OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 4 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

DEC. 2000 & JAN./FEB. 2001

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE The Need to Communicate

Tom Torma

For any organization to be effective, to serve its members and community, it must be able to communicate. On Halloween, the National Audubon Society served a trick to the chapters — they stopped providing space on their web site for chapters. National also cut the dues share the chapters receive from your memberships. They will no longer return near the level of funding to local chapters as they have in the past. The world of Audubon is changing, and the South Shore Audubon Society must change with it.

Your South Shore Audubon Society now has its own web site. It can be reached at http://redrival.com/southshore. Our site is under construction, but it already provides information on our chapter. A schedule of events and an application to join SSAS are included on the site. In the future we hope to include information on chapter projects and articles from the *Skimmer*. We are planning a photo gallery of our members' photographs. We will also provide links to other birding and environmental web sites.

In addition, we have begun an e-list for chapter members. An e-list provides members with the ability to send and receive e-mails with everyone who has subscribed to the list. Do you have an environmental concern you would like to share with fellow members? You can also share birding information with other chapter members. To subscribe, send a message to ssas_list-subscribe@ egroups.com. To post an e-mail to the list, use ssas_list @egroups.com. You can also visit the web page for the site at http://www.egroups.com/group/ssas_list. This list will provide us with the ability to communicate with each other on a continuing basis.

For many of our members, our newsletter, the South Shore Skimmer, will continue to be the main means of communication. The newsletter is one of our largest expenses. With the National Audubon Society cutting the

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DATES: Second Tuesday of the Month

TIME: 8:00 p.m. ②

Pre-Meeting Birding ID Class at 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

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

December 12 — Guest Speaker John Heidecker: Our Beautiful Long Island. From Montauk Point to Jamaica Bay, there are many beautiful locations to study nature and bird-watch. John's slide program will take us from east to west to explore many of the best natural areas on Long Island.

John Heidecker is an author/photographer whose work has appeared in *Birder's World*, Audubon calendars and field guides, and *National Geographic*. He also leads trips as a field photo instructor.

January 9 — Members' Night. Members and friends of the South Shore Audubon Society are invited to bring their creative efforts to our annual membership meeting. Bring your photographs, slides, paintings, carvings, needlepoint, ceramics — any arts & crafts related to nature. Share your talents with fellow members during this exciting evening.

February 13—Guest Speaker Jim Browne: What's Happening Along Our Shoreline. Ocean currents and wind change our shoreline every day. Our February program will discuss how our shoreline is changing and how these changes affect life existing along our shores.

Jim Browne has worked for the Town of Hempstead's Department of Conservation and Waterways for almost 29 years. He has master's degrees in both biology and computer science, and is an adjunct professor at C.W. Post College. He is also a past member of SSAS's board.

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE

BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS

funding we receive from our members' dues (see last month's Skimmer for details), we have no choice but to cut

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the number of issues we publish each year. The board of the South Shore Audubon Society has decided to publish the *Skimmer* five times each year. Starting with the next issue in March, we will publish the *Skimmer* every other month from September through May. I can only hope this new policy will continue to fulfill the communication needs of our members.

PRE-MEETING BIRDING ID CLASSES

Scott Oglesby's topics for December, January, and February, respectively, will be winter finches; birds at the feeder; and a review of the two field guides that recently made highly publicized debuts, *The Sibley Guide to Birds* and Kenn Kaufman's *Birds of North America*. Please bring your favorite field guide in December and January.

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 will be published in December, March, May, September, and November by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

KEEPING LONG ISLAND GREEN

Tom Torma

For several years, generous members of the South Shore Audubon Society have contributed money to our Greening of Long Island Fund. This dedicated fund is used to purchase trees to be planted in parks and other areas on Long Island.

