

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 32, NUMBER 3 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2001

NEXT TWO MEETINGS

Tom Torma

DATE: Tuesday, November 13, 2001
TIME: 8:00 P.M. ☉
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)
SPEAKER: Mel Springer
TOPIC: Adventures in Fiji and Australia

The tropical paradise of Fiji and Australia's vast wilderness are the subjects of our November meeting. Mel Springer will present a slide show featuring the fauna and flora of these exotic locations.

Mel is the president of the Long Island Shell Club and the author of the book *Sea Shells of Long Island*. Join your fellow members for a photographic adventure to the romantic South Pacific.

Pre-Meeting Bird ID Class at 7:30. Arrive early and join Scott Oglesby as he helps us expand our birding horizons.

DATE: Tuesday, December 11, 2001
TIME: 8:00 P.M. ☉
PLACE: Same as Above
SPEAKER: Brett Curlew
TOPIC: Preserving Our Maritime Heritage

Brett Curlew of the Maritime Oceanological Society, Inc., will present our December program. Join us.



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.

JOIN US AT ALLEY POND PARK

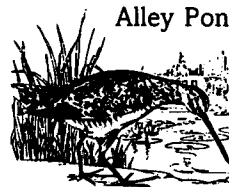
Joanne Del Prete

SSAS is booked for **Saturday, November 10** at 9:30 A.M. at Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd, Douglaston, NY; (718) 229-4000.

Alley Pond Park was designated as a National Environmental Study Area in 1979 and is comprised of 635 acres of woodland, meadows, fresh and salt water, and marshes. We will be escorted by APEC staff and expect to finish by approximately noon. Bathrooms are available at the main building. There will be a \$3 fee per person. Heavy rain cancels — there is no rain date. Picnic tables are available; possible local group lunch at diner/restaurant. Call me at (516) 433-0739 (evenings) for car-pool leads.

Directions. Take the Southern State Parkway, Northern State Parkway (Grand Central Parkway), or Long Island Expressway west to Cross Island Parkway north. Exit the Cross Island Parkway at Northern Blvd., eastbound (exit 31E). Coming off the exit ramp, stay in the right lane and the center is about a hundred yards on the right. Look for a green building with reddish trim (may be partly hidden by trees). Go right into the driveway and park on the side or back of the building.

From the Skimmer Editor. Here's some info I found in *The New York City Audubon Society Guide to Finding Birds in the Metropolitan Area*, which was published this year and whose two Nassau County entries were aided by people listed on the back page of this newsletter: Alley Pond Environmental Center is in the Alley Wetlands section of



Alley Pond Park. This section's meadows and old fields, adjacent to Alley Creek, are nesting spots for American Woodcocks, vireos, Swamp Sparrows, and American Goldfinches. Common Snipes (pictured) and American Tree Sparrows can be common in autumn and winter. Great Blue Herons arrive in autumn, too. The Park, especially the Upper Alley section (which is south of the L.I.E.), is visited by a wide variety of migrating songbirds.

SSAS ALLOWS DISADVANTAGED YOUNGSTERS TO ATTEND TR SANCTUARY'S DAY CAMP

Betty Borowsky

This was the fourth year we've been able to send children from low-income families in our area to a one-week day camp run by the National Audubon Society's Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay. Our chapter's catchment area encompasses some of the poorest communities on Long Island. And even within our more-affluent communities, there are many families who cannot possibly afford to send their children to day camp during the summer. That's the first reason why we began this program. The second reason is because environmental education and conservation are part of our chapter's mission, and we know that the deep love of nature and the environment that many of us have began when we were young. But maybe the most important reason is because it gives us so much pleasure to see how much fun the children have.

Each year we work with a different school district in our area. This year we worked with the Oceanside School District and sent eighteen youngsters to camp. We were blessed by having a strong advocate in Oceanside — Doreen Cronin (daughter of our own Dolores Rogers), who is a social worker there. Doreen, assisted by bilingual colleagues, worked with teachers to identify eligible children, and actually obtained permission slips for 24 of them.

The participation of someone who speaks Spanish was critical this year, since while all the children are perfectly fluent in English, some of their parents only speak Spanish, and we must explain the program to them so they are comfortable about sending their children to camp. I thank Doreen and everybody at Oceanside who worked so hard and made my job so much easier this year.

There are many other people we need to thank as well. Absolutely everyone was indispensable. Thank you to:

* *Old Navy Company*, who provided the school bus and driver for free. In particular I want to thank *Vicky Seely* in the Islandia office, who made the paperwork easy for me, and our *bus driver*, a man with nerves of steel. We are very grateful for Old Navy's continued support for our program. Indeed, without their assistance we probably would not be able to afford it; commercial school buses are prohibitively expensive. And the children get a big kick out of riding in that colorful bus.

* Our chaperons: *Chris Schmitt*, who accompanied the children on the bus to and from the camp every day and who coordinated attendance and other details; and *Alice Blaustein* and *Maureen Rube*, who once again were able to spend two whole days making sure the children would have adult supervision at all times.

* *All the counselors and staff of TR Sanctuary*, but most especially *Jay Teyan*, *Marilyn England*, and *Joan Seaman*. It wouldn't work without their cooperation. For the rea-

sons given below, I really can't even tell the TR staff how many children we'll be sending; indeed, not until we get there the first day do I know for sure. So I keep changing things until the last moment, and TR always accommodates this uncertainty.

