VOLUME 32, NUMBER 6 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH 2002

NEXT MEETING

Tom Torma

DATE:

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

TIME:

8:00 p.m. 🕗

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: Elliott R. Kutner

TOPIC:

Birds in Your Backyard

This month, SSAS's charismatic field trips leader will present 50 of the species he has filmed in his backyard and elsewhere. We'll see footage of Evening and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, bathing Baltimore Orioles, his and hers Snowy Owls, and over two dozen warbler species. Join us!

Pre-Meeting Bird ID Class at 7:30. Jim Remsen, SSAS's master of birding by ear, will provide hints on sharpening your ears for listening to birds (and other animals) and remembering their sounds. He'll also play a few tape recordings.

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS. SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!

SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

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

SSAS GREENING FUNDS AWARDED

For many years, SSAS has sent just one fund-raising letter per year to its members, asking for donations to our Greening of Long Island fund. The proceeds are used to purchase native trees and shrubs that will improve the wildlife habitat in our parks and preserves. Your board of directors recently voted to award \$2000 to Wantagh Park and Cedar Creek Park (in Seaford), and \$3000 to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge (JBWR), for plantings to be done this year. Since there was a delay in arranging these donations, we won't be sending out a Greening letter in 2002; you can, however, expect to see an appeal for environmental education support in your mailbox by spring.

According to JBWR's Refuge Manager, Don Riepe, "Last year, we cut down over 300 dead Japanese black pines and replaced them with native species such as red cedar, white pine, American holly, and pitch pine. I also planted some beach plum, as this plant provides spring blossom and fall fruit. The South Shore Audubon grant will enable us to continue the removal and replanting process this summer. The area proposed for work this year will include removal of trees north of the visitor center near the bird blind pond. None of the area will be within the proposed bike path zone. The bike path (if completed) will include its own buffer plantings. I can assure you that none of the trees donated by your organization will be used for this purpose." (When SSAS's treasurer, Nancy Frame, contacted Don regarding our proposed grant, we specified that none of it could be used to further the destructive bike path project that's been mentioned in previous Skimmers.)

Earlier, Don had written that "funding for the first round of plantings came from a National Park Service regional resource management account. However, this coming year we will continue to cut down dead pines but do not have any operational funds to purchase the necessary replacement plantings." In addition to the five species mentioned above, our Greening funds will be used to purchase eastern redbud trees and some topsoil.

SSAS TO VISIT QUOGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Ann Marie Pozzini

An early spring nature walk has been scheduled for **Saturday, April 6** at 10 a.m. at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. We will have a guided walk on the main trail, which is a broad, well-maintained trail that passes through many habitats: oak woods, a sphagnum bog, pine barrens, a grassy field, and a maple swamp. Winding around the eleven acre Old Ice Pond, the trail includes a bridge that allows hikers to cross over the water at the northern end. If time permits, we will also walk down to the Fairy Dell salt marsh described below.

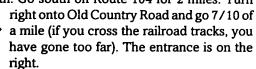
Quogue Wildlife Refuge, located just north of the junction of Old Main and Old Country Roads in Quogue (just east of Westhampton), is a cooperatively managed 305-acre natural resource area encompassing the headwaters of the Quantuck Creek drainage basin.

The refuge is unique in that the land is owned by three principal landowners and is managed by a fourth partner through long-term lease agreements. Three parcels of approximately 100 acres each are owned by the Southampton Township Wildfowl Association (STWA), the Village of Quogue, and the Town of Southampton. All three parcels are managed under 99-year leases by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The refuge includes the Charles Banks Belt Nature Center and the Distressed Wildlife Complex, as well as an extensive set of trails for use by the public.

Fairy Dell Boardwalk (0.6 miles). Constructed in 1984, this wooden boardwalk grants access into the Fairy Dell salt marsh. Overlook points allow groups to look out upon Quantuck Creek, where waterfowl and other estuary creatures congregate. Fairy Dell was a freshwater wetland until a 1938 hurricane changed the tide patterns in the area and allowed salt water into Quantuck Creek. To this day, the creek is a salt water tidal estuary.

