






**BIRD WALKS**
  
 Elliott Kulner

All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

- Sept. 26 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Oct. 3 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Oct. 10 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Oct. 17 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Oct. 24 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Oct. 31 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

*Directions to Jamaica Bay:* Southern State Parkway to Belt Parkway to Exit 17 South (Cross Bay Blvd.). Drive four miles, passing through Howard Beach and over Joseph P. Addabbo Bridge; turn right at the Refuge entrance's traffic light and look for dozens of Auduboners in the parking lot.

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**ISLAND PARK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

*Michael Sperling*

Our printer is located in Island Park; they open by 8 A.M. on Mondays and close at 5 P.M. on Fridays. Some more volunteers are needed to drop off the *Skimmer* on Monday mornings and/or to pick it up on Friday afternoons (they'll put the heavy boxes in your vehicle), so if you might be available for either trip please call your volunteer editor at 541-0805 after 7:30 P.M.

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**UNDERHILL**

*Michael Sperling*

The 1995 revision of New York State's Open Space Conservation Plan listed 90 "unique and irreplaceable open space resources that include exceptional ecological, wildlife, recreational, scenic, and historical values." Seven of those places were on Long Island, including the 96 acre Underhill parcel in the northwest corner of Jericho Turnpike and Route 107 in Jericho. The 1998 revision described Underhill as "consisting of rolling hills, woodlands, and a complex of kettle hole ponds. It is a visually spectacular open space area in a heavily populated town and is under developmental pressure. In addition to fulfilling recreation needs, the project [acquiring Underhill] also serves to protect the groundwater aquifer system."

In 1974, Henry Willets Underhill sold the development rights to 81 of those 96 acres to the Tilles Investment Company. In 1986, Tilles sued the Town of Oyster Bay for refusing to approve a zoning change that would have allowed the construction of 218 condo units and 124 houses. In 1996, Tobay settled that lawsuit by agreeing to 270 houses, a clubhouse, a swim-



ming pool, and four tennis courts, which resulted in Tilles and Tobay being sued by civic groups for failing to comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Last year, the civic groups prevailed in court, but Tilles and Tobay filed an appeal. In June of this year there was a large rally in support of Underhill and the Town of Oyster Bay announced that it would support preservation by not participating in the appeal.

SSAS has been advocating the preservation of the Underhill parcel for over a decade and is one of the dozens of groups (including the Jericho Water District and Jericho Union Free School District) in the Society to Preserve Underhill coalition. According to their fact sheet: "The parcel sits atop the first federally designated Sole Source Aquifer and is one of only two state-designated Special Groundwater Protection Areas in Nassau County... Elected officials at every level have endorsed purchase of this property, yet no effective action has been taken to secure it. Today, thanks to the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act and other environmental funding sources, there is an unprecedented opportunity to obtain our long-sought objective."

Letters in support of joint state/county acquisition of Underhill should be sent to Governor George E. Pataki (Executive Chambers, Albany, NY 12224), County Executive Thomas S. Gulotta (1 West St., Mineola, NY 11501), and Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor John Venditto (74 Audrey Ave., Oyster Bay, NY 11771).

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**BUDGET 1999-2000**

Accounting.....	\$1500
Armchair Activist.....	500
Audubon Camp Scholarships.....	2000
Brookside Preserve.....	2000
Conferences.....	1500
Conservation.....	400
Corresponding Secretary.....	150
Donations.....	1000
Education: <i>Audubon Adventures</i> .....	300
Education: Media Development.....	250
Festivals.....	500
Insurance.....	900
Library Custodians.....	300
Library Donation: Freeport.....	500
Library Donation: Merrick (committee meetings).....	200
Library Overtime (Freeport).....	500
Membership.....	100
Miscellaneous.....	1000
Publicity.....	200
Refreshments at Meetings.....	400
<i>Skimmer</i> .....	6500
Speakers.....	1000
Sanctuaries.....	1000
T.R. Sanctuary Scholarships.....	2500
<i>Total</i> .....	<b>\$25,200</b>



## BIRDSEED SALE

Michael Sperling

On **Sunday, October 31st**, from 9:30 A.M. until 2:30 P.M., SSAS will be in Tackapausha's parking lot (on Washington Avenue in Seaford, just north of Merrick Road) for our annual end-of-daylight-saving-time birdseed sale. Preorders are recommended & appreciated, and are due October 16th, so please call me at 541-0805 (evenings) or send e-mail to [mssperling@compuserve.com](mailto:mssperling@compuserve.com) for an order form if you don't have a copy of last month's *Skimmer*.