Two weeks before camp, I call every family to confirm their child's attendance. It is at this point that I realize how marginalized these families are. This year, by two weeks before camp was to begin, I was only able to reach 19 of the 24 families that Doreen had gotten permission slips for (one mother said her child could not attend because of illness). There are many reasons why I can't reach some of these families, but the underlying reason is that they are poor. So their phone may be disconnected. Or they may move frequently. Or they've moved into another relative's home temporarily, so I can't locate them.

What do the children do when they get to camp? They do pretty much what children in other day camps would be doing. They have running games and building games. They go fishing; they comb the shore for shells. But at TR,

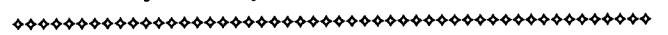


this is all in the context of the environment. So the running and tag games' theme revolves around the environment. They might build a log cabin for themselves of sticks they find in the woods. Then, at the end of each day, a counselor takes out a special live animal and tells the children all about it, drawing them into the discussion. The animal might be a bird, or a lizard, or even a millipede (yuck!). The kids just love this. I have some video to show you all, but this will just give you a small idea of what they experience. You need to see their faces, and listen to what they say when they get on the bus in the afternoon, to really appreciate how much they enjoy the camp.

And I should mention that most of our children are really wonderful kids. They are smart, they participate with enthusiasm, and they're just plain fun to be around. You would be very proud of them.

Each year we've been able to send more children than the previous year. With everyone's help, I look forward to continuing to grow this program. But we need more help. If you are bilingual, and/or if you work in one of the school districts in our area, and/or if you would like to be a chaperon next year, or if you just have some ideas, I would love to hear from you. Call me at 764-3596.

On the last day of camp, one of the children said it all to Chris: "See you next year!"



SSAS Post Office Statement — *South Shore Skimmer* is published monthly from September through January and March through May by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.



OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list



All walks start at 9:30 A.M. except for Pelham Bay; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

- Oct. 21 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Oct. 28 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 4 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Nov. 11 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Nov. 18 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Nov. 25 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Dec. 2 Pelham Bay for *Owls* (pull over to street



- on extreme right after going through
- Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Dec. 9 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)

Jones Beach Toll Season Advisory: Prior to the election of George Pataki as Governor, parking fees were charged at NY State Parks from Memorial Day through Labor Day. When the Pataki administration extended the toll season to be from early May through Columbus Day, Elliott adjusted the bird walk schedule to avoid the tolls. However, we've learned that tolls will be charged through Thanksgiving this year and it's too late to change our schedule, so carpooling, especially with someone who has an Empire Passport, will now help your pocketbook in addition to helping the environment.

BECOME A MEMBER OF SSAS
Think Globally, but Join Locally!

Option 1. 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 (we get a first-year bonus for recruiting you). If you'd like to become a member of National Audubon and your all-volunteer local chapter, please mail the following form and your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to us at 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.

Option 2. You can subscribe to the *Skimmer* for a year by sending \$10 payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** to us at the address above.

✂*****

NAME: _____

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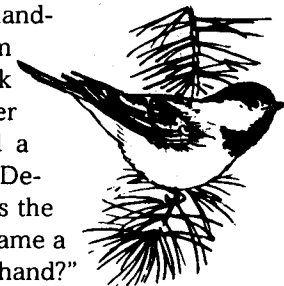
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TOLL-FREE NUMBER FOR DEAD BIRDS

In the September *Skimmer*, we reported that New York State's wildlife pathologist, Dr. Ward Stone, had concluded that the use of toxic pesticides (including some common lawn-care chemicals) was the leading cause of death for the birds examined by his office during the West Nile Virus scare. We omitted the toll-free number that has been set up to report dead bird sightings in New York; according to an Audubon New York media release, it's 1-866-537-2473. If you find an intact dead bird, you can double bag it; tag it with the time, date, and location; and send it to Ward Stone, State Wildlife Pathology Unit, Game Farm Road, Delmar, NY 12054.

WILD BIRD TAMING

As noted in this *Skimmer*, we're heading east to Morton on December 1 — a National Wildlife Refuge famous for the generations of chickadees (pictured) and titmice that have become so acclimated to hand-outs that they'll take seed from anyone's hand. The Adirondack Park Visitor Interpretive Center in Paul Smiths, NY published a series of columns titled "Nature Detectives," one of which answers the timely question "How do you tame a bird so it will eat out of your hand?"



Here's their answer, with tips that should be useful at Morton NWR.

Taming a bird to eat out of your hand can be rewarding; it also can be a nuisance, as the bird may approach you every time you go outside.

The general premise of taming techniques is to get the birds accustomed to you. You can do this by remaining at the feeder for 10 to 30 minutes each day. You might feed the birds, then move 10 feet or so away and wait. Each day after you feed them, move closer and remain.

Once they feel comfortable with you hanging around, you can begin the process of getting them to eat out of your hand.

According to the book *Hand-Taming Wild Birds at the Feeder* by Alfred Martin, the next step is to remove all the food from your feeder except a small quantity at the corner of a tray. Lay your hand flat on the tray with a large portion of food in it and wait. Martin advises you to:

- Speak softly to the birds in low conversational tones.
- Avoid sudden movements and do not look directly at the birds.
- Not swallow; the birds may think you want to swallow them.

Birds generally regard hands as potential traps, so keep your hand flat and do not move it.

You may have to repeat the procedure over a few days before a bird will risk taking food.

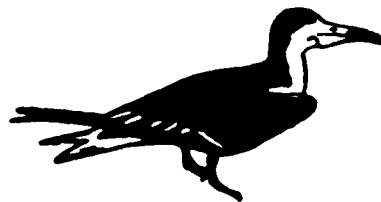
Chickadees are the most likely bird to be hand tamed.

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A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
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