The refuge's web site (www.dec.state.ny.us/website/reg1/quogue.html), the source for much of the information in this article, can be visited for more details.

Directions. Travel east on Rt. 27 (Sunrise Highway) to Exit 64 South. Go south on Route 104 for 2 miles. Turn



Registration. The cost of this walk is \$3 per person and will be collected upon arrival at the refuge. Bathrooms are available at the

main entrance. No eating is permitted along any of the trails, but feel free to bring lunch or a snack if you wish, which can be eaten in your car. The trip is limited to 30 people. To confirm your spot to this special place, please call me at (516) 579-3353 and leave your name and phone number on my answering machine. In case of bad weather, the trip will be canceled. There is no rain date.

SEARCHING FOR THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Elliott Kutner

Editor's note: The following is a letter to the editor that Elliott wrote for the general public. Please write to Bernadette Castro, Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Albany, NY 12238 if you agree with SSAS's position.

It appears that Ms. Castro, our state's Commissioner of Parks, is determined to make "Holiday Lights at West End" a permanent entertainment feature at Jones Beach. The monies taken in by SFX, Inc. and the commission that accrues to the state are just too much for Ms. Castro to refuse. Our park receives very little of the money earned.

West End and its environs is one of the crucial places that our wildlife have left to live out the daily needs of their lives. This year, there was a Hammond's Flycatcher (a Pacific Coast bird) on our beach. Those that had the happy experience of seeing it had to spend one moment wondering and pondering the miracle of it all; this creature 3000 miles from home, yet home in our backyard by the sea. One day, a Peregrine Falcon swept out of the sky at its average speed of 200 MPH and took the flycatcher for a much-needed meal. It is the daily cycle of Life played out by all of us, living together on the face of our home, Earth.

We have to ask ourselves a couple of questions.

Is it necessary or environmentally correct to set up two miles of lighted crystal beads for our amusement at the expense of Snowy Owls, Merlin, Peregrine

Falcon, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Horned Lark, Eastern Meadowlark (pictured), Sharp-shinned Hawk—just to name a few?

Are we so bored, so completely depleted, that we've lost the thrill of buying a Christmas Tree and decorating it with pinecones placed among traditional ornaments, with our families, friends, and neighbors?

The Christmas Tree dates back to German pagan times. These tribes would celebrate the depths of Winter with a holiday of lights at the Winter solstice. The Christian British saw it and made it an integral part of Christmas.

If we lose one bird to the crystal impostor, it is one bird too many and diminishes the very essence of Christmas, the coming of new life and hope for the world. Ms. Castro is intent on turning Jones Beach into an amusement park. Robert Moses, to his credit, did not see our precious natural resource as a penny arcade. It was a jewel, to be enjoyed for its natural beauty; a place of escape and stretching from the bustle and congestion of city life.

I would remind you, one and all, that the Three Wise Men followed a Star to the Manger. They would be hopelessly lost in the crystal jungle of Ms. Castro's West End arcade.



entrance for a 2-1/2 hour "behind-the-scenes" tour of this indoor/outdoor facility. See sea otters, walrus, penguins, seals, sharks, local & tropical fish, and "Discovery Cove," a hands-on exhibit for children (& adults). Cost: \$15 (kids \$10). NATIVE AMERICAN CLAM BAKE (Sun., March 10). Take a hike, make stone tools, and learn how native Americans used the seashore as a resource. Cookout afterwards. Cost: \$15 (\$10 kids). Call Jeff Gottlieb for location, 631-423-2169. ASSATEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND (May 16-19). Visit Chincoteague Refuge and Assateague National Seashore during peak spring bird migration. See lots of shorebirds & passerines, plus river otter, Sika deer, endangered Delmarva fox squirrel, and wild ponies. Cost: \$295 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, boat tour of marshes, guided hikes, buffet. FIRE ISLAND HIKE (Sat., May 25). Hike through "Sunken Forest" and along beaches with marine ecologist Steve Finn. Cost: \$20 includes birding, butterflies, seining, ferry & guide. JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE (Sun., June 2, 5-8 P.M.). ICELAND (Aug. 2-12); MOROCCO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 7).

