through subterranean passages to reach waterfalls and rapids deep within mountains, where the blind waterfall-climbing cave fish thrive.

Thailand is the home of at least seven species of cave fish, all discovered during the last fifteen years. Professor Borowsky's interest in the evolution of these animals and what they can tell us about the genetics of congenital blindness has led him to organize three international expeditions to this area in the last two years. Catch him and his slide show before he returns for his fourth trip this March to collect specimens of the most recently discovered species.

Dr. Borowsky is a Professor of Biology at New York University, specializing in population genetics and evolution.

most spectacular being the Redheads. I also learned that ice comes in varieties: thin, thick, and slush, and comments like "Gee, wouldn't it be something to throw a piece of

bread into that flock?" are met with an awful silence.

Our day ended at Tackapausha pond as the sun was setting in shades of rose and gold. Joe collected THE

MEMO PAD and we said our goodbyes. Joe thanked all of us first-timers for our help. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Joe, Jim, Paul Butkereit, and their non-first-timer team members for their nine-plus years of dedication to this project, which has caught the attention of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The data is valuable on many levels, including determining population shifts and migratory patterns. If you have not gone on a duck count, your next opportunity is January 31st.

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# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS OF SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON

Doreen Remsen

At the December board meeting of SSAS, three amendments to our Constitution and Bylaws were discussed and approved. It is required that our members be notified in writing at least 15 days prior to the next general meeting, in this case February 10th, when a vote will be held. The proposed changes are as follows.

① Article I of the Constitution currently reads: "This organization shall be known as THE SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY." Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution currently reads: "The purpose and objectives of this Society shall be to engage in any such educational, scientific, investigative, literary, historical, philanthropic and charitable pursuits as may be part of the stated purposes of the National Audubon Society, of which this Society shall function as a chapter."

It is proposed that Article I be changed to read "This organization shall be known as THE SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY, a chapter of the National Audubon Society" and that the current Article II, Section 1 text be replaced by our mission statement as published in the Skimmer (see page 4). The mission statement was written in 1995, 21 years after the Constitution.

② Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws currently reads: "The Directors shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, and their terms shall be separated so that the terms of two directors shall expire each year."

It is proposed that we add a second sentence, "All Directors shall serve on a committee of their choice."

③ Article III, Section 7 of the Bylaws currently reads: "Any Board member who, unless physically unable, shall fail to attend three (3) consecutive Board meetings, shall automatically forfeit his (her) post. In the event of such a forfeiture, the President, with the advice and consent of a majority of the remaining members of the Board, shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next annual election."

It is proposed that the opening statement read "Any elected Board member or Standing Committee Chairperson who..." The Bylaws list the Standing Committees (Membership, Program, Conservation, Field Trip, Publications, and Education).

# **★★ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ★★**

Marion Yavarkovsky

Welcome to all our new members. You are certainly starting the new year right. Make 1998 a year of active participation in the many activities of SSAS. Join us!

[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.]

Albertson	Carol Reiss		
Atlantic Beach	Arthur Baron		
Baldwin	Mrs. Nancy A. Mitchell, Lauren S.		
	Reiss, Ronapam Weissman		
	Kyle Karlin, Ms. Therese Lucas,		
	Ms. Jackie Richichi		
Bethpage			
	Mr. Arnold Saxe, Tema Wolfson		
East Meadow			
East Rockaway	<b>A</b> 1 1 2		
Elmont			
Farmingdale	Thomas Donnolo		
Floral Park			
Franklin Square			
	Paul Lapinski, Olympia Ward		
Hempstead			
	Robert Caccioppoli, Ginnette G.		
	Groome, Ms. Elizabeth Hartman,		
Will San	Robert F. Jonason,		
	Geraldine E. Liccardi		
Island Dads			
	Gregory Oldensmith		
	Martin Howard, Mrs. ? Jania		
	Judith James (Friends Academy)		
Long Beach	Mrs. Juliet M. Dirolf, Carolyn		
	Ganim, Matthew Mc Cann,		
	Andrew Winter		
Lynbrook			
Massapequa	Daniel Gottlieb, Daniel Ippoliti,		
	Norma C. Solenick		
Massapequa Park			
	Ann Fraser, Jacques Simon		
Oceanside			
Rockville Centre			
	Joseph F. Metzger		
Seaford			
Valley Stream	A. Batchelor, Gilbert Goldstein,		
	J. W. Lundgren		
Wantagh	Mr. Mark Morasca		
Woodmere	Paul Stessel		
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TAPE-RECORDED UPDATES FROM WASHINGTON, DC

# **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.

# **HOLIDAY WILDLIFE PARTY THANKS**

Michael Speding

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 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.

# CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN ESTABLISHED, VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

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Bellu Borowsky

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.

# 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 tollfree).

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.



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# 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

# BIRD 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.

Jan. 25	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Feb. 1	Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street
<b>*</b>	on extreme right after going through
<b>7</b>	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
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# 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.

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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.

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

Saturday, February 7th (7 to 9 A.M., family) — Morning Birding and Banding. An expert bird bander will introduce you to our songbird banding program, allowing you to view wild songbirds in the hand and learn about bird population studies and conservation. TRS members \$3, nonmembers \$5.

Thursday, February 12th (7 to 9 P.M., adults) — Owl Prowl. Study our five species of owls as our naturalist discusses their natural history. Afterwards, we'll hike the trails and call in Screech Owls. TRS members \$5, nonmembers \$7.