We recently purchased 159 red cedar trees and 50 bayberry bushes to be planted at the West End of Jones Beach. The cost of these plants was \$4,952.00, including delivery. Most of the plants were planted on the lawn next to the Coast Guard station. This new garden will increase the bird habitat in that area. Many of the remaining trees will be planted in several areas around the West End. They will be located near Japanese black pine groves, which have been contaminated with a disease that will eventually cause their death. It is hoped that these new

trees will replace the dying pine trees.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our generous members who contributed to the Greening of Long Island Fund. In the future, we hope to continue this

effort to keep our island beautiful and green.

BECOME A MEMBER OF 55A5 Think Globally, but Join Locally!

You can help SSAS survive NAS's major dues share cutbacks by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS. And from now until the end of 2000, NAS has doubled our dues share for new members we recruit — we'll get \$30 if you join through us, \$5.50 if you join through them.

If you'd like to become a member of National Audubon and your all-volunteer local chapter (that's us), please mail the following form and your check payable to "National Audubon Society" to South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031. The special rate for the first year is \$20 per household; \$15 for students and seniors.

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NAME:
ADDRESS:
E-MAIL:
×***************



Explore the coast with the

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

HOLIDAY PARTY (Sat., Dec. 9, 5–10 p.m.). At Fort Tilden, Breezy Point. Cost: \$35 gets you all food & drink, door prizes, an "Ugly Auction," and a performance by the Don Diego Flamenco Dance Company. Meet at 3 p.m. for a hike.

NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACH WALKS. Start the new year with a brisk, free, two-hour hike. Meet 11 A.M. at Jones Beach West End 2 parking lot. Or meet 11 A.M. at Ft. Tilden (Rockaway, Queens) for a hike with free champagne.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Feb. 16–18). Visit Montauk during quiet season and peak winter birding time. See rafts of scoters, loons, mergansers, oldsquaw, goldeneye, eiders, and many other species of winter waterfowl. Cost: \$275 includes 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening slide programs, plus star watch.

FLORIDA (March 2–10). Visit the best birding spots on both coasts. Explore Everglades, Sanibel Island, Ding Darling Refuge, Loxahatchee Refuge, and several other parks. See gators, crocodile, burrowing owl, painted bunting, reddish egret, white pelican, loggerhead shrike, and lots more wildlife. Cost: \$1695 includes airfare, 8 nights lodging, guides, vans, park fees, and admission to Butterfly World.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 634-6467, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Tom Torma

Bring your kids and grandchildren to a unique holiday party where they can create gifts for the birds. They will enjoy making pinecone feeders and strings of popcorn &

cranberries that can be placed in a garden to attract birds. Entertainment will be provided by outdoor educator and wildlife rehabilitator Elizabeth O'Connor, who will present "Raptors of Long Island," a live birds of prey program.

The party will be held at Tackapausha Museum and Preserve on **Saturday, December 16** at 1 P.M. The birds of prey program will begin at 2 P.M. Tackapausha is on Washington Avenue in Seaford, south of Sunrise Highway and just north of Merrick Road; from Sunrise Highway, Washington Avenue is three traffic lights east of the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway. The regular admission to the museum will be charged (\$2 for adults, \$1 for children).

Volunteers, Pinecones, and Audubons Wanted. If you would like to volunteer to help at a food or arts & crafts table, please call Therese Lucas at 221-8654. Pinecones and *Audubon* magazines are needed; please bring them to SSAS's bird walks and meetings.

CORMORANT CONTROVERSY

Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary's Marilyn England is seeking information regarding the historical presence of cormorants on Long Island; please send any info to her at mengland@audubon.org or call TRS at 922-3200.

National Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program and NAS of New York State have begun an outreach program in order to help schoolchildren (grades 3–12) understand the world of the Double-crested Cormorant within the context of ecology, current controversies, and threats.

Cormorants are goose-sized relatives of pelicans that dive underwater to catch fish and breed in colonies on isolated island locations. There are thirty species of cormorants in the world and six species in North America. The Double-crested Cormorant is the most common and widespread here in America, and is the only one typically seen on bodies of fresh water.