NEW YORK AQUARIUM (Sat., March 2) . Meet 10 A.M. at

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 634-6467, donriepe@aol.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alsnyc.org

LOST PINES

Editor's note: The following article, written by Dave Taft of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, is taken from the Gateway National Recreation Area Winter 2002 Program Guide. It explains why SSAS's Greening of Long Island donation to the refuge is so important.

Chris Olijnyk sports a warm smile that belies the chain saw he deftly swings as we walk the woods of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. He wears protective chaps, an orange hard hat, and walks with a businesslike gait, all too familiar with the work at hand. These are bad times for Japanese black pines, and we both know it. We look at each other, Chris guns the chain saw twice, and the Refuge Resource Manager sets another dead pine reeling. The tree hops twice, as if to get up. It will be another woodpile in just a few moments, valuable for wildlife, lost to the landscape.

The dense pine woodlands of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge are looking painfully open, we agree, these days. The chain saw sputters to a stop.

Tremendously popular with horticulturists and landscapists during the 1940s and 1950s, the Japanese black pine (Pinus thunbergii) was planted anywhere sandy soils and salt spray demanded a truly tough tree. Thousands of them were established throughout Long Island. In places like Jacob Riis Park, Floyd Bennett Field, and the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, thousands of their descendants sprouted and matured. Even now, it is a rare visitor who fails to notice the craggy beauty of the windswept pines at Riis Park or their dense owl-filled shade at the wildlife refuge.

Creatures with names only a scientist could invent and a horror film director could love are putting an end to these scenes. The black turpentine beetle, the blue-stain fungus, the pine sawyer, and the pinewood nematode are eating their way through the northeast's black pine groves. And the pines are in trouble. The black turpentine beetle (Dendroctonus terebrans) is a small black beetle, about one-quarter inch long, which bores into the bark of pines. The larvae of this beetle feed on the inner bark of the trees. girdling them, quite literally cutting off the transport of nutrients from roots to needles. These beetles frequently harbor the blue-stain fungus (Leptographium sp.), which also attacks the inner bark of the tree, exacerbating the problem. The pine sawyer (Monochamus carolensis) is a much larger beetle of about one and a quarter inches length, with graceful arching antennae. These beetles feed on the upper branches of healthy black pines and harbor microscopic worms known as pinewood nematodes (Bursaphalenchus xylophilus). The nematodes enter healthy pines through the feeding activities of the beetle. The parasites reproduce quickly in the host tree and first the foliage, then the branches, and eventually the entire tree, dies.

But why now? The plain truth is, no one is quite certain. Stressful conditions such as prolonged droughts may weaken trees and make them more susceptible to attack by these parasites.

At all three of these Gateway sites, steps are being taken to mitigate the loss. Native pines such as the white pine (Pinus strobus) and pitch pine (Pinus rigida), which demonstrate greater resistance to these pests, are being planted in groves to replace the dying black pines. Infected pines are being cut and disposed of to retard the spread of the disease agents.

Sadly, though, appearances have changed. A bright green crop of young trees is already sprouting where the first bright light in almost fifty years is falling, but they're not pines. Inches of needles will soon be covered by the fallen leaves of birches, willows, and alders. Though the replacement pines are almost eight feet tall, it will be many years before their thick green canopy is back.

I look back to see Chris examining a recently planted white pine. He spreads the needles gently to look at the growing tips. Somehow, I'm sure the refuge's first manager, Herbert Johnson, saw the same open vista back in 1951. And, like Mr. Johnson, I intend to stand back and watch these trees grow.

