

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 8 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAY-AUGUST 2004

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Enid Klein

DATE: Tuesday, May 11, 2004

TIME: 7:30 p.m. ②

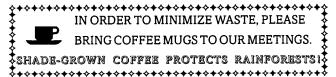
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

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

NARRATOR: Joanne Woodward

TOPIC: Pale Male

For our last general monthly meeting till September, SSAS will screen the documentary film *Pale Male*, which chronicles the exploits of the Red-tailed Hawk that, since 1991, has successfully nested above the window of a Fifth Avenue apartment facing Central Park. After our coffee break, stay for 54 minutes of not only excellent footage of Pale Male, his mates, and their offspring, but also of the variety of New York birders who became obsessed with them.



#### **BROOKSIDE CLEANUP REMINDER**

On **Sunday, May 2,** beginning at 1 P.M., SSAS will have its annual spring cleanup at Brookside Preserve, rain or shine. Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County and managed (and rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. With help from a state grant, we published a trail guide, educational freshwater wetland guide, and video; we continue to add plantings for wildlife. The guides are at ssaudubon.org.

The Preserve is located on the Freeport-Baldwin border, along Milburn Creek; park at the main entrance on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway (turn north at the traffic light that's just east of Freeport High School). Please bring gloves, rakes, bags, and/or friends of all ages.

#### **SSAS SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL BIRDATHON!**

James Remsen, Jr.

This year, SSAS will conduct its seventeenth annual Birdathon! SSAS raises funds through the Birdathon by having members get cash pledges for each species of bird identified during a 24-hour period in May, when the spring migration is at its height. Due to the decision by National Audubon to sharply decrease the amount of financial support given to chapters, the Birdathon is now one of our major sources of income. Many of you have been very generous with your time and pledges in recent years; we hope you will continue and increase your gift of either time or pledges this year.

Mark the dates on your calendar if you haven't already — Friday, May 7 from 5:00 P.M. until Saturday, May 8 at 5:00 P.M. — and join one of our intrepid leaders (or go it alone, in which case you choose the turf). Birding expertise is not necessary and your teammates will point out the birds for you. Rain dates are one week later at the same times.

Please note: In the event of questionable weather, I will decide whether or not to cancel the Birdathon by 3 P.M. on Friday, May 7. If you have any uncertainty about whether it will be postponed, please call me by 3 o'clock on May 7. This may save unnecessary trips. Please contact me at (631) 957-0949.

We need Birdathon prizes! As we have done in the past, we wish to make everyone who brings in at least one pledge (sponsoring yourself counts) eligible for a prize drawing to be held at our annual dinner (attendance not required). However, as of now we have very few prizes. If you would like to donate a prize, please contact Doreen Remsen or me. What we would really like to do is give some kind of reward to everyone who takes part, but we will need suggestions or donations to do this. Please see us at meetings or bird walks if you can help!

Our schedule of starting places and leaders is as follows: Friday, May 7. Meet Elliott Kutner's team at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore (leaders TBA); Paul

Butkereit at Jones Beach's Coast Guard Station (5:00 P.M.); or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot, 5:00 P.M.).

Saturday, May 8. Meet Elliott Kutner at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8 A.M.; Paul Butkereit at the Ryan Building behind Mercy Hospital at 6:30 A.M.; or Jim and Doreen Remsen at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore at 5:45 A.M. Other meeting places on Saturday for the Remsen/Grupp team will be: Muttontown Preserve (most likely the gate on Route 106) at 8 A.M., Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area at approximately 11 A.M., and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at approximately 1:15 P.M. Please try to notify me or Doreen before the Birdathon if you plan to go with one of these groups so they will know how many people to expect. Meeting times at Oceanside and Jamaica Bay for my team are estimates, because we can be as much as 15 minutes earlier or 30 minutes later, depending on traffic conditions.

For interested parties, we're also planning an informal post-Birdathon dinner on Saturday for all who would like to join (at a buffet or similar restaurant). This will be on a pay-as-you-go basis.

