

 **BIRD WALKS** 
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.

- Dec. 29 *Season's Greetings — No Walk*
- Jan. 5 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Jan. 12 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Jan. 19 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Jan. 26 Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first lot south of Southern State Parkway, south end of lot)
- Feb. 2 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Feb. 9 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
- Feb. 16 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve*
- Feb. 23 Pelham Bay for Owls (hiking shoes recommended; pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll; meet at 9 A.M.)
- Mar. 2 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Mar. 9 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Mar. 16 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve*
- Mar. 23 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Mar. 30 Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner

*Directions: From the Meadowbrook Parkway, use the Merrick Road M9 east exit. Enter the Department of Sanitation entrance immediately on right (if you're driving west on Merrick Road, make a U-turn after Central Blvd. and before the Meadowbrook Parkway). Look for signs to Levy Park and Preserve parking lot.

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 the *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 last month's *Skimmer* are:

- Bellmore Charles W. Raftery
- Hempstead Edward Bowser
- Long Beach Lindy Goodman
- Massapequa Mrs. Debbi Brown
- Massapequa Park Virginia White
- Merrick Tia Jordan, Gail Volk
- Seaford Jennifer George




VISIT SSAS'S ONLINE NATURE STORE!

South Shore Audubon'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 7000 items.



There are thousands of books about birds, animals, insects, trees, natural history, geology, astronomy, gardening, etc., typically available at a 20% discount. You can also purchase videos, CD-ROMs, software, bird and squirrel feeders, birdseed, discounted nature jewelry, bird-friendly coffee, and more in over 20 departments, including: Animals; Art & Photography; Audio, Video & CDs; Best Selling Items; Bird Baths, Clocks, etc.; Bird Books; Bird Feeders; Bird Food; Bird Houses; Bird Songs; Butterflies & Bugs; Children's Books; Clothes; Earth & Space; Environment; Field Guide Series; Gardening; Gifts & Coffee; Jewelry; Magazines/Membership; Natural History; Plants; and Recreation Guides.



*Explore the coast
with the*
**AMERICAN
LITTORAL SOCIETY**

NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACH WALKS (Jan. 1). Honor the long-standing 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.

FIRE ISLAND HIKE (Sun., Jan. 26). Join ranger Steve Finn for a brisk hike in the Otis Pike Wilderness. Meet 10 A.M. at Smith Point Ranger Station. Cost: \$10; bring lunch & binoculars. Call Steve evenings at (631) 821-2160.

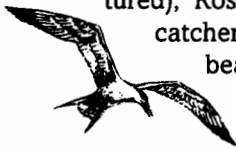
NY AQUARIUM (Sat., April 5). Meet 10 A.M. at aquarium entrance in Coney Island, Brooklyn for a 2-1/2 hour "Behind-the-Scenes" tour. See walrus, sea otter, penguins, sharks, sea turtles, beluga whales, and local & tropical fishes. Cost: \$15 (\$8 kids). Call Don.

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

OCEAN PARKWAY BIKE PATH

Once again, the NYS Department of Transportation has proposed a bicycle path through an environmentally sensitive area. The proposed path will run along the north side of Ocean Parkway from Jones Beach to Captree State Park, and will be 13.3 feet wide plus 4 feet for shoulders. South Shore Audubon Society is opposed to this project.

From the West End of Jones Beach east to Overlook Beach (owned by the Town of Babylon), several endangered and threatened species, as well as species of concern, nest. The birds that nest along this stretch of beach include Piping Plover, Least Tern, Common Tern (pictured), Roseate Tern, and American Oystercatcher. While these birds nest on the open beach, the bike path on the opposite side of Ocean Parkway would still pose a threat. Bicyclists will be able to stop anywhere along the path, cross the highway, and intrude upon the nesting areas of these birds.



This is a real possibility; in fact, it is happening already! At three locations along Ocean Parkway, people are crossing the highway through the dunes into restricted areas where these birds nest. This occurs at Gilgo State Park, Gilgo Town Beach, and the east end of Jones Beach. At Gilgo State, boaters cross the highway from the bay and surfers are dropped off from vehicles. In either case, these individuals ignore access paths designed to keep people away from nesting areas and take the shortest way to the beach.