2001 PRESIDENTIAL REPORT CARD

The League of Conservation Voters gave President George W. Bush, for his first year in office, the following grades for his environmental actions:

Presidential Appointments:	D
President's Budget:	D+
Presidential Initiatives:	F
Energy and Climate Change:	F
Public Lands and Land Management:	
Pollution and Public Health:	D
Wildlife Conservation:	F
International Issues:	F
OVERALL GRADE:	D-

According to the League's 34-page report card (available at www.lcv.org): "President George W. Bush in his first year in office has actively pursued an anti-environmental agenda. From selecting industry lobbyists to regulate their former employers, to retreating on regulations

designed to protect public health and the environment, to eliminating protections of our public lands, President Bush continues to roll back environmental protections... In its first year in office, the Bush administration has largely taken an unfortunate and

aggressive anti-environmental approach to public policy. While upholding some positive environmental and public health protections developed under the last administration, for every step forward, this administration has taken multiple steps backward. From opening public lands to oil and gas exploration, to reneging on his campaign promise to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, to rolling back rules to protect public lands from toxic mining waste, this administration has allowed short-term political concerns to outweigh America's long-term interest in environmental protection."

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.

alongside us.	
	since the last <i>Skimmer</i> are:
Baldwin	Mary Patterson, Carol M. Schulz
Bayside	William Ryan
Bellmore	P. Kushner, Ronald Motkin,
	Steven Ronan
Bethpage	L. Christensen, Patti Pizzanelli
East Meadow	Nancy Mergo, Bob Sanders
Elmont	Mrs. Caroline Pederson
Farmingdale	Dorothy Conboy
Floral Park	Christine DeFilippo, Ms. Kara
	Matthews
Franklin Square	Lynne Hammel
Freeport	Mary Kanandspy
Glen Oaks	
Hempstead	James Flood III, Joyce
	Wildermuth
Levittown	
Long Beach	Jeffrey & Lonnie Garber, Paula
	Lane, Marilyn Swiss, Lily Yee
Lynbrook	
Massapequa	Doug & Donna Aloise, Russell L.
	Barth
	Evelyn Langer, Betty Rich
Oceanside	Marian A. Howkins, Alice Lavelle,
	Libby Mandel
Old Bethpage	
Rockville Centre	Marianne Calabrese, Craig
	Fishkin, Archard & Joan Shapiro
Seaford	
Stewart Manor	
Valley Stream	James Kelty, Mr. Henry Krooss,
	Arthur Olson, Valerie J. Rizzuto,
	Jennifer Zurlo
Woodmere	-
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ANOTHER SSAS WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

SSAS's third annual early May visit to migrant-filled Central Park, to be led once again by NYC Park Ranger Bob DeCandido, is scheduled for **Saturday**, **May 4**. Details will be in the next *Skimmer*.

LAST CHANCE TO JOIN A DUCK SURVEY

Joe Grupp continues to seek volunteers who are interested in spending a half day or full day viewing and learning about our waterfowl at some or all of the 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park that his team surveys each winter. If you're interested, please call him at 481-4208. The last surveys this season will take place on **February 23** and **March 23**, rain or shine.

HOW OUR POLITICIANS VOTED

Michael Sperling

The League of Conservation Voters' web site, www.lcv.org, contains weekly briefs on Congressional votes of interest to environmentalists. LCV's summaries (excerpted below) are linked to the web pages of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives that contain how everyone voted on each amendment, the final bill, etc. Space permitting, the *Skimmer* will let you know how SSAS's two members of the House and two U.S. Senators voted on important legislation, accompanied by summaries of the votes of their peers.