Saturday, February 14th (10 A.M. to 12 P.M., adults) — Winter Weeds. Come spend Valentine's morning at the Hoffman Center in East Norwich as we search for beautiful winter weeds. Our expert naturalist will identify them for you and describe their natural history. TRS members \$7, nonmembers \$9.

Saturday, February 21st (12 to 2 P.M., adults) — Owl Walk at Jones Beach. Food shortages in Canada bring majestic Snowy Owls to Long Island in winter. Join us at Jones Beach as we search for Snowy and Short-eared Owls. TRS members \$5, nonmembers \$7.

Winter Nature Camp. On February 17–20, from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., children in grades PK through 6 are invited to spend one or more days participating in fun games and activities while learning to appreciate the world around them. TRS members \$100/week or \$30/day, nonmembers \$120/week or \$35/day. Different topics each day; call for details.

Free Teaching Kits. The Sanctuary has created teaching kits complete with books, puppets, posters, and videos that can enhance a teacher's lesson on a number of environmental topics. Educators may borrow a trunk for three weeks with a letter from their principal. The trunks, created with a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education Grant awarded to TRS, cover the following topics: Endangered Species, the Pine Barrens and Groundwater, Solid Waste, Long Island Sound, Migratory Birds, and Rain Forests. Please call for more information.

# **BIRDSEED SALE REMINDER**

Our second and last birdseed sale is/was **Sunday**, **January 25th**, from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. at Tackapausha Museum on Washington Avenue in Seaford (between Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway). Although it's too late to preorder, some birdseed and feeders will be available. **HELP IS NEEDED** to take orders and carry seed around the parking lot. Some of the 17 different birdseed packages will probably still be available after the sale; please call Paul Butkereit (599-0395, late evenings) or Michael Sperling (541-0805, after 7:45 P.M.) for information.

## **BIRDS AROUND THE ISLAND**

Mike Andersen

Birders all over Long Island reported widespread numbers of winter finches during the month of December. White-winged Crossbills have been most numerous, while smaller numbers of Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls, and Purple Finches were also reported. One other irruptive species seen, more numerous than the finches above, was the Red-breasted Nuthatch (pictured). A good place to search for these birds is Jones any stand of Beach West End, although conifers along the South Shore may har-[Editor's Note: bor these birds. February issue of The January/ TR Sanctuary's Trailside reports sightings of Pine Siskins, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches, and Fox Sparrows at TRS and says the following: "Some winters, we see a surprising number of northern birds visiting southern areas like Long Island... Southward movements of northern seed-eating birds are called irruptions. Irruptions occur when there are food shortages in the northern forest." Call the Rare Bird Alert for updates.]

The mild winter so far has kept a few songbirds well north of their normal wintering range in the tropics and southern Florida. Birders at Prospect Park in Brooklyn reported single Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and White-eyed Vireo. Other lingering warblers from other parts of the Island were single Black-throated Blue, Prairie, Black-and-White, Nashville, and Blackpoll Warblers.

December was an especially good month for alcids (auks) seen close to shore from locations on the East End. Most notable were the large numbers of Razorbills. Montauk Point and Main Beach in East Hampton have produced the highest numbers, with 33 seen at Montauk on one day. Also reported were sparse Dovekies and Black Guillemots.

During the latter half of the month, two Black Brant, a Ross' Goose, and a Greater White-fronted Goose were located on the Marine Park Golf Course in Brooklyn. All three species have been relocated from time to time at the same location or nearby at Jacob Riis Park in Queens.

# **MONTALIK 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.

# 

The Audubon Advisory is National Audubon's weekly policy report, available for free via e-mail (send a message to mssperling@compuserve.com for info or check 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 emails 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, tearning 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.

# 

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;
  - The future of the Bridgehampton Race Track;
  - 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

125, 1250 of Figure 1, And Committee Charles and Charles	
Doreen Remsen, President	472-6830
Jonathan Staller, Vice President & Environmental Festivals Coordinator	
Nancy Frame, Treasurer	. 520-9016
Christine Schmitt, Recording Secretary & Hospitality Co-Chairperson	. 887-7713
Doris Pirodsky, Corresponding Secretary	. 378-1790
Michael Higgiston, Director (6/00)	. 538-8376
Judy Hoyer, Director (6/00)	
Jim Hartnett, Director (6/99)	. 868-6528
Bill Hollweg, Director (6/99)	. 226-2519
Henry Levine, Director (6/98)	
Annie F. McIntyre, Director (6/98) & Educational Media Chairperson	. 379-2206
Betty Borowsky, Conservation Legislation Chairperson	
Sandy Brenner, Program Chairperson	
Paul Butkereit, Wild Bird Feed Savings Day	. 599-0395
Joseph Grupp, Duck Survey	. 481-4208
Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve Committee Chairperson	. 546-8841
Marge Jaeger, Fund-raising Chairperson	. 536-9166
Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips Chairperson	. <b>4</b> 86-7667
Joseph Lancer, Binocular / Book Sales (7 to 9 P.M.)	. 536-6574
Suzanne Lancer, Education Chairperson (7 to 9 P.M.)	
George Popkin, Financial Advisor (8 to 9 P.M.)	. 378-4467
James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon Co-Chairperson	. 764-5168
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming Committee Chairperson	. 599-1224
Mary Jane Russell, Armchair Activist Chairperson	
Michael Shannon, Youth Representative	
Diane Singer, Publicity (5 to 8 P.M.)	
Marcia Specht, Hospitality Co-Chairperson	
Michael Sperling, Skimmer Editor	
Marion Yavarkovsky, Membership Chairperson	
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# South Shore Audubon Society P.O. Box 31 Freeport, NY 11520-0031

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation



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