In recent decades, after recovery from the effects of DDT and other contaminants, Double-crested Cormorant populations in the eastern United States have increased in a number of locations. In some places, cormorants are perceived as a serious threat to wild fish populations by some members of the sportfishing community and to farm-raised fish by the aquaculture industry [editor's interruption: on Long Island Sound, they're perceived by yacht owners as a serious source of poop]. Currently, all cormorants are protected by the federal government under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and it is illegal to kill them without a special permit.

In July of 1998, more than 1000 cormorants were illegally killed by nine men on Little Galloo Island in eastern Lake Ontario. In May of 2000, more than 500 cormorants were shot at the Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge on Lake Michigan. Public sentiment against cormorants in some areas has been loud enough to convince the wildlife departments in New York and Vermont to ask the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for permits to kill adult birds. Those permits were turned down, but agents for New York State oiled 23,000 cormorant eggs in 17,000 nests this year on Little Galloo Island and oiling has taken place on Vermont islands in Lake Champlain. Egg oiling suffocates the developing chick and prevents it from hatching.

In 1998, U.S. Fish and Wildlife published a depredation order allowing catfish farmers and other commercial aquaculturists in 13 states to kill cormorants without a special permit and without numerical restrictions if the cormorants have been preying on their fish stock. This permission, however, is granted only to those farmers who also have a nonlethal harassment program enacted.

Clearly, the cormorant is the focus of a frequently intense public debate. A subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a bill to allow for the hunting of Double-crested Cormorants. Also, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement on cormorant management.

Thus, it is both essential and timely that the National Audubon Society develop an effective outreach program directed toward students living near cormorant population centers so that they can view the birds as part of a dynamic, ever-changing environment, rather than just to see them through current local biases. It is vitally important that students are exposed to a larger historically placed and ecologically based perspective. During the autumn of 2000, we will design engaging lessons and activities to take to schools on Long Island and in other appropriate areas of New York. These lessons will focus on basic biological, ecological, and social themes such as:

- Thow does it survive a life spent largely in the water?

- ▼ What is the history of humans and cormorants in North America, and how have cormorant numbers changed and why?

Next year, we will consider the possibility of programs for adult community groups.

BIRDING ON FLORIDA'S GULF COAST

Mike Higgiston

My wife and I decided to take a late-winter vacation, so we headed down to Sanibel Island and the Gulf Coast's cooling breezes. It was the end of March 2000 and although it was a bit early for migration, we were able to see resident birds in good form.

The beach in front of our cottage yielded immediate results. Common, Sandwich, and Royal Terns (pictured)

rested there, facing the wind as Brown
Pelicans dove for meals just offshore.
Sanderlings scurried, Willets walked, Red
Knots reddened into breeding plumage,
Ruddy Turnstones turned stones, and one

Black-bellied Plover plaintively pouted. On Sunday we rested, but Monday found us at Ding Darling Refuge on Sanibel looking for wading birds. Low tide is best, but one can't be too choosy on vacation when time is limited. The five-mile drive offered us good views of herons, egrets, and ibis. Of particular interest were the Reddish Egret and the White Ibis (pictured below), both Florida specialties.

Across from Ding Darling is the Sanibel–Captiva Conservation Foundation Nature Center. There is a museum, bookstore, nursery, butterfly garden, and four miles of trails crossing marshes, thickets, hammocks, and the Sanibel River. There is also an observation tower that is a good vantage point over the entire area. There were Ospreys flying to nests with fish dangling from their claws, three sets of Pileated Woodpeckers building nests, an Anhinga sunning himself, a calling Carolina Wren, Palm Warblers in the canopy, a White Ibis feeding, Blue-winged Teal and Common Moorhens swimming, and Tree Swallows and Purple Martins doing acrobatics overhead.

