VOLUME 32, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2002

NEXT MEETING

Tom Torma

DATE: Tuesday, April 9, 2002

TIME: 8:00 p.m. ②

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

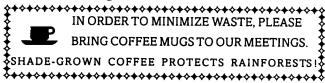
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)

SPEAKER: Deborah Allen TOPIC: Eastern Warblers

Positioned on the Atlantic flyway, the area surrounding New York City is one of the best places in the country to observe and photograph migrating warblers. This month's program will focus on the identification of warblers, highlighting differences between spring and fall plumage. Join us!

Deborah Allen is a freelance photographer, specializing in birds, and is president of the Linnaean Society of New York. Her photos have been published in National Wildlife, National Parks, The New York Times, Birder's World, Bird Watcher's Digest, WildBird, and elsewhere. Deborah lives in New York City and reports on Central Park for North American Birds.

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



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.

 OUR WEB PAGE (incl. online store) www.ssaudubon.org **^+^+**



Elliott Kutner

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.

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)
May 5	Tobay JFK Sanctuary
May 12	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 19 & 26	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
June 2	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE An Eco-Ecological Revolution

Tom Torma

The words ecology and economics both begin with eco; for most economists, that is about as close as the two words get. Today's market-based economy does not consider the concept of a sustainable yield, nor does it respect the balance of nature. It is as if our economy exists in a bubble separate from the forces of nature to which we all must answer.

For most economists, pollution is of little concern, as the cost of the pollution is passed on to others. Polluters need not pay for the damage that occurs. For example, economists pay little attention to the growing imbalance between the amount of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere and the ability of nature to "fix" carbon. They don't consider the role of burning fossil fuels in the rise of atmospheric carbons, nor the rising temperature, melting ice, and rising sea level resulting from the carbon releases. To ecologists this is a signal that it is time to shift to other energy sources.

Ecologists understand the processes that support life on our planet — the importance of photosynthesis, the relationship between plants and animals, the role of the climate and the hydrological cycle. Ecologists also understand the importance of a sustainable yield of our ecosystems, our fisheries, rangelands, forests, and croplands.

Today's economy is mostly linear. We strip resources from the Earth, then produce a product that we consume. When we are finished using that product, we send it to our landfills. The result is that our resources are in decline. Our fisheries, forests, rangelands, and water resources are all declining. Coal production has fallen 7% since 1996. Oil production in the United States has been declining since the 1970s, and projections indicate world production will soon follow the same course. The high cost of ensuring nuclear safety will prevent that industry from being an answer to our energy needs. Our economy is out of sync with nature.

If we want to continue our economic progress, we must restructure our economic system. It must be a system that works in sync with the natural world, a system that is sustainable and recognizes the services that our environment provides. We need an economy that relies on recycling our resources, and on sustainable energy sources

such as wind and solar energy. One example of the services provided by nature is our drinking water. In Nassau County, all our drinking water comes from the groundwater stored in our aquifers. This water must be renewed, or recharged by rainwater falling on the land. If the land is open space, forest, fields, or wetlands, the soil and plants help filter and purify our water. Our economy does not recognize the value of that service. It only

recognizes the need of the landowner to make a profit on his investment. This is not just theory; we must consider the value of the service nature provides. If our groundwater becomes contaminated, or salt water intrudes from the ocean, Nassau County will need to find another source of drinking water. It could be desalinization or going outside the county for water; no matter what, the alternative will be very expensive for everyone.

We need to develop an economy that satisfies our needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations. A Native American saying says it best: "When we learn to love the Earth and all the creatures on it, then we have made a future for the children."

Next month: Some ideas for our eco-economic future.

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

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.