We will be selling black oil and striped sunflower seeds, mixed seeds, cracked corn, sunflower chips (no shells), peanut hearts, safflower (for cardinals), niger (thistle), suet bells (no feeder needed), and suet cakes. Help will be needed on the sale date to take orders and carry seed; no purchase required to volunteer.

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**1999 SSAS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS**

Betsy Gulotta

This year, two college students were awarded the Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarship. Due to the generosity of Evelyn Bishop, who dedicated the scholarship in memory of her late husband, each student received \$750 towards her college education.

Heidi Lesmeister, from Island Park, is beginning her sophomore year at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. Possessing a strong interest in the natural sciences, she expects to hold a double major in Biology and Environmental Studies. She hopes to have a career in natural resource and wildlife conservation.

Kimberly May, from Massapequa, is beginning her junior year at SUNY – Geneseo. She has a strong interest in conservation biology and environmental issues. Coming from a family with a long history of activity in our Audubon chapter, she also expects to become active in SSAS.

South Shore Audubon Society congratulates both of these bright young women, and wishes them luck and success in their future academic endeavors.



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 Seed - Feeders  
 Houses - Baths  
 Books - Gifts

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## FOR THE BIRDS

In 1997, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service published a 52-page booklet, *For the Birds*, about food, housing, and plantings that appeal to wild birds. The 50¢ booklet's listed in the Consumer Information Catalog that's available from Pueblo, Colorado (1-888-8-PUEBLO). It also can be downloaded for free from the Internet at [www.pueblo.gsa.gov](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov). Here's most of the part about food:

As you learn to enjoy the beauty of bird life around your home, you may wish to improve the "habitat" in your yard so that more birds will visit your property. You can attract birds by placing bird feeders, nest boxes, and bird baths in your yard, and by planting a variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers. These can provide good nesting sites, winter shelter, places to hide from predators, and natural food supplies that are available year-round.

Backyard bird feeding is a convenient way to enjoy wildlife. More than 65 million Americans of all ages watch, feed, and landscape for birds.

Bird-watching is one of the fastest growing forms of outdoor recreation in the country. Each year millions of people discover for the first time the joys of bird-watching. It's easy to understand why. Birds are fun to watch. And you can watch them just about everywhere. The most convenient place to start is right in your own backyard. All it takes to get their attention is food or water, a place to build a nest, and appropriate vegetation.

**Feeder Selection.** When the ground is covered with snow and ice, it's hard to resist just tossing seed out the door. But it's healthier for the birds to get their handouts at a feeding station, rather than off the ground. Regardless of the season, food that sits on the ground for even a short time is exposed to contamination by dampness, mold, bacteria, animal droppings, lawn fertilizers, and pesticides.

You can start simply with a piece of scrap wood elevated a few inches above the ground. Add a few holes for drainage and you've built a platform feeder. It won't be long before the birds find it.

**Placement.** There are several factors to consider after you've decided to feed birds in your backyard. Where do you want to watch your birds? From a kitchen window ... a sliding glass door opening onto a deck ... a second-story window? Pick a location that is easy to get to. When the weather is bad and birds are most vulnerable, you may be reluctant to fill a feeder that is not in a convenient spot near a door or an accessible window. Also, pick a site where discarded seed shells and bird droppings won't be a cleanup problem.

Put your feeder where the squirrels can't reach. Squirrels become a problem when they take over a bird feeder, scaring the birds away and tossing seed all over. Squirrels have been known to chew right through plastic and wooden feeders.

If you've seen squirrels in your neighborhood, it is safe to assume they will visit your feeder. Think long and hard

before you hang anything from a tree limb. Squirrels are incredibly agile, and any feeder hanging from a tree is likely to become a squirrel feeder. In the long run, a squirrel-proof feeder or any feeder on a pole with a baffle is the least aggravating solution. The most effective squirrel-proof feeder is the pole-mounted metal "house" type.

If you must hang a feeder, select a tube protected with metal mesh. Most plastic "squirrel-proof feeders," despite manufacturers' claims, may eventually succumb to the squirrels. Any wood or plastic feeder can be effective when mounted on a pole with a plastic or metal baffle, if the pole is at least 10 feet from a tree limb or trunk (squirrels can jump great distances).