These shortcuts often damage fragile dunes. They also bring these people dangerously close to nesting birds. People also cross the highway from the cottages at Gilgo Town. Last year, two Piping Plover nests and exclosures were vandalized, and four valuable eggs were destroyed at this location. The problems at the east end of Jones Beach are mostly from people being dropped off by vehicles, but also from people crossing the highway from boats anchored in Zach's Bay.

In all these cases, law enforcement has been unable and/or unwilling to stop these people from intruding into the restricted areas. If they cannot stop this problem in three small areas, how will they be able to stop this problem along a 20-mile stretch of bike path and highway? This bicycle path project requires a thorough Environmental Impact Study, along with a realistic, workable plan that will prevent individuals from crossing the highway and intruding on restricted endangered and threatened species' nesting areas.

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RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

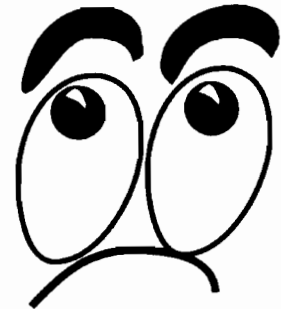
Joe Grupp

Phase three of the Research Committee's expanded data-gathering research project involves the gathering of data in a formal manner at specific locations within prescribed time limits. Since April, four locations have been surveyed consistently at no greater than four-week intervals: Hall's Pond in West Hempstead (surveyed by Mike Higgiston), Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve in Merrick (by Doreen and Jim Remsen), Mill Pond in Wantagh (by Doreen and Jim Remsen, Ann Marie Pozzini, my wife Dolores, and me), and the section of Massapequa Preserve between Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway (surveyed by me).

Mill Pond was formally surveyed for the first time on April 13. Eleven surveys have been completed as of this writing. Here's a summation of some of the data gathered at Mill Pond:

- 4/13: 25 species observed
- 5/4: 40 species observed
- 5/25: 32 species observed
- 6/15: 31 species observed
- 7/6: 24 species observed
- 8/2: 25 species observed
- 8/24: 29 species observed
- 9/14: 36 species observed
- 10/5: 31 species observed
- 10/27: 26 species observed
- 11/23: 22 species observed

Total number of species seen at least one time: 91



In the above, the term *species* includes domestics and birds whose exact species could not be determined (such as yellowlegs). This research is ongoing and additional locations will be added as time progresses.

SSAS BIRD WALK DRIVER NEEDED

SSAS's best-known nondriving birder, Stephen Janko of East Rockaway, is in need of a new source of Sunday morning transportation due to the imminent relocation of his chauffeur, SSAS's Arthur Ziegler. If you can help, please call 596-0194 or e-mail sjanko@optonline.net.

- Seed — Feeders
- Houses — Baths
- Books — Gifts

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AUDUBON'S REVISED WATCHLIST

Editor's note: The following comes from an October 23 NAS press release and www.audubon.org/bird/watchlist.

Despite the exciting recovery of endangered birds like the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, more than one-quarter of America's birds are in trouble or decline. In a report released today, entitled "WatchList 2002," Audubon identifies 201 species that show either significantly decreasing numbers or restricted range, or are under other threats.

"Audubon WatchList 2002 is a warning system that shows us where to focus our attention and resources if we want to help the survival of a vast number of bird species," says Frank Gill, Audubon's chief ornithologist and senior vice president for science. "It is also a powerful tool that policy makers, businesses, and the general public can use now to take positive conservation action."

Based on a stoplight model, WatchList places selected bird species in green, yellow, or red categories, depending on the danger they face. WatchList serves to underscore some disturbing trends; since 1970, many songbird species have declined by as much as 50 percent or more. The California Thrasher and the southeast's Painted Bunting both show declines in excess of 50 percent, while the Cerulean Warbler of the eastern U.S. has declined by more than 70 percent and the Henslow's Sparrow from the Midwest has dangerously dropped by 80 percent.

"WatchList is preventative medicine," continued Gill. "It will be used first and foremost to enlist federal, state, and local governments to focus their resources towards protecting these birds before they become endangered or threatened — when they would demand more serious action and major taxpayer support to recover."