秋 WELCOME NEW MEMBERS 秋

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 Madelon A. Knoerze
Bellmore Frederick Gottesman, Heide Russ
Bethpage Helen Pospisil, Frank Verdone,
Jay Waxenberg
Cedarhurst McKean Thompson
East Meadow Robert O'Brien, Manfred
Zimmerman
East Rockaway Anne Treglia, Eithne Wonsever
Elmont Amanda Macklin
Farmingdale Joseph P. Sheeran
Floral Park Alice Gnad, Dorothea Lawson
Franklin Square Susan Drzewicki, Margaret Elliott,
Doris Gail Lundquist
Garden City Stephanie Bird, William M.
Marshall
Hempstead Braunstein Chase, Vera Rivers
Hewlett I. R. Bring, Blanche Cirker, Harry
Neufeld, Robert Solomon
Hicksville Steven Goldstein
Inwood E. Entwistle
Levittown Mickey Gray, Leon Lebensbaum,
John Suppan
Long Beach Catherine Crittenden
Lynbrook Robert Plonsky, Larry Rienbecker
Malverne Judah Frank, Beverly Ryan
Massapequa Wilma Diehl, Leila Pivnick,
Jacqueline Thomas
Massapequa Park Frank J. Bonanno
Merrick Linda Segota
Oceanside Joel Schechter
Old Bethpage Mary Rosenfeld

Plainview Paloma Anderson, Joan Argento

Seaford	Mary Manning, Bertram S. Zipkin
Valley Stream	Kathy Leistner, Felice Mc Mahon
Wantagh	Robert Berman
Woodmere	Seymour Jeffries, Lendard Siegal
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AUDUBON MEMI	BERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201
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QUOGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE

As announced in last month's *Skimmer*, Ann Marie Pozzini has made arrangements for an early spring nature walk for SSAS on **Saturday**, **April 6** at 10 A.M. at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

Directions. Travel east on Rt. 27 (Sunrise Highway) to Exit 64 South. Go south on Route 104 for 2 miles. Turn right onto Old Country Road and go 7/10 of a mile (if you cross the railroad tracks, you have gone too far). The entrance is on the right.

Registration. The cost is \$3 per person and will be collected by Ann Marie upon arrival at the refuge. Bathrooms are available at the main entrance. Eating is not 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, please call Ann Marie at (516) 579-3353 and leave your name and phone number. In case of bad weather, the trip will be canceled; there is no rain date.



Explore the coast with the

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

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.

HORSESHOE CRAB WALKS (Sun., May 26 & Mon., June 10). Meet at Jamaica Bay refuge 7:30 p.m. for slide program & walk to see mating crabs. Contact Don for reservations. Free.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE (Sun., June 2, 5–8 P.M.). Learn about birds, fish, management issues & general ecology, aboard 96 ft "Dorothy B VIII." See nesting Osprey, Oystercatcher, egrets, Peregrine Falcon, many shorebirds. Cost: \$35 incl. wine & cheese, snacks. Leader: Don (refuge mgr.).

MONTAUK (June 7–9). Cost: \$285 incl. 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, and star watch.

ICELAND (Aug. 2-12); MOROCCO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 7).

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

EARTH DAY AT HECKSCHER

Therese Lucas

This year, South Shore Audubon Society is celebrating Earth Day by participating in the always well-attended Heckscher Spring Festival, which will be held at Heckscher State Park in East Islip on **April 20** and **21**.

The focus of the weekend festival will be the celebration of Earth Day. The festival will be at Fields 1 and 4 between

11 A.M. and 4 P.M. It is a weekend of varied demonstrations and entertainments. Why not come down, partake in the celebration, and volunteer an hour or two of your time at the SSAS table? To volunteer, contact me at

221-8654 or TKLWingsII@aol.com.

Would you like to discover some of the last primeval forests of New York State? On **May 18 and 19**, there will be daytime field trips to Welwyn Preserve in Glen Cove (site of NY's tallest hardwood forest), to Pelham Bay Park and NY Botanical Gardens in the Bronx, and to explore a suspected old growth forest on Long Island or just north of the metropolitan area. Saturday

of the metropolitan area. Saturday evening's activities at the Botanical Gardens will include a slide show by author and national old growth authority Bruce Kershner (who is Buffalo Audubon Society's conservation chair), an informal dinner, and a meeting to form the Southern NY Old Growth Survey Team. If

you want to join the team, the only requirements are a love of trees and the thrill of discovery, a willingness to participate in periodic field trips, and the ability to explore all kinds of terrain.