Wednesday found me on Fort Myers Beach in front of the Holiday Inn. Between the hotel and the ocean is an inland lagoon stretching the entire length of the property and extending to the tip of the island. It is perfect habitat for shorebirds, wading birds, terns, gulls, and skimmers. It is also the spot where I saw my only Wilson's Plover some 10 years earlier. It is a long walk, but I did see my plover and Black Skimmer, as well as American Oystercatcher, Caspian Tern, Whimbrel, and other species previously seen.

Later that morning, we went to Corkscrew Swamp and walked the two-mile boardwalk through a variety of habitats, including the largest old-growth stand of bald cypresses in Florida. There were White-eyed Vireos singing, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers hunting, Wood Storks and Swallow-tailed Kites circling in the sky, and Red-shouldered Hawks screaming. We had our first migrating warblers, the Black-and-White and Northern Parula. There was a scope on the boardwalk trained on a sleeping Barred Owl, and Green Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron perched

over a pond filled with alligators. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird sipping from flowers in the butterfly garden rounded off this trip to Corkscrew.

The rest of the week was spent on the beach, where I spotted a Snowy Plover and a Magnificent Frigatebird. One more trip was made, to Cape Coral to see a colony of Burrowing Owls. Sadly, all six of the owls were seen perched on For Sale signs, as a housing development is pushing the owls out of their nesting area. Just another indication that our environmental work is never done.

Wendy Murbach

One of the wonderful perks that you get from an Audubon membership is the chance to be a part of your local Audubon Chapter, South Shore Audubon Society.

You are automatically a valued member of this active and friendly chapter, so please come out to the next meeting at the Freeport Library from 8–10 P.M. on the second Tuesday of the month to hear what you can do to help preserve your local environment's health and viability, to hear about local issues that you can help to solve, and to see an interesting program.

Whether you are a beginning birder or someone with a large life list, you will enjoy our weekly Sunday bird walks led by Elliott Kutner, birder extraordinaire. Check out the special events that are mentioned in this *Skimmer*. Attend them yourself, and bring your family and friends too.

You are warmly invited to be an active participant in this vibrant all-volunteer organization comprised of persons who, like you, care about the earth we live on, about our local environment, and about the creatures that live alongside us.

Our new members since the last Skimmer are: Baldwin Carl F. Benson, Lafayette Mc Daniel Bellmore Mr. Charles Beck, Della Pezzuto Bethpage Karen Capineri, Mary Mertz East Norwich William Stone Farmingdale..... Margaret Corbett Floral Park..... Eileen Daly, Jeffrey Goldberg Franklin Square Alphonse D'Angelo Freeport Vincent Gennaci Garden City Ruth Rapp Glen Oaks Lorraine V. French Hempstead M. Intrater Hewlett Jeffrey E. Jacobson Hicksville Val Cutajar, Mrs. Marguerite M. Hisen, Mary Manning, Ronald Mirabile Island Park Michael Gutman Long Beach Prabhakar Hosangara, Martha L. Yorgev

Lynbrook Marina Landwersiek

Malverne Jacqueline Villa

Massapequa Geri Kowalik, Donna Marcus,
Terry Matarazzo
Merrick Joan Voyles, David Weir
Oceanside Janet Boerd, Miriam F. Gamlem,
Diane Michon, Ernest Penchuk
Rockville Centre Marilyn Johnson
Seaford Christine Marzigliano,
Mr. A. Rosalie
Valley Stream Asma Sameer
Wantagh Ann Marie Pozzini

MR. GOLDSMITH BUILDS HIS DREAM FEEDER

Michael Goldsmith

It all started innocently enough and with the best of intentions. Winter is approaching and my wife Lorraine and I thought it would be a good idea to replace our aging backyard pole feeder.

We returned triumphantly from the store with the box containing our brand new feeder. Eagerly, I unpacked it, taking out the feeder itself with its three seed tubes, the four aluminum telescoping rods constituting the seven foot pole, and the green squirrel baffle. Perhaps I was blinded by visions of happy goldfinches munching thistle, because I had no idea of what was in store for me.

