OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 4 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2002

NEXT MEETING

Tom Torma

DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2002

TIME: 8:00 p.m. (2)

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: J. Breft Bennington

TOPIC: The Geology of Long Island

This month's program begins in a location familiar to South Shore Audubon Society members — Pelham Bay in the Bronx. From the bedrock of Hunters Island, you can look across the Sound to Long Island, which was created by glaciers thousands of years ago. This program uses satellite imaging to help us discover new and interesting details about the formation and geology of the island we live on. J. Brett Bennington is an Assistant Professor of Geology at Hofstra University.

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.

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. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

15th ANNUAL WATERFOWL SURVEY

Joe Grupp

The dates of the 2002–03 Waterfowl Survey are as follows: **December 7, January 4, February 1, February 22, and March 22**. Volunteers are welcome to participate in the surveys. If you are interested, call Joe Grupp, Research Chairperson, at 481-4208. JOIN US!

ANNUAL SSAS CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY

Therese Lucas

Take a moment to circle **Saturday**, **December 21**, on your busy calendar. From 1 to 3 P.M. at Tackapausha



Museum and Preserve, children will have the opportunity to make gifts for wildlife and everyone will be treated to a live hawk

program presented by Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary. The TRS program will begin at about 2 P.M.

Refreshments will be served and volunteers are needed. The regular admission will be charged (\$2 for adults, \$1 for children ages 4 to 14, and \$0 if under 4 and accompanied by an adult).

Directions. Tackapausha Museum is located on Washington Avenue in Seaford, just north of Merrick Road. From the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway, either take Sunrise Highway east for three traffic lights and turn right on Washington, or take Merrick Road east for four traffic lights and turn left on Washington.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS FOR SALE

Twenty-five pound bags of black oil (\$12.50) and striped (\$14.50) sunflower seeds from our November 3 sale are available. Please call Paul Butkereit at 632-3905 (work).

NATURE NOTES FROM A WANDERER Duck Counting Time

Joe Grupp

I can see it coming and I know the season is changing well before the early December day when we will take to the field to begin the annual survey of waterfowl that are found on our local ponds and estuaries. Each year, we wander from pond to pond in the same sequence as when we started in 1989. We count and record, count and record, and count again if we are unsure that we have counted the waterfowl to the best of our abilities, or unsure if we missed some, or unsure if we counted some that really were not there because of their distribution or movement, or even their flying in and/or out of the ponds and waterways. We count until we are satisfied and bring the numbers home to be compiled in an organized manner, establishing a database — a record of the waterfowl populations using the ponds at the times we surveyed. The database is simply a numerical history of nature's activity in that moment of time. Two teams, one in the southwest section of the SSAS area and one along the major traffic arteries from its western to eastern boundaries, wander in a prescribed sequence, on the balmy winter days, on the colder winter days, and even in the rain, the wind, and the snow, bundled up against the weather, even glad that we are there. As I write on this November day, that time is not here yet, but it is coming and its coming can be seen.

When you spend time in the field on SSAS bird walks and on other formal surveys conducted by the SSAS Research Committee, or just on individual bird walks, the signs of the coming change of season, the coming of the populations of wintering waterfowl, become evident. The change can be seen in observations being done at 3-4 week intervals by the Research Committee at Wantagh's Mill Pond, when the number of species of just ducks on the pond begins to increase from the two or three recorded during the summer months to four in September and five in October. It can also be seen in the American Coots that populate that same pond, as one or none were found during the heart of the summer, two in late summer, and, as we enter and move through early autumn, it's four and then eight. Their number should be in the twenties, thirties, and possibly more over the winter. It can be seen

again as Hooded Mergansers (pictured) start appearing on a number of ponds during October, or when flocks of Brant are observed on SSAS bird walks in October at Jamaica Bay and in

early November at Jones Beach's West End 2, and when the leaves of the trees have turned on their colorful displays and drift down from their branches to the ground below.

As you read this, our first survey day, **December 7**, is fast approaching or possibly even past. When it comes, we will be out there as we will on the other four dates of the

winter survey season. We may be bundled up in layers of clothing preserving our body heat, usually comfortable in its warmth, even enjoying one of our very few quick stops and a warm drink on a cold winter's day, or have open jackets and hat or gloves off, getting rid of that same body heat on a warm winter's day. We will be out counting waterfowl, occasionally taking time to admire a particular species, such as a Green-winged Teal when the light enhances the beauty of the green ear patch that extends from the eye back along the side of its chestnut-colored head, or a scene such as a flock of Hooded Mergansers whose white hoods are extended, contrasting with the black of their heads, their image being reflected off of the pond's water and the lands behind them having been dusted by snow. Most of all, though, we will count and count and count, and bring home our numbers and continue to build our database as we have for the last 14 years.