Old growth forest has two parts to its definition:

- ① a natural community that has been continuously forested since before European settlement, and
- ② a forest whose canopy is dominated by trees with ages of 150 years or older. Most old growth forests have six or more trees per acre that are 150 years old or greater. The 150 year figure is based on easily observed and well-documented changes that appear in trees around the 150 year mark. These include dramatic changes in bark, shape of trunk, and canopy branches.

The weekend's activities are free and were announced at the recent meeting of the NYS Audubon Council, which includes SSAS. For more info or to register, call Bruce at 716-634-7158 or send e-mail to bskershner@adelphia.net.

For information on New York's largest individual trees, some of which are found in old growth forests, visit www.championtrees.org.

			
RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070			
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THE EFFECTS OF MARINE DEBRIS

Theresa Perez

Editor's note: The following is reprinted with the author's permission from the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary Trailside's "Ask the Naturalist" column; I added the title and the clip art. Theresa is TRS's Program Coordinator and is occasionally spotted on SSAS bird walks.

Strolling along any beach on Long Island, one is likely to find a wide variety of discarded items, from plastic sixpack rings, balloons, and plastic bags to tangled fishing line, hooks, and nets. The natural action of the ocean makes it easy for debris to travel far and wide from multiple sources, but some of it does originate in our own backyard. Balloon releases, though fewer and farther between due to improved education, still occur. Picnickers and sunbathers leave garbage behind on the beach, and wind carries debris from dumps and landfills. Superficially, this debris merely poses an aesthetic problem; however, humans, marine habitats, and wildlife are much more seriously impacted.

From the human perspective, marine debris poses economic and health-related threats. Beach cleanup is expensive and time-consuming; yet, without it, public beaches risk losses in revenue as locals and tourists stop visiting their dirty beach. Private and commercial boats are vulnerable to floating debris tangling in propellers or being sucked up into water intake components. This is not only expensive to fix, but also dangerous if the boat is stranded far from shore. Finally, barefoot beachgoers face potential injury or contamination from medical waste, glass, metal or plastic pieces, and discarded fishing hooks.

Marine habitats are also quite vulnerable. Invasive plant and animal species travel, by many means, to distant water environments. Organisms may attach themselves to or get caught on floating debris, journey hundreds of miles, and successfully establish a population in a foreign environment. While other forms of debris may biodegrade, dissipate, or simply be cleaned up over time, invasive species are very difficult and expensive to eradicate once established and have the potential to completely change their new environment, to the detriment of native species and local fisheries. Heavier, less buoyant debris can smother coral reefs and sea grasses, making it easier for a more tolerant nonnative species to invade and out-compete native ones.

While marine debris poses serious threats to humans and marine habitats, it is often fatal to wildlife. According

to a study by the North Carolina Sea Grant College Program released in 1997, at least 267 different species have been found entangled in or

have ingested marine debris.
Unsuspecting marine animals are trapped in essentially invisible fishing line; birds look-

ing for an easy meal become tangled while removing tidbits from discarded nets; and balloon strings can wrap around legs, necks, wings, and fins, cutting off circulation or causing deadly infections. Floating balloons and plastic bags bear a striking resemblance to jellyfish, a staple in many marine diets. Birds mistake small plastic pieces and Styrofoam packaging material for bits of food, eating it themselves or feeding it to their young. Indigestible debris may either damage the digestive tract or create a sensation of being full, preventing normal eating habits and, eventually, starving the animal to death.

There are laws in place to prevent plastics and other rubbish from finding their way into our marine environment. However, there are also several things we can do to help. Be sure to dispose of your garbage properly. Cut up six-pack rings. Carefully package waste to prevent wind dispersal. Recycle appropriate items. Participate in beach cleanups or simply pick up and dispose of a piece of garbage each time you visit your local beach. Hold on to your balloons! If your school or organization is planning a balloon release, suggest alternative, environmentally safe group activities. Most importantly, encourage your family and friends to help make a difference.

♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+NASSAU COUNTY POLLUTION HOTLINE 739-6666 **♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+♦+**

NOMINATIONS FOR 2002-2003 OFFICERS

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 14th, officers will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee, chaired by Elliott Kutner, has recommended the following candidates:

President — George Peters
Vice President — Somebody
Treasurer — Nancy Frame

Recording Secretary — Sal Navasaitis

Corresponding Secretary — Alice Blaustein Director (to June 2005) — Louis P. Paolillo

Director (to June 2005) — Ann Marie Pozzini

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS REMINDER

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**.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT RESULTS

For those of you who don't have access to the http:// birdsource.org web site, here are the totals for only New York State in the February 15-18, 2002 Great Backyard Bird Count that was announced two Skimmers ago and sponsored by National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants, as will be obvious from the list below, were allowed to count birds anywhere. They reported the largest number of birds of each species that they saw at one time during the weekend.

We've listed the birds in order by how many people reported seeing them; the second number is the number of individual birds counted during this unusually warm winter (e.g., 2437 New Yorkers saw 11,956 Black-capped Chickadees; one's pictured below). When the numbers for a species differ greatly from those of two years ago, the old stats are in parentheses (sorry, your editor doesn't have last year's statistics).

Black-capped Chickadee 2437/11,956 Mourning Dove 2008/13,469 Downy Woodpecker 1868/3420 Northern Cardinal 1827/5399 Blue Jay 1764/8036 American Crow 1756/14,909 White-breasted Nuthatch 1702/3197 Dark-eyed Junco 1505/8024 Tufted Titmouse 1450/3906



House Finch 1165/7449, American Goldfinch 1141/7600 House Sparrow 1072/10,965, European Starling 1025/33,606 Hairy Woodpecker 870/1264, Red-bellied Woodpecker 839/1096 Red-breasted Nuthatch 626/994, American Tree Sparrow 598/3418 Canada Goose 494/52,930, White-throated Sparrow 469/2257 Red-tailed Hawk 446/685, Rock Dove 377/6554 American Robin 304/2807, Mallard 302/8016 Song Sparrow 281/1064, Common Redpoll 273/6261

Purple Finch 267/1317 Red-winged Blackbird 223/2057 (only 69/1025 in the 2000 count) Carolina Wren 207/292, Herring Gull 204/11,539 (112/2796 in 2000)

Ring-billed Gull 203/10,167 (79/2924 in 2000) Northern Mockingbird 170/218, Wild Turkey 161/3084

Northern Flicker 155/237

Eastern Bluebird 128/390 (79/281 in 2000), Brown Creeper 122/159 Pileated Woodpecker 112/133, American Black Duck 100/1849 Evening Grosbeak 94/1933, Sharp-shinned Hawk 93/93

Common Grackle 89/1577 (144/1962 in 2000), Cooper's Hawk 82/91

Great Black-backed Gull 81/1059 (45/426 in 2000)

Cedar Waxwing 77/1214, Mute Swan 72/299 (30/115 in 2000) Common Merganser 69/2694 (33/519 in 2000), Pine Siskin 65/437 Brown-headed Cowbird 60/688

Turkey Vulture 59/207 (28/68 in 2000)

Great Blue Heron (Blue form) 58/82, Common Raven 56/141 Bufflehead 54/620, Common Goldeneye 47/2640 (24/999 in 2000) White-crowned Sparrow 43/109

Hooded Merganser 41/251 (19/104 in 2000), Bald Eagle 40/85 Red-breasted Merganser 38/425, American Kestrel 37/45

Northern Harrier 36/102, Ruffed Grouse 33/77

Fox Sparrow 32/62, American Coot 31/1536

Ring-necked Pheasant 28/46 (49/67 in 2000), Field Sparrow 25/76 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 24/28

Golden-crowned Kinglet 24/43 (8/13 in 2000)

Ring-necked Duck 22/335 (10/186 in 2000), Great Horned Owl 22/29 Pied-billed Grebe 21/42 (5/8 in 2000), Gadwall 21/233 (8/30 in 2000) Double-crested Cormorant 21/192 (3/8 in 2000)

Belted Kingfisher 20/20 (6/10 in 2000)

White-winged Crossbill 19/162 (3/4 in 2000), Winter Wren 18/31

Rough-legged Hawk 18/42, Common Loon 17/103

Swamp Sparrow 16/24, Snow Bunting 16/353 (56/4252 in 2000)