My first task was to remove the old pole feeder. It was a large, black metal pole that I screwed into the ground about five years ago. At first I tried to unscrew it, but all that did was snap it in half. Then I tried pulling the remaining half out, and it broke again, leaving a 1/2 inch thick metal rod sticking out about 2 inches from the ground.

Still brimming with confidence, and hearing the songs of grateful Song Sparrows in my head, I drove off to Home Depot to get a shovel to dig the pole from the ground. I figured I needed a hole anyway, as the instructions for the new feeder said I needed to sink the pole 14 inches into the ground.

Upon my return, much to my chagrin, I discovered that the plastic shovel I purchased was ill suited to dig hard Plainview soil. Undaunted, like Wile E. Coyote chasing the Road Runner, I came up with an alternate plan. "Didn't they dig foxholes with bayonets in war movies?" I thought to myself. Since I don't own a bayonet, I came up from the basement with the next best thing, my trusty branch-cutting hatchet.

I eagerly set to my work, thinking of John Wayne in *The Sands of Iwo Jima*. After about 45 minutes of chopping and scooping out the dirt, I couldn't help but think "How the heck did the Duke dig those holes so easily?"

Another problem was that the metal rod seemed to have no end. A foot and a half beneath Plainview, the rod was still firmly anchored. Moreover, whenever my axe would strike the rod, sparks would fly. I was wondering where the gas lines were and thought of mushroom clouds. It was now dark. It was cold and drizzling. I tore my jeans at the knee and I was caked with mud. Still, with the crazed determination of Captain Ahab, I continued to dig. At that point, Lorraine looked out and asked what the problem was. After seeing me kick and curse the metal rod, she said, "Why don't you just put the new pole over the old one? The new pole is hollow and would fit easily over the rod that is in the ground."

With a sheepish grin, I said "Good idea, honey," and was actually kind of glad she stopped me from blowing up the house in my dementia.

Normally, this would be the end of the story, but the Fates were not so kind. I duly followed the instructions and quickly assembled the pole, attached it to the rod, attached the squirrel baffle, and filled in my hole.

With the pride of Michelangelo chipping off the last bit of marble from his David, I attached the feeder to the top of the pole.

At that point I should have walked away, but I wanted to make sure the feeder was firmly attached, so I took it off and, in the process, I pulled the entire pole out of the ground. "Duh!," I yelled, a la Homer Simpson. "OK," I said to myself, "all I have to do is push it back down." So I tried. No go. Then I took apart two of the rods, and tried to really apply pressure. Still, I couldn't get it back in the ground, even while sitting on it.

With the calmness of purpose of a true lunatic, I picked up my hatchet, figuring I could use the flat side to hammer the pole back into the ground. Maybe I got a little carried away, because after a few whacks, I broke my hatchet in half. However, I was not disheartened. My loyal hatchet's sacrifice was not in vain; the pole was in the ground. Now all I had to do was to reattach the other metal tubes and I was back in business.

I then quickly found out just how bad an idea using the hatchet as a hammer was. The aluminum pole was now bent and would not fit into the other metal tube. Thinking quickly, I pulled the pole out of the ground again, figuring I could just reassemble it upside down, but the other end was bent too

It was another half an hour before I gave up trying to reshape the pole ends with pliers. Still, I refused to acknowledge defeat.

Although I couldn't attach one of the aluminum attachments, our feeder stands in our yard about 5 feet tall. Since I had to put the pole in upside down, the squirrel baffle (about 2 feet from the ground) acts more like a squirrel step stool. Still, I have a clean conscience. "Seed for all," I say. I will not discriminate against mammals.

I am proud of my miniature, wobbly pole, birdand-squirrel feeder. It kind of reminds me of Charlie Brown's scrawny Christmas tree. We have been through a lot together, and survived to tell of the adventure. Still, Lorraine wants me to order a new pole. Perhaps there will be a sequel to this story.