If you aren't going with a team, why not try your own Birdathon? Do a variation on the usual theme of seeing as many species as you can during the count period. Use your imagination. Limit yourself to your backyard, a favorite park or preserve, or even a "couch potato" Birdathon. (For this one, you count as many bird species as you can on television during the 24 hours. Yes, people have really done it, but we suggest you make it clear to your sponsors if you decide to give it a try!)

Sponsors are the heart of the Birdathon. These are people who agree to give you 25¢, \$1, or any amount for each species you see (they may also give you a flat pledge not based on number of species). Ask anyone you know, and don't forget yourself!

Note on Submitting Pledges. Pledges submitted to me must be received (not mailed) by June 2. After then, pledges must be submitted to Doreen Remsen, as I will be away beginning June 4 and will not be at the annual dinner on June 4. If you want pledge forms, I can supply them. Let's make our 2004 Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

Birdathon Chairpersons: James Remsen, Jr., 8 Venetian Blvd., Lindenhurst NY 11757; Doreen Remsen, 3264 Park Avenue, Oceanside NY 11572.

Last Year's List (150 species seen by one or more teams)
Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned
Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great
Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned
Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Canada Goose, Brant, Mute Swan,
Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Bluewinged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Greater
Scaup, Lesser Scaup, King Eider, Common Merganser, Redbreasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck,

Osprey, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Ring-necked Pheasant, Clapper Rail, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Piping Plover, Killdeer, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Laughing Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Ringbilled Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Least Tern, Black Skimmer,

Rock Dove (now called Rock Pigeon), Mourning Dove, Blackbilled Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (pictured), Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker,

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling,

White-eyed Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Goldenwinged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Wormeating Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler,

Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Boat-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.



#### ARTHUR C. SNOW

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## NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER My Elusive Bird

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Joe Grupp

A bright blue-white point of light was suspended fairly high above the horizon in the night sky as we, my wife and I, carried our bags into a motel in Lewes, Delaware. I later confirmed my hunch that the light came from the planet Venus. It had caught my attention frequently, as we drove the 240-plus miles from home. Having the urge, over the previous few days, to explore a natural area we had never explored before, we squeezed this evening and the following day out of the rest of life to explore Delaware's Cape Henlopen State Park. Cape Henlopen is located across the Delaware Bay from Cape May, New Jersey. They stand as sentinels, one on either side of where the water of Delaware Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Cape Henlopen is a northward swoop of sand and sand dune that extends into Delaware Bay. As a state park it offers many things, including being a popular beach in season. In the usual confusion of not having a feel for a place we had never been to before, we stopped first at the park's Seaside Nature Center, which also acts as a visitors' center of sorts. After a short talk with a staff member, we had more information about the park's features than we could possibly cover in a day and the knowledge of a bird that is common there, the Brown-headed Nuthatch.

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is a fairly easy-to-find bird in the open pine woodlands of the southeastern United States. We have explored in its range and habitat over the years, but never for the sole purpose of finding the bird. Each time we completed our exploration, we were always left thinking that it would have been nice to have seen it. We entered the nature center focused on one goal, to explore a park we had never been to before. We left with a second goal, to find a Brown-headed Nuthatch.

Returning to the car, I paused to observe the activity on and around the center's feeder, which I just happened to park in line with and fairly close to. All of a sudden, a small bird shot from high in a surrounding tree down to a crossbar that held two feeders. I impulsively shouted to my wife: "That may be the bird!" and quickly reached for the binoculars. Sure enough, the bird that was so elusive to us for years was now dead center in the field of view of my binoculars, elusive no longer.

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is similar to the White-breasted Nuthatch common to our home area. The most obvious difference is the dull brown cap of the Brown-headed compared to the black cap of the White-breasted. It is an easy characteristic to see in good light and at the appropriate angle at which the bird is being viewed. At times, when our bird moved, the color of the cap was not immediately evident or was hidden. Closer scrutiny then revealed that its cap came down to the eye and was the distinguishing characteristic for identification, as the cap of the White-breasted (pictured) stops well above the eye. When the bird turned so its back was towards us,

a pale dull-white spot which blended into the brown of the cap and blue-gray of the back was evident on the nape (back of the neck). That characteristic is absent in the White-breasted. I had picked up these characteristics because the bird we were observing was seldom still, as it moved from feeder to crossbar and back, or bent to pick a seed from the

feeder or to hammer a seed open on the crossbar. The chance occurrence of seeing that bird was a great way to start our exploration of the park, even if my concept of a great way might differ from that of others.