Ruddy Duck 16/1186, Northern Goshawk 16/16

Lesser Scaup 16/490, Greater Scaup 16/500

American Wigeon 15/145, Snow Goose 14/225 (4/121 in 2000)

Barred Owl 14/16, Red-shouldered Hawk 13/19, Fish Crow 13/37

Canvasback 13/694, Horned Lark 12/64 (28/1397 in 2000)

Northern Shoveler 11/180, Gray Catbird 11/15

Yellow-rumped Warbler 10/59 (3/37 in 2000)

Tundra Swan 10/1723, Pine Grosbeak 10/59

Eastern Towhee 10/44, Bonaparte's Gull 10/912

Horned Grebe 9/43, Great Cormorant 9/22

Wood Duck 8/18, White-winged Scoter 8/5106

Red-throated Loon 8/35, Redhead 8/498

Merlin 8/8, Long-tailed Duck (formerly Oldsquaw) 8/380

Killdeer 8/14, Hermit Thrush 8/9, Brant 8/301

American Woodcock 8/13, Rusty Blackbird 7/23

Eastern Phoebe 7/21, Surf Scoter 6/7045, Sanderling 6/610

Northern Gannet 6/45, Lesser Black-backed Gull 6/7

Iceland Gull 6/10, Eastern Screech-Owl 6/10, Short-eared Owl 5/12

Savannah Sparrow 5/9, Monk Parakeet 5/38, Hoary Redpoll 5/5

Eastern Meadowlark 5/9, Black Vulture 5/14

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 4/4, Red Crossbill 4/11

Peregrine Falcon 4/5, American Green-winged Teal 4/8

Trumpeter Swan 3/10, Northern Saw-whet Owl 3/3

Northern Shrike 3/3, Northern Pintail 3/18, Gray Jay 3/4

Glaucous Gull 3/3, Bohemian Waxwing 3/92

Black-bellied Plover 3/21, Snowy Owl 2/2

Red-headed Woodpecker 2/2, Razorbill 2/7, Greater Yellowlegs 2/2

Golden Eagle 2/5, Dunlin 2/156, Chipping Sparrow 2/2

Black Scoter 2/272, Black-crowned Night Heron 2/8 Ruddy Turnstone 1/1, Pine Warbler 1/2, Osprey 1/2

King Eider 1/2, Eurasian Wigeon 1/1, Common Eider 1/538

Boat-tailed Grackle 1/12, Baltimore Oriole 1/1

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SSAS WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

On Saturday, May 4th, we will meet at Belvedere Castle in Central Park at 9 A.M. (unless it rains) to explore the lakes, ponds, meadows, forests, and spring-migration species. For the third consecutive year, Joanne Del Prete has recruited NYC Park Ranger Robert DeCandido, Ph.D., to lead us through Central Park. Bring your lunch, buy it in the Park, or join a possible group lunch afterwards. Joanne will meet SSAS members at any of the following locations (and will be collecting a \$3 fee per person):

- 1) LIRR station in Massapequa (Broadway and Sunrise Highway). We will take the 6:58 A.M. train, which is scheduled to arrive in Penn Station at 7:55 and makes all local stops through Rockville Centre:
- 2) before 8:15 A.M. at Penn Station (LIRR Waiting Area), after which we will head to the 8th Avenue subway's C train (please buy tokens or MetroCards in advance if possible);
- 3) Belvedere Castle (mid-Park at 79th Street) by 9 A.M. Joanne suggests that you call her at 433-0739 if you want to join us at Massapequa or Penn Station, so we can look for you.

Belvedere Castle can be reached at 212-772-0210; touchtone LIRR schedule info is available at 516-822-5477.



"NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE"

621 Fulton St. (Rt. 109), Farmingdale, NY 11735 Located between McDonald's & Dunkin' Donuts

Editor's note: The following information was published, ©2002, by Grassroots Environmental Education, whose supporting organizations include Audubon, CCE (Citizens Campaign for the Environment), CHEC (Children's Health Environmental Coalition), NCAMP/Beyond Pesticides, and NYCAP (NY Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides).