**Durability.** Bird feeders are made from a variety of materials. You can buy disposable plastic bag feeders; feeders made of cloth, nylon, vinyl, and metal netting; clear, lexan, colored, and PVC plastic tubes; ceramic and terra cotta; redwood, western cedar, birch, pine, and plywood; sheet metal and aluminized steel; glass tubes; and bottles.

How long a feeder lasts depends on how well you maintain it, the effects of weather, and whether squirrels can get to it. Water can get into any feeder regardless of how carefully you protect it. Cloth, vinyl, nylon, and metal netting feeders are inexpensive, but they do not protect your seed from spoiling in damp or wet weather. Improve them by adding a plastic dome.

Most wood, plastic, ceramic, and solid metal feeders keep seed dry, but water can get into the feeding portals. Look for feeders with drainage holes in the bottoms of both the feeder hopper and the seed tray.

Even bowl-type feeders and trays with drainage holes will clog with seed and bird droppings that can mix with rainwater and be unhealthy for any animal. Look for shallow platelike seed trays to catch dropped seeds while allowing spent seed shells to blow away.

When you feed birds, expect bird droppings and a leftover food mess. While you do not have to wash the feeder daily, you should clean it at least every few weeks. Diseases like salmonella can grow in moldy, wet seed and bird droppings in your feeder tray and on the ground below. Move your feeder a few feet each season to give the ground underneath time to assimilate the seed debris and bird droppings.

The maintenance required to keep your feeder clean varies according to the type of feeder. A thistle feeder for goldfinches should be cleaned about once a month depending on how often it rains. Sunflower and suet feeders need to be cleaned only once a month.

Plastic, ceramic, and glass feeders are easy to clean. Wash them in a bucket of hot, soapy water fortified with a capful or two of chlorine bleach. Use the same regimen with wood feeders, but substitute another disinfectant for the bleach so your wood won't fade.

**Food Capacity.** The ideal feeder capacity varies with your situation and the types of birds you want to attract.

If you opt for a large-volume seed feeder, protect it from the weather and keep it clean. If after months of use, the birds suddenly abandon your feeder full of seed, it's time for a cleaning.

**How Many Birds.** If too many birds at your feeder becomes a problem, you can control their numbers by putting out smaller amounts of seed, or by using specialty seeds or restrictive feeders that will attract only certain species. If you fill your feeder only when it's empty, the birds will look for food elsewhere.

You can encourage small birds and discourage large birds with feeders that restrict access. Wood feeders with vertical bars and feeders covered with wire mesh frustrate larger birds. The most nonselective feeders are the tray, platform, or house feeders because they allow easy access by all birds.

Tube feeders without trays also restrict access to only small birds. Remove the perches and you've further restricted the feeder to only those birds that can easily cling — finches, chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers.

If starlings are a problem at your suet feeder, discourage them by using a suet feeder with access only from the bottom. Starlings are reluctant to perch upside down. Chickadees and woodpeckers don't find that a problem.

You can virtually eliminate visits by birds you would rather not see by offering seeds they won't eat. If you use more than one type of seed, put them in separate feeders. This will reduce wasted seeds, as birds will toss unwanted seeds out of a feeder to get to their favorites.

Watch a feeder filled with a seed mix and you'll see the birds methodically drop or kick out most of the seeds to get to their favorite — sunflower.

Many birds prefer sunflower. Some prefer millet. A few prefer peanuts. Sparrows, blackbirds, doves, and juncos will eat the other grains used in premade mixes: corn, milo, red millet, oats, wheat, and canary seed. Birds will also kick out artificial "berry" pellets, processed seed flavored and colored to look like real fruit.

Black oil sunflower is the hands-down favorite of all the birds that visit tube and house feeders. Birds who visit platform feeders (doves and sparrows) favor white proso millet. Ducks, geese, and quail will eat corn. Many cereal grains (corn, milo, oats, canary, wheat, rape, flax, and buckwheat) in mixed bird seeds are NOT favorites of birds that visit tube feeders.

The most effective way to attract the largest variety of birds to your yard is to put out separate feeders for each food:

- a starling-resistant suet feeder
- a house feeder for sunflower
- a wire mesh cage feeder for peanut
- a nectar feeder
- a tube feeder for thistle



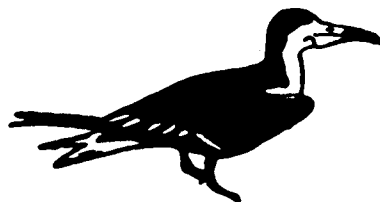


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A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
*Americans Committed to Conservation*



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