Sand dunes roll out before the small parking area at the terminus of the road leading to the point of land jutting into the mingling waters of bay and ocean. The distance from the parking area to the point is fairly long, but we were not permitted to walk there because it was closed so that Piping Plovers, Least Terns, Oystercatchers, and other birds could nest without our interference. The sandy trail to the bay and the one to the ocean were open. We walked both while a pair of Osprey, one with a fish held in its talons, circled in the air above, sometimes close together, sometimes farther apart, all a part of the mating ritual I'm pretty sure.

Exploring further, we stopped and climbed to an observation platform built on a high dune above an old W.W.II military bunker. The platform was occupied by three members of the Cape Henlopen Hawkwatch, who we chatted with. They were observing and recording the spring migration of raptors passing the cape. None passed while we talked. We moved on, stopping at an old military observation tower, and climbed its 115 steps for the view of the cape and all that surrounds it. We noticed the everpresent Turkey Vultures, which at times flew low, rocking side to side, wings held in a sharp dihedral, and at other times flew high, in small groups, wings outstretched, circling effortlessly on a rising air column. Our day passed too quickly as we explored other areas by car and on foot.

Following a trail that is a little more than a mile long in open pine woodland, we attempted to find the Brownheaded Nuthatch again. There the bird was as elusive to us as it ever was before and we did not see one. We left satisfied, however, by the one we did see earlier, even though it was at a feeder.

#### TO FAHNESTOCK OR NOT?

In the March issue of the Skimmer, we announced that Mary Jane Russell had made arrangements for us to spend another rustic fall-foliage weekend at Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park (part of an Audubon-designated Important Bird Area), October 9 & 10. The cost of this outing would be \$60 for SSAS members and \$65 for nonmembers. The park and its Taconic Outdoor Education Center (where we'd stay) are located off the Taconic Parkway in the highlands of Putnam County, about 90 minutes from Long Island. Three meals prepared by students of the Culinary Institute of America would be provided for all registrants (lunch and dinner on Saturday, breakfast on Sunday). We would be sleeping in heated and plumbing-equipped bunkhouses containing three rooms, with up to five single beds per room, and only our group would be in the bunkhouses.

For this trip to occur, we must have 35 hardy participants registered before summer. A \$10 deposit, payable to South Shore Audubon Society, will hold your reservation. Please call Mary Jane at 766-7397 now if you're interested.

#### **★★ 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 7:30-9:30 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 last month's Skimmer are:

... plus everyone on the overdue/missing monthly list from National Audubon Society (we'll officially welcome you next time).



Elliatt Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains. Walks in NYS Parks will resume in autumn. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667. Directions and summaries may be found at ssaudubon.org.

Apr. 25	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
May 2	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
May 9	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 16	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
May 23	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge* ← ← ← ←
May 30	Memorial Day Weekend — No Walk*
June 6	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Aug. 8	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Aug. 15	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
Aug. 22	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Aug. 29	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Sep. 5	Labor Day Weekend — No Walk
Sep. 12 & 19	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Sep. 26	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)

\*Please note: In last month's Skimmer, we inadvertently changed the weekend that Memorial Day is celebrated. Sorry about that; the schedule above is correct.

**^** 



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John Zarudsky

The Town of Hempstead's Department of Conservation and Waterways needs your help in insuring the protection and survival of Piping Plovers, Least and Common Terns, and Black Skimmers that nest between Point Lookout and Atlantic Beach. In New York State, Piping Plover is listed as endangered, Least Tern and Common Tern as threatened, and Black Skimmer as a species of special concern. The Piping Plover is a threatened species nationwide.