Despite growing evidence linking lawn and garden pesticides with serious human health problems and environmental harm, the use of these chemicals continues to grow each year. Homeowners, in pursuit of the aesthetically perfect lawn and encouraged by advertising, use three times more pesticides per acre than the average farmer. Especially in densely populated suburban areas, this release of chemical toxins into the environment significantly impacts our air and water quality, and, ultimately, our health. Several types of cancer, neurological diseases, and birth defects have all been associated with exposure to common lawn care pesticides.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "all pesticides are toxic to some degree... and most pesticides have not been adequately tested to determine their effects on people or the environment." According to NY State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, "pesticides pose health risks, even when used and applied in full compliance with manufacturers' recommendations and legal requirements."

Children at Risk. Children are uniquely vulnerable to pesticides due to a variety of physiological and behavioral factors. Scientists believe that even a single exposure during a critical period of development can cause acute or long-term health problems. Children, unlike adults, spend much of their time playing outdoors on the grass and indoors on carpeting where lawn chemicals have been brought into the house on shoes. Once indoors, chemicals remain active longer, as they are usually formulated to break down in sunlight, soil, and water. According to Dr. Phil Landrigan, M.D., Director of the Center for Children's Health and the Environment at Mount Sinai School of Medicine: "Children have greater exposure than adults. Pound for pound of body weight, they drink more, eat more, and breathe more than adults. Growing and developing processes are easily interrupted... If reproductive development is diverted by pesticides, the resulting dysfunction can be permanent and irreversible... As a pediatrician, I urge all parents to reduce pesticide use as much as possible, especially lawn services. Children's health is more important than a few weeds."

Environmental Impact. Domestic usage of pesticides now accounts for the majority of wildlife poisonings reported to the EPA. David Pimentel, Professor of Entomology at Cornell University, estimates that seven million wild birds are killed each year due to the aesthetic use of pesticides by homeowners. Most pesticides are generally not species specific, killing non-targeted beneficial insects and important pollinators and food sources in their wake. Accidental pesticide applications or "drift" into aquatic areas is a common problem, causing contamination or loss of an important food source for other animals as well as humans.

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Ward B. Stone, "Birds dying on lawns from pesticides are a strong warning of the potential risks these chemicals pose to people and pets. As a wildlife pathologist, I see firsthand the carnage caused by the unnecessary use of lawn and garden pesticides."

Making the Transition to Natural Lawn Care. Making the transition from chemical treatments to natural lawn maintenance may take a little time, but putting it into practice is easier than you think. Soil health should always be the primary concern, because years of heavy pesticide use may have destroyed many beneficial organisms that provided natural pest control, soil aeration, and plant nutrition. Here are a few suggestions to get you started: A soil rebuilding and natural lawn program should include aeration and compost applications, seeding with grasses best suited to your area, corn gluten for pre-emergence weed control, biological controls for insects if necessary, and one or more applications annually of a slow-release nitrogen organic fertilizer (commercial fertilizers frequently contain toxic herbicides, such as 2,4-D). Other important steps to take are mowing high at 2 to 3 inches, deep watering early in the morning, and performing periodic soil tests to determine needed amendments, such as lime or rock dust. If you use a lawn care service, look for a company that follows a program such as the one described above. Be wary of IPM (Integrated Pest Management) programs, which often include the use of toxic pesticides. Your decision to stop using pesticides benefits not only your immediate family, but your neighbors, pets, and wildlife in your community.

For information on safe lawn care and nontoxic alternatives, and a list of organic landscapers in your area, go to www.grassrootsinfo.org. [Editor's interruption: You can also contact the Neighborhood Network's Pesticide Alternatives Project at 541-4321 and ask for a copy of their annual "Organic Lawn Resource Directory" booklet.]

Web Sites to Visit for Pesticide Info: www.pesticide.org (NCAP; click on "Publications and Information"), www. beyondpesticides.org (NCAMP; click on "Info Services"), and www.pesticideinfo.org (PANNA; click on "Open Database" and enter pesticide name in "Search" box under #2).

HELIUM BALLOON LEGISLATION

Michael Sperling

About a year ago, SSAS's Dolores Rogers gave me a flyer from Ft. Lauderdale's Wildlife Care Center that says: "Balloons can be pretty... deadly! When floating in water, they take on the appearance of jellyfish and other sea creatures. Balloons are mistaken for food by many marine animals... When caught in trees, and lying on the ground, balloons can catch and entangle small animals with their strings... Balloons are not biodegradable and will be here for a long, long time..."