JOIN US AT MASHOMACK PRESERVE

Joanne Del Prete

On **Saturday, December 2**, SSAS will meet at 11 A.M. at Mashomack Preserve Visitor Center (Manor House) on Shelter Island for an escorted walk led by Mashomack's Tom Damiani (sorry about the short notice; your editor's laser printer broke, delaying this newsletter). The walk will run approximately through 1:30-2 P.M. Bring your lunch/liquids. Hopefully we will see winter ducks [scoters, Oldsquaw (now called Long-tail Duck), mergansers,

and Bufflehead (pictured)], and possibly Red-headed Woodpecker and Eastern Bluebird. There is a \$4 charge per person. There may be time to explore the preserve afterwards

on your own. Possible dinner in Sag Harbor afterwards. About Mashomack (excerpted by your editor from a Nature Conservancy leaflet): Mashomack Preserve is a natural area of nearly 2100 acres which encompasses

natural area of nearly 2100 acres which encompasses diverse habitats necessary for the survival of many species of plants and animals. Only 90 miles from New York City and comprising one third of Shelter Island, the Preserve was acquired by The Nature Conservancy in January of 1980. Mashomack was purchased to stop development of this nearly pristine peninsula and to protect one of the most dense populations of breeding Ospreys on the east coast... Edged in white by 10 miles of coastline, Mashomack is an area of magnificent scenic beauty. Its combination of interlacing tidal creeks, woodlands, fields, and coastline makes it a superb wildlife habitat.

Directions: The Sag Harbor–North Haven ferry (631-749-1200) runs every 10 minutes from 6 A.M. to 11:45 P.M. From Sunrise Highway (Route 27) eastbound, pass through Bridgehampton village and at the traffic light (flagpole/war memorial) turn left on County Road 79. Travel approximately 4 miles into the village of Sag Harbor (Main Street) until the road ends at the waterfront. Turn left on Route 114 and travel north for 3 miles to the ferry. (Note:

there is a possibility that due to bridge work, you may have to follow a detour.) Ferry costs \$7 for car & driver one way, but \$8 round trip for car & driver; \$1 each way per passenger.

When the ferry reaches Shelter Island, follow Route 114 one mile to Mashomack Preserve (wooden sign is on right), park, and follow path to the Visitor Center.

Call me at (516) 433-0739 for help with carpooling. Preregistration is not required, but I would appreciate knowing if you are attending since a 10 person minimum is required. Rain cancels, but call if weather is questionable. No rain date.

We hereby thank Tackapausha Halloween party helpers Alice Blaustein, Helen Buckley, Louise Leonard,

Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, Doris Pirodsky, Chris Schmitt, Marcia Specht, and Tom & Jeanne Torma.

We also thank birdseed sale helpers Paul & Joan Butkereit, David Daly, Eileen Daly (his mom), Joe Grupp, Mike Higgiston, Bill Hollweg, Marge Jaeger, Therese Lucas, and Chris Schmitt.

And we thank SSAS Brookside Preserve cleaners Betty Borowsky, Susan Brychcy, Michael Goldsmith, Betsy Gulotta, Judy Hoyer, Therese Lucas, Christine Marzigliano,

Wendy Murbach, Stacey P., George Peters, Vince Puglisi, Laurie Raisher, Dolores Rogers, Chris Schmitt, and Mike Sperling, plus John Fischer & others from Trout I Islimited's l



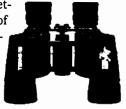
others from Trout Unlimited's Long Island Chapter and Don Obers, Lorrie Bellafiore & others from the Unitarian South Nassau Church's Social Action Committee.

If we've left out or flubbed a name, please let us know.