Audubon volunteers will help prevent disturbances to nesting areas, will record the presence of plover chicks and any incidents of predation, and can give beachgoers educational literature pertaining to Piping Plovers and terns. Help is particularly needed on evenings, weekends, and holidays from May through August. If you're interested and are able to volunteer regularly, please contact John Zarudsky, Conservation Biologist (and active SSAS member), at 897-4126 (work) or 486-5272 (home).

#### **WEED WATCHERS WANTED**

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from a message that was forwarded to me by SSAS member Judy Hoyer. For further info, contact Stacey Goldyn at (631) 367-3384, ext. 131 or e-mail sgoldyn@tnc.org.

Established in 2002, the Long Island Weed Watchers program is a volunteer weed-management initiative sponsored by the Long Island Weed Management Area (LIWMA). Weed Watchers volunteers are trained and supported to identify, document, report, manage, and monitor new populations of invasive plants, also known as weeds. The purpose of Weed Watchers is to prevent new invasive plant populations from becoming established infestations that would adversely impact biodiversity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, scenic qualities, and crop production in Long Island's natural areas, parks, preserves, refuges, and farmland.

Weed Watchers volunteers are supervised by The Nature Conservancy in collaboration with a team of representatives from LIWMA. On project sites, the landowner or other land manager may supervise the volunteers. A small, specially trained core team of Weed Watchers volunteers works on a weekly basis to help direct and facilitate the activities of individuals and groups of volunteers engaged in identifying and managing weeds at high-priority sites on a periodic or occasional basis.

Weed Watchers volunteers are trained and supported to accomplish the following tasks:

- \* Identify and locate new, recent, and newly expanding populations of invasive plants, focusing on a short list of troublesome species in a given area.
- \* Document and record observations, using the methodology and forms provided.
  - \* Report observations.
- \* Assist in the planning and implementation of management responses.
- \* Participate in weed management activities, such as controlling weeds by cutting or pulling.
- \* Monitor the results of weed management efforts.

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

# SSAS THANKS ITS HICKS VOLUNTEERS

SSAS thanks the members who greeted the public at our table at the Hicks Nurseries' Spring Flower & Garden Show on March 20 & 21: Alice Blaustein, Betty Borowsky, Enid Klein, Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, Chris Schmitt, and Michael Sperling.

#### **SSAS THANKS ITS DONORS!**

First, we'd like to thank Cotten Coverage Insurance Agency, Inc., for their generous donation to our chapter.

Next, we'd like to thank all of the members who have responded to the fund-raising letter we mailed to you in March (the first one we've sent in two years). The contributions are still coming in, so here's a preliminary list:

Mildred E. Ackerley Anonymous (27) Bruce J. Armour Dr. & Mrs. Jerrold Axinn Gloria Berkowitz Elaine T. Bermas Jean Carvel Brennan Jim & Gail Brown Mr. & Mrs. Peter Bruno Joan M. Cihanek Beatrice A. Combs Dorothy J. Donnally Henry Drewitz John & Trisha Duffy Edward & Jo-Ann Esrick Family Seymour Faust Ida & Ira Feldman Arlene Ferrante Mr. & Mrs. Leo Freed

Mark F. & Koyla Braun Greiner

William F. Hanley Charles Hersh Linda J. Ilan Marion Kilfoyle Mr. & Mrs. T. A. Kimmons Geraldine Luisi John D. & Jane E. Moore Carl J. Muller Nancy A. Ohland Walter J. Peters Doris Pirodsky Susan E. Pratt John Romanchek Charles Rowan Gene Sanders Norman Seastedt Mr. & Mrs. George Warrin Maxwell Wheat, Jr. Camilla C. Williams Clem Wingert Dorothy J. Zondag



Walter Grinspan

Explore the coast with the

## AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

ASSATEAGUE WEEKEND (May 20–23). Hike Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge trails and Assateague National Seashore beaches during peak spring bird migration. See nesting eagles & osprey, migrating shorebirds & herons, butterflies, Sika and white-tailed deer, river otter, red fox, black rat snake, Chincoteague ponies. Cost: \$325 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn (heated pool, jacuzzi), marsh boat tour, bus tour of back dune areas, guided hikes, evening lectures, and Saturday night seafood buffet. Leaders: Mickey Cohen & Don Riepe.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISES (May 29 and June 12). Leave Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn on 96' boat "Dorothy B VIII" at 5:30 p.m. for a three-hour tour of backwater marshes. Learn about the history and ecology of Jamaica Bay during peak nesting time. Cost: \$35 includes wine, cheese, snacks, guides.