Three times in the last decade, New York State's Democrat-controlled Assembly has passed a balloon-release bill, but our Republican-controlled Senate has failed to do so.

Once again this session, Assemblyman Alex Grannis has introduced a helium balloon bill, cosponsored by Assemblyman Harvey/Weisenberg of Long Beach and supported by one other Assembly member in SSAS's backyard, Earlene Hooper of Hempstead.

According to the Assembly's web site (www.assembly. state.ny.us/ALIS/billsearch.html), bill A.299 "would prohibit any business, firm, or corporation from intentionally releasing within a 24 hour period 25 or more balloons inflated with any lighter-than-air gas."

Exceptions to the prohibition would include balloons used for carrying scientific instrumentation or by a person on behalf of a governmental agency, or pursuant to a governmental contract for scientific or meteorological purposes; hot air balloons that are recovered after launching; and balloons released indoors.

Any violation would be punishable by a civil penalty of \$10 for each balloon released, with a maximum of \$50,000.

The official justification for the bill is: "What goes up must come down. The release of balloons has essentially the same consequences as dumping thousands of plastic baggies from the air into the environment. The hazards of nondegradable mylar balloons are well documented. However, latex balloons used in far greater numbers and with greater frequency pose an even greater threat. The release of latex balloons into the atmosphere are a hazard to endangered sea turtles, whales, sea birds and other marine life. The vast majority of the balloons come down over the ocean and because these balloons resemble food are eaten by marine life. Balloons have been found in the guts of dead sea turtles and whales in the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts."

Similar legislation has already been passed in Maine and Florida, and is now under consideration in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island. If you support this legislation, contact your Assembly member and ask him/her to support it; and ask your State Senator to introduce a similar bill in the NYS Senate.

SSAS FIFTEENTH ANNUAL BIRDATHON!

James Remsen, Jr.

The fifteenth SSAS Birdathon is set for 5:00 P.M. on Friday, May 10 until 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, May 11. Since 1988, our chapter has raised funds for our conservation programs by tallying the number of species seen by observers in 24 hours at the peak of spring migration. For each species identified, our members obtain a pledge in any amount from donors who want to support our cause.

The rain dates for the Birdathon are May 17–18, 2002, same time frame. Full details will appear in the next *Skimmer*. To sign up sponsors, please use sponsor sheets available at our meetings and bird walks. Mark your calendar for the second weekend in May! See you there!

YOU'RE INVITED TO SSAS'S ANNUAL DINNER!

An enjoyable evening awaits everyone at our 31st annual dinner, which will be held at Pompei Restaurant and Catering in West Hempstead on **Tuesday**, **June 11**, starting with cocktails (open bar) and an hour of hot hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m. Smoking will be prohibited; wine and soda will be unlimited, and co-hostess Shirley Kutner says there'll be "wonderful music" just like last year. Pompei is located at 401 Hempstead Ave. Take Southern State Parkway Exit 17 north about 1-1/2 miles. Join your fellow South Shore members and bring your friends.

Advance registration is required; the cost is still \$25 per person, which also includes salad, strawberry shortcake, and coffee. Please mail the following form and your check, payable to *South Shore Audubon Society*, to: Diane Singer, 118 Kent Road, Valley Stream, NY 11580-3316.

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~	Chicken Marsala	
	Grilled Chicken	
***	Filet of Sole	
	Roast Beef	
	Eggplant Rollatini	

2001 –2002 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Therese Lucas, Environmental Festivals	221-8654		
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James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon (pager)			
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Mary Jane Russell, Armchair Activist	766-7397		
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Michael Sperling, Skimmer Editor	541-0805		
Jonathan Staller, Hospitality Chairperson	482-7963		

BECOME A MEMBER OF 55A5 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. Gift memberships help too; we will ask that non-local recipients be assigned to their own local chapter if you prefer.

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.

Renewing? Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS.

×*****************
NAME:
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South Shore Audubon Society P.O. Box 31 Freeport, NY 11520-0031

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