Audubon WatchList is a unique project that filters information on bird populations compiled by field scientists in the U.S. and overseas. The final product recognizes three levels of concern:

RED [identified with an asterisk (*) in the lists below]: Species in this category of global conservation concern are declining rapidly, have very small populations or limited ranges, and face major conservation threats. Audubon identifies several red-listed species as probable candidates for inclusion on the Federal Endangered or Threatened Species Lists.

YELLOW: This category includes the majority of species identified. Yellow-list birds are declining, but at slower rates than those in the red category. These typically are birds of national conservation concern, and those that can be saved most cost-effectively.

GREEN: Species in this category are not declining, have unknown trends, or have very large population sizes. These species are not included on the Audubon WatchList.

For the first time in 2002, the Audubon WatchList includes birds of Hawaii and Puerto Rico, in addition to the birds of mainland North America.

"The reasons for identifying species on the WatchList is not entirely altruistic," concluded Gill. "Like the proverbial canary in the coal mine, birds are primary indicators of environmental health, and what hurts birds also hurts the people who share the same space. We should in no way take WatchList birds for granted; we should rather listen to what their declines are telling us about the ecosystems we both inhabit."

Audubon's WatchList Species by Family

Seabirds: *Ashy Storm-Petrel, *Bermuda Petrel, *Black-capped Petrel, *Black-footed Albatross, *Black-vented Shearwater, *Craveri's Murrelet, *Hawaiian Petrel, *Kittlitz's Murrelet, *Marbled Murrelet, *Newell's Shearwater, *Pink-footed Shearwater, *Red-faced Cormorant, *Red-legged Kittiwake, *Short-tailed Albatross, *Tristram's Storm-Petrel, *Xantus's Murrelet, Black Storm-Petrel, Buller's Shearwater, Laysan Albatross, Least Storm-Petrel, Whiskered Auklet

Hérons, Egrets, and Allies: Reddish Egret

Waterfowl: *Emperor Goose, *Hawaiian Duck, *Hawaiian Goose, *Laysan Duck, *Spectacled Eider, *Steller's Eider, *West Indian Whistling-Duck, *Yellow-billed Loon, American Black Duck, Brant (pictured), Mottled Duck, Trumpeter Swan



Birds of Prey: *California Condor, *Hawaiian Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Swainson's Hawk

Gallinaceous Birds: *Greater Prairie-Chicken, *Gunnison Sage-Grouse, *Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Blue Grouse, Greater Sage-Grouse, Montezuma Quail, Mountain Quail

Rails: *Black Rail, *Caribbean Coot, *Hawaiian Coot, Yellow Rail

Cranes: *Whooping Crane

Shorebirds: *Bristle-thighed Curlew, *Buff-breasted Sandpiper, *Elegant Tern, *Eskimo Curlew, *Heermann's Gull, *Long-billed Curlew, *Mountain Plover, *Piping Plover, *Snowy Plover, American Golden-Plover, American Oystercatcher, American Woodcock, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Pacific Golden-Plover, Purple Sandpiper, Red Knot, Rock Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Surf-bird, Whimbrel, Wilson's Phalarope, Wilson's Plover, Yellow-footed Gull

Pigeons and Doves: *Plain Pigeon, Band-tailed Pigeon, White-crowned Pigeon

Parrots: *Green Parakeet, *Puerto Rican Parrot, *Red-crowned Parrot, *Thick-billed Parrot

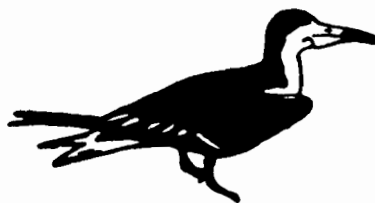
Owls and Nightjars: *Puerto Rican Nightjar, *Spotted Owl, Antillean Nighthawk, Elf Owl, Flammulated Owl, Short-eared Owl, Whiskered Screech-Owl

Swifts and Hummingbirds: Allen's Hummingbird, Black Swift, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Lucifer Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, White-throated Swift

Woodpeckers: *Arizona Woodpecker, *Ivory-billed Woodpecker, *Nuttall's Woodpecker, *Red-cockaded

South Shore Audubon Society
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Freeport, NY 11520-0031

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Americans Committed to Conservation



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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.



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