P.S. If you would like to join us, dates can be found on the front page of this *Skimmer*.



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. Directions may be found at ssaudubon.org.

Nov. 24	Pelham Bay for Owls (pull over to street
	on extreme right after going through
•	Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
Dec. 1	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Dec. 8	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Dec. 15	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Dec. 22 & 29	Season's Greetings — No Walks
Jan. 5	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Jan. 12	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Jan. 19	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
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R.	ARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070
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SSAS BACKYARD BIRD SURVEY

Joe Grupp

The Research Committee is conducting a study to document the bird species found in the SSAS geographical area and to make some estimates as to their numbers. We request input from anyone that feeds and/or observes birds in their yard or neighborhood. If you would like to participate, simply record the birds that you see, and the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species. At the end of each month, please send your record to: Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson, 660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale, NY 11553 or Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com. Optional survey forms are available at SSAS events.

VISIT SSAS'S ONLINE NATURE STORE!

SSAS's Web site (www.ssaudubon.org) includes an online store run by WithoutBricks.com. Our chapter receives a portion of all purchases, so please pay our store a visit and look at some of the 6000 items.



 ★★ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ★★

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.

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Our new members since last month's Skimmer are:
Bethpage Rumi Ganguly, Russell F. Horn,
Ms. Gini Karanik
East Rockaway Ms. Marianne Pearsal
Farmingdale Catherine Delalio, Martin
Schneider
Franklin Square Anne Solomon
Freeport Martha Raimondi
Garden City Brian Kane, Mrs. Edith
Kao, Hamilton Smith
Hempstead Peggy & Marty Brown
Hicksville Nancy Grant, Ed Keegan, The
Peters Family, Dr. Elliott Utrecht
Lynbrook E. Ketelsen
Massapequa Ann Adams, Marie Jackson,
Harold McShane, John Ward
Merrick Robert & Janna Alfarone
Rockville Centre D. Gelestino
Stewart Manor Edward A. Kush
Valley Stream Sophia Gordon, Solveig Johansen,
Robert P. Meyer
Wantagh John F. Collins
<u></u>
AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201
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THANKS TO THE HALLOWEEN. BROOKSIDE. AND **BIRDSEED VOLUNTEERS**

We'd like to give recognition to the SSAS members who helped out at three of our recent special events.

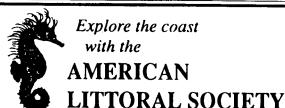
- → At the Halloween Party for children at Tackapausha: Helen Buckley, Louise Leonard, Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, George Peters, Doris Pirodsky, Chris Schmitt, Michael Sperling, and Karen Weinstein.
- → At the birdseed sale at Tackapausha: Alice Blaustein, Joan & Paul Butkereit, Dolores & Joe Grupp, Bill Hollweg, Therese Lucas, and Michael Sperling.
- → At the fall cleanup at Brookside Preserve: Betty Borowsky, Susan Brychcy, Charlie Kiefer, Therese Lucas. Wendy Murbach, George Peters, Doris Pirodsky, Laurie Raisher, Chris Schmitt, and Michael Sperling.



"NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE"

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

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ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY (Sat., Dec. 7). Join ALS members for a fun-raising party at the Ryan Visitor Center on Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, the historic reception area and control tower built for the city's first municipal airport just off Flatbush Avenue. Take a ranger-led tour of the tower. Cost: \$35 (still) includes food, drink, door prizes, an "Ugly Auction," and the infamous Don Diego Flamenco Dancers. Meet 3 P.M. for a brisk hike through the "North 40" trail; 5 P.M. for the party. Contact Don.

NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACH WALKS (Jan. 1). Honor the longstanding tradition of hiking the beaches in NY and NJ to start off the New Year. Meet at 11 A.M. at one of the following locations: Fort Tilden, Breezy Point (free champagne, cookies, and coffee); call Don. Jones Beach West End 2; call Jeff Gottlieb at (631) 423-2169. Fire Island Lighthouse (Field 5); call Steve Finn at (631) 821-2160. Sandy Hook, NJ; call ALS at (732) 291-0055.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Jan. 10-12). See thousands of waterfowl, including loons, mergansers, eiders, scoters, and goldeneye, as well as lots of seals. Cost: \$295 includes 2 nights at the luxurious Manor House (heated pool, jacuzzi), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, and star watch. Leaders include Mickey Cohen, Robert Villani, Don Riepe, Steve Finn.

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

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation

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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. 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:	-
PHONE NO.:	
E-MAIL:	
Chapter Code R15 7XC	H (South Shore Audubon Society)