HORSESHOE CRAB WALKS (June 2 and 16, 7:30 p.m.). Join Don Riepe at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to witness the annual mating ritual of the horseshoe crabs. Call Don to register.

MONTAUK SUMMER WEEKEND (June 4-6). Spend two nights at Manor House; hike "Walking Dunes," Montauk Bluffs, Accobonac Harbor, Montauk Beach & Lighthouse.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 318-9344, donriepe@aol.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alsnyc.org.

#### **VACATIONING IN TRINIDAD**

Jonathan Staller

Trinidad is the southernmost of the islands in the Caribbean archipelago and lies seven miles off the coast of Venezuela. Unlike all the other Caribbean islands, Trinidad was attached to Venezuela 11,000 years ago; the other islands were made from ancient volcanoes and their geology is different. Trinidad has an unrivaled diversity of flora and fauna. It is home to 108 species of mammals, 80 species of reptiles and amphibians, 2300 varieties of flowering trees and shrubs, 617 species of butterflies, and 460 species of birds, including 15 different hummingbirds. The island includes four mountain ranges, four major rivers, mangrove swamps, tropical savannas, and many streams, ponds, and small rivers. Did I mention that the island is only the size of Rhode Island?

My wife and I arrived in Trinidad on February 20. Her family lives there, in San Fernando, and across the street grow acres and acres of sugarcane. Around the corner is one of the largest sugar manufacturing plants in the world, where the cane is processed into sugar. My brother-inlaw, Terry, worked there for many years and gave us a tour. The rest of the day we relaxed at home and were greeted by family members.

On the second day, Terry drove us to Devil's Woodyard, which is an active mud volcano. The route there is very scenic, featuring a road on the edge of steep-sided green hills. We saw Greater Ani, Blue Dacnis, Orange-winged Parrots, a Gray-headed Kite, Blue-and-white Swallows, a Common Black-Hawk, and Crested Oropendolas flying to and from their nests. The nests resemble those of Baltimore Orioles, but these are two to three feet long. The Woodyard is a circle of dry earth, with a few bubbling mounds of mud. The volcano erupted in 1997, caking most of the nearby village, and you never know when it will happen again. On the way back home, we saw Southern Lapwing, Black Vulture, and Turkey Vulture. We drove past the ocean and saw Brown Pelican, Large-billed Terns, and a Magnificent Frigatebird.

Day three actually started on the night of day two. We were in Trinidad during a special time called Carnival. Everything closes down as the islanders and thousands of tourists join in spectacular street parties. It's a national holiday and is highly organized. The main days of Carnival are the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, although the season starts just after Christmas. The official start, called Jour Ouvert (Joovay), is Sunday night and early Monday morning. My wife and I participated. Joovay jump-up starts around 2 A.M. The costumes are less elaborate than the colorful masquerades of Monday and Tuesday. We marched down the streets, smeared with green, yellow, and black paint all over our bodies. Others were covered in mud. Music was played on large trucks. Thousands and thousands of people covered the streets. I'd never experienced anything like this in my life. It makes our Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade look like any average day of the week. It ended around 11 A.M. Later on, we met up with our family and went to Manzanilla Beach to rest up and take in the sun.

On day four we took a break from all the craziness and partying that was going on and just stayed home. I birdwatched in the yard, where I saw Great Kiskadee, Bluegray Tanagers, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Palm Tanager, Shiny Cowbird, Carib Grackle, Bare-eyed Thrush, Tropical Mockingbird, and Yellow Orioles.