H.R. 2646 (Farm Security Act). According to the Environmental Working Group, 84% (\$60.2 billion) of the agricultural subsidies paid between 1996 and 2000 went to less than 25% of the nation's two million farmers. Under



the current commodity payment system, operators who produce the most receive the largest share of the federal payments. The result has been an increase in large corporate operations at the expense of family farmers and the environment. H.R. 2646 would dedicate \$170 billion over ten years to rural development

projects, annual subsidies to farmers, conservation programs, and farm price supports.

Unfortunately, this Farm Bill would only exacerbate current trends that favor large corporate farms. In addition, the conservation title of H.R. 2646 is riddled with proposals to roll back proven conservation programs that have helped private landowners improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, and preserve working agricultural lands.

A diverse coalition of family farm, conservation, sportsmen's groups, and members of Congress from both parties rallied behind an amendment that would have allocated \$1.9 billion to conservation programs for which every farmer, rancher, and private forest owner is eligible, no matter what they grow, where they grow it, or the size of their farm. The amendment failed 226–200 and the House subsequently passed H.R. 2646 by a vote of 291–120.

On the amendment, Republicans voted 161–54 opposed, Democrats 145–64 in favor, and Independents split 1–1. NY's Republicans voted 11–0 in favor (surprise!), with one not voting; NY's Democrats voted 19–0 in favor.

On the final bill, Republicans voted 151–58 in favor, Democrats 139–61 in favor, and Independents split 1–1. NY's Republicans voted 6–5 in favor, with one not voting; NY's Democrats voted 10–9 in favor. Republican Peter King voted no and Democrat Carolyn McCarthy voted aye.



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

Feb. 24	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Mar. 3	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Mar. 10	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Mar. 17	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Mar. 24	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Mar. 31	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Apr. 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Apr. 14	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Apr. 21	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Apr. 28	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
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SSAS NEEDS HICKS HELPERS

The Horticultural Fair at Hicks Nurseries' Spring Flower & Garden Show is a free indoor gathering of plant and gardening clubs, societies, schools, and organizations who share a common interest in plants, gardening, wildlife, and the environment. The annual event at Hicks (100 Jericho Turnpike in Westbury) is attended by thousands of Nassau County residents and is an excellent opportunity to greet the public, share information about our chapter and its goals, and recruit new members for Audubon while enjoying the beautiful display gardens. This year there will be a Victorian Garden, a French Country Garden, a Fairy Garden, a Children's Liberty Garden, a Neon Garden, and a Pond Garden (details at www.hicksnurseries.com).

South Shore Audubon has accepted Hicks' invitation to once again have a table at this event. We will be there on Saturday and Sunday, **March 16th and 17th**, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. We need volunteers throughout the weekend. If you can do a half day on Saturday, an afternoon on Sunday, or just an hour or two, it will be greatly appreciated! There will be sign-up sheets at our next general meeting, or you can contact SSAS's Therese Lucas (221-8654 or TKLWingsII@aol.com) and let her know which dates and times you can be there.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Fool Us Once, Shame On You; Fool Us Twice, Shame On Us!

Tom Torma

In 1972, Alaska was in the news. The petroleum companies wanted to drill for oil at Prudhoe Bay. They made many promises about protecting the environment and the wildlife in the area. Twenty years later, Prudhoe Bay is an environmental nightmare and the oil companies are back making the same promises, this time about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Fool us once, shame on you; fool us twice, shame on us!

Not too long ago, I was listening to a woman being interviewed on the radio. She was portrayed as a petroleum expert who worked for an oil company. Naturally,

she supported the proposed drilling on the
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. She



described the refuge as a barren place with no trees, a wasteland, an empty place. She did not mention an endless procession of caribou (pictured), packs of

wolves, and flocks of Snow Geese that live in the refuge. It is a land of coastal lagoons, barrier islands, arctic tundra, foothills, mountains, and boreal forests. These areas are home to 160 species of birds, 36 species of land mammals, 9 marine mammal species, and 36 species of fish. Her whole presentation was spin, a fantasy full of myth. What are these myths? What are the facts?