BINOCULARS AND FIELD GUIDES FOR SALE

For many years, South Shore Audubon has been selling the complete line of Bausch & Lomb / Bushnell binoculars and spotting scopes at discounted prices. Joe Lancer

(536-6574, 7 to 9 P.M., or ask at meetings and bird walks) keeps a supply of \$125 Natureview binoculars (endorsed by National Audubon Society) and can order other items. The Natureview provides 8 × 42 magnification and a 341' field of view,



and comes with a vinyl carrying case and a neck strap.

In addition to the binoculars, Joe has copies of the Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Eastern Region (\$15, filled with color photos; list price is \$16.95).



Elliott Kutner

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.

Nov. 26	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
Dec. 3	Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first	
	lot south of Southern State Parkway,	
	south end of lot)	
Dec. 10	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Dec. 17	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
Dec. 24	Season's Greetings — No Walk	
Dec. 31	Happy New Year No Walk	
Jan. 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Jan. 14	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
Jan. 21	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
Jan. 28	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
Feb. 4	Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street	
5	on extreme right after going through	
97	Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)	
Feb. 11	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Feb. 18	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
Feb. 25	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
Mar. 4	Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)	
Mar. 11	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Mar. 18	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
Mar. 25	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
Apr. 1	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
Apr. 8	Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)	
Apr. 15	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Apr. 22	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
Apr. 29	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	

THE NEXT GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Here are some pieces of a Cornell Lab/NAS press release: It is well known that many bird species are showing population declines due to habitat loss or other human impacts. Now, people of all ages and backgrounds can help monitor bird populations — including several that are showing declines — by participating in the 4th annual Great Backyard Bird Count on **February 16–19**.

A project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the GBBC combines high-tech web tools with "citizen-science" observations of birds. The GBBC asks families, individuals, classrooms, and community groups to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders, local parks, schoolyards, and other areas during any or all of the four count days. Participants enter their observations at BirdSource, a user-friendly, state-of-the-art web site developed by NAS and the Cornell Lab.

Audubon and the Cornell Lab are asking participants to pay special attention to quail and several species of woodpecker, including the Red-headed Woodpecker and the Northern Flicker, which are showing signs of serious population decreases.

Because the GBBC charts findings in real time, scientists have already made connections between weather patterns and bird movements. For the last few years, American Robins appeared farther north than typically expected, in areas where snow cover was scant or nonexistent. Such a correlation may be suggestive of global warming or other broad-scale weather changes. This year's GBBC will again collect information about snow depth.

The GBBC has also helped track movements of winter finches that typically remain in Canada and in the extreme northern U.S. but that move farther south some winters during irruptions. The count showed "southerly" concentrations of Common Redpolls in the northeast and across the Great Lakes and northern Rockies. "It's thought that some of these species, including Common Redpolls, irrupt biennially, as a result of a lack of seeds in what is typically their year-round ranges," says the Cornell Lab's director, John Fitzpatrick. "But much of this phenomenon remains a mystery that participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count can help us solve."

To participate in the GBBC, count the highest number of each bird species seen at one time (to ensure the birds are not counted more than once) and keep track of the amount of time spent counting. Log on to BirdSource at

www.birdsource.org and click on the appropriate state or province for a checklist of the most frequently reported birds in that region; there's no fee or registration. Findings from previous years are available at the site, and there is a vocabulary section, bird-watching and birdfeeding tips, bird vocalizations, and more, including informa-



tion about House Finch eye disease. For those tired of winter and ready for spring, there will be tips about planning and preparing for the spring bird garden.

DUCK SURVEY HELPERS WANTED

Since 1989, SSAS Duck Survey chairperson Joe Grupp has spent five Saturdays every winter counting ducks in 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park, with Paul Butkereit doing the same at 10 locations in southwestern Nassau. The data being collected provides essential and unprecedented information about the populations of every duck species wintering on our lakes and ponds.

Joe is looking for volunteers willing to spend a half day or full day viewing and learning about our waterfowl and where to find them. If you're interested, please call him at 481-4208. The counts will be held on **December 9**, **January 6**, **February 3 & 24**, and **March 24**, rain or shine.

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

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