Myth: Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will be limited to 2000 acres and will have little effect on the environment.

Fact: "Limiting" development in the Arctic Refuge does not include support elements needed to drill for oil. The 2000 acre limit does not include 200 miles of pipelines, 200 miles of gravel and ice roads, 20 oil fields, water, trucks, pollution, and grave pits required for the development. The U.S. Department of the Interior estimates that the actual area affected by this project will be 130,000 to 303,000 acres.

Myth: New drilling technology will prevent environmental damage.

Fact: There are 400 oil spills in Alaska each year. From 1996 to 1999, over 1.3 million gallons of oil and toxic chemicals were spilled on the Arctic tundra, threatening birds and wildlife. Why should we expect a different experience in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?

Myth: Oil development will not affect the birds or wildlife in the Arctic Refuge.

Fact: The effect on wildlife will be dramatic. The caribou herds will be reduced by 40%. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates 20% of the area will be impacted, including its migratory birds.

Myth: Arctic Refuge oil is needed for economic development.

Fact: The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that if clean-energy policies were adopted today, by 2020 the use of natural gas would drop by 30% and the use of coal by 60%, compared with government projections for energy requirements. This could be accomplished with fuel-efficient cars and renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal.

The Bush administration plan provides \$27 billion in subsidies to traditional energy producers and only \$6 billion for conservation. Another bill, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Investments Act sponsored by Senator Jeffords of Vermont, would save consumers \$70 billion by 2020. Our cars are less efficient now than at any time in the last 21 years. If we were to increase our fuel efficiency by 3 miles to the gallon, we could reduce our dependence on foreign oil by a million barrels per day. This would save consumers \$25 billion in fuel costs and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 140 metric tons a year.

Myth: We need Arctic Refuge oil for economic recovery. Fact: The Arctic Refuge oil field will only supply six months of our nation's petroleum requirements. Even the oil companies admit it will be eight years before the oil begins to flow and it will take twenty years to pump the oil out. How will this help us recover from our present recession?

Myth: We can drill ourselves to energy self-reliance.

Fact: U.S. oil production has been falling since the 1970s. In fact, the United States possesses a mere 3% of the world's known reserves. Yet we consume over 25% of the world's oil supply. The oil from the Arctic Refuge will do little to assure our nation of energy self-reliance.

Myth: The oil from the Arctic Refuge will increase our national security.

Fact: Most of our oil comes from Venezuela, Canada, Mexico, and Nigeria. Less then 25% of our oil comes from the Persian Gulf. So, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will not assure us of any increased national security.

You can help! Write your Congressman, Senators, and President Bush. Tell them we will not be fooled again.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Betsy Gulotta

Thanks, in part, to the continued generosity of Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society will be awarding two \$750 Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships to students who are college juniors, seniors, or graduates and who are continuing their studies towards a degree in biological or environmental sciences, such as wildlife management, forestry, animal behavior, ecology, marine biology, oceanography, mammalogy, ornithology, etc. For information, call Betsy Gulotta at 572-7575 (daytime) or 546-8841; applications are due by April 5.

WE NEED MORE MONDAY/FRIDAY GOFERS!

Michael Sperling

If you're occasionally available on Monday mornings (after 7:30 A.M.) or late Friday afternoons (before 5 P.M.), please join the list of SSAS members who are willing to transport the *Skimmer* to our printer in Island Park (located between Oceanside and Long Beach).

If you're occasionally available on Mondays or Tuesdays and are able to carry trays of *Skimmers* from the Freeport Post Office's parking lot to the loading dock, you're needed!

For more info or to volunteer, please call me at 541-0805 (after 7:30 P.M.) or send e-mail to mssperling @compuserve.com.

The date for SSAS's annual Brookside Preserve spring cleanup will be one of the topics discussed at our next committee meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday night, **March 19**, in Merrick (for information, call Betsy Gulotta at 546-8841).

Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County and managed (and rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. The Preserve is located on the Freeport-Baldwin border, along Milburn Creek; the main entrance is on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway.

Editor's note: The following is from Audubon New York's Director of Conservation and Armchair Activist Coordinator, Carole Nemore.

On January 22nd, the Governor released this year's executive budget proposal that includes the allocation of \$1.4 billion to environmental programs. The Governor's proposal not only called for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to be fully funded at \$125 million in fiscal year 2002/2003, but also urged the legislature to pass a deficiency budget by March 31st to ensure that \$125 million is appropriated to the EPF in this fiscal year (2001/2002). When the "bare-bones" budget was passed last August by the New York State legislature, the EPF was never allocated. Consequently, no EPF programs have received funding for the current fiscal year.

Armchair Action ALERT!! Contact your state legislators now and urge them to immediately pass an environmental deficiency budget for this current budget year for \$125 million. If no action is taken by March 31, the opportunity to provide \$125 million for this year's environmental programs will be lost.

Despite a looming \$6.8 billion dollar state deficit and the backdrop of September 11th, the Governor's budget proposal for fiscal year 2002/2003 and a deficiency budget for 2001/2002 maintain a high level of commitment to the environment. The Governor's EPF proposals (both for FY

01/02 and FY 02/03) would provide land acquisition funds, farmland preservation funds, Hudson River Estuary program funds, park and environmental conservation stewardships, and capital projects funds, as well as dollars to zoos, botanical gardens, and nature education centers. Furthermore, the Governor's proposal has no state agency employees in the EPF, a major concern in the past and in turn a victory for the environmental community. In fact, while most other state agencies will be facing staffing cuts, the Governor's budget maintains overall staffing levels at the Department of Environmental Conservation; Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation; and the Adirondack Park Agency without relying on EPF monies.

You can reach your elected officials by accessing www.assembly.state.ny.us and www.senate.state.ny.us.

Your letter could make all the difference.

WE THANK THE HOLIDAY PARTY VOLUNTEERS

SSAS's perennial wildlife-oriented holiday party for children was held on December 15 at Tackapausha Museum and we'd like to thank our volunteers. They included Alice Blaustein, Helen Buckley, Louise Leonard, Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, Doris Pirodsky, Dolores Rogers, Chris Schmitt, Michael Sperling, and Karen Weinstein.

We'd also like to thank falconers Bob Young and Sonny Squiciarino for providing the free live-raptor show. Some of you may have seen a half-hour of this show on Cablevision's public access channel 71, thanks to Wendy and her camcorder; SSAS's time slots (which may change before you read this) are Saturdays at 4 P.M. and Tuesdays at 10 A.M.

For those of you who haven't joined SSAS's free e-mail list and haven't been on a bird walk recently, here's one of Wendy Murbach's weekly recaps of what we're seeing on our Sunday morning bird walks. At Massapequa Preserve on January 20, we saw: Northern Mockingbirds (2), mixed gulls (75), Mute Swans (2), Hooded Mergansers (5, pictured), Black Ducks (2), Canada Geese (40), Pekin Ducks

(2), Mallards (12), Carolina Wrens (2), American Coots (2), Song Sparrows (6),

Great Blue Heron, White-throated Sparrows (2),
American Goldfinches (4),

Northern Cardinals (5), Black-capped Chickadees (3), Blue Jay, Gray Catbird, yellowlegs (12), Killdeers (2), dowitchers (3), and Green-winged Teal.

Lists Wanted! We're compiling these lists in order to develop a database of all the bird life in SSAS's area — data that will be valuable if we need to thwart habitat-harming proposals in the future. As noted in the previous Skimmer, our Research Committee, chaired by Joe Grupp, seeks lists of the birds you see anywhere in southern Nassau; to participate, please call Joe at 481-4208.

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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. Gift memberships help too; we will ask that non-local recipients be assigned to their own local chapter if you prefer.

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