Day five was Ash Wednesday and is known as Cool Down, the day after Carnival. Trinidadians relax by the beaches to escape from the heat and all the partying that took place the last four days. So, as they cooled down, I cooled up and took the family to Asa Wright Nature Centre. Here the birds were having their own Carnival, flying from tree to tree and flower to flower. Wow!! Did I say wow? There's no other way to describe this place. If a rainbow could fly, it would go to Asa Wright. We saw Purple and Green Honeycreepers, Chestnut Woodpecker, Redbreasted Blackbird, White-necked Jacobin, Silver-beaked Tanager, Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Cocoa Thrush, Gray Hawk, Golden-headed Manakin, Black-throated Mango, Collared Trogon, Bearded Bellbird, and a Common Potoo, just to name a few. A potoo is a nocturnal bird like an owl. It sits in a tree, blended with the branches. If it wasn't for our guide, we wouldn't have seen it. We only stayed there for five hours. On the way home, we drove through grasslands and saw Sooty Grassquit, Saffron Finch, and a Yellow Warbler. Flying above was a Savanna Hawk. We had dinner in the capital city, Port-of-Spain, had a nightcap by the water, and saw a Nacunda Nighthawk.

On day six, our family went to Maracus Bay Beach. On the way home, we stopped by Mount St. Benedict. Located 795 feet above sea level is a monastery with an excellent view of the Caroni Plains and the Piarco Savannah.

Day seven was another day of rest. I asked Terry to take me to a nearby pond, where I saw Yellow-hooded Black-bird, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Neotropic (Olivaceous)
Cormorants, Pied Water-Tyrant, and White-headed Marsh-Tyrant. An Osprey (pictured) flew overhead. That night we talked under the clear skies, gazing at the stars above. A

Barn Owl flew right over us.

On day eight we packed our bags and went back to New York. I recommend that everyone travel to Trinidad as your next trip. This was my second time there. I've seen 101 species of birds so far, but to see all 460, I know "I'll be back."

#### **CENTRAL PARK TRIP REMINDER**

Ann Marie Pozzini

On **Saturday, May 1**, SSAS will be in Central Park for our fifth annual early May bird walk. In previous years, we've tallied up to 70 species in less than three hours.

The cost is \$5 for members and \$6 for nonmembers. Please send your check payable to South Shore Audubon Society, along with your e-mail address and phone number, to: Joanne DelPrete, 20 Ceil Pl., Bethpage, NY 11714. Registration is required prior to April 28. If you meet us on the train or in the park and have not previously registered, your cost will be \$7 if you're a member and \$8 if not. Per the SSAS Field Trip Guidelines published in the March Skimmer, if you find that you cannot make the trip, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance to have your fee refunded. However, if the trip is canceled by the leaders or due to weather, all fees will be refunded.

Joanne prefers to be reached by e-mail (jdp4 @erols.com); please put "Central Park" in the subject line so the message isn't deleted. If you're not online yet, you can call her at 433-0739.

For train schedule information, please contact the Long Island Rail Road at (516) 822-5477 or http://lirr42.mta.info/index.asp; a group of us will be in one of the front cars of the Babylon line train that is scheduled to depart from Massapequa at 7:28 and arrive in Penn Station at 8:25. A \$4 MetroCard is required for the subway. This can be purchased along with your train ticket at your local train station. We will meet in Penn at 8:30 (in front of the LIRR's waiting area) and at Belvedere Castle in the park at 9:30 (entering the park at W. 77th St. to look for warblers in the first few trees). Bring lunch and spend the day in the park, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. We look forward to seeing you there!

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Michael Sperling

Once again, it's time for your editor to thank everyone who contributed articles and info to this year's eight issues, made trips to F&B Printers in Island Park (Ruth Aptacker, Bill Eichholz, Christine & Brendan Kelly, Doreen Remsen a bunch of times, Dolores Rogers, and Chris Schmitt), brought Skimmers to the Freeport Post Office (George Peters), printed the labels (Wendy Murbach), and stuck labels on Skimmers (Alice Blaustein, Therese Lucas, Wendy, Laurie Raisher, and Chris). Thanks!

I'd also like to thank the Association for the Help of Retarded Children for stuffing and labeling our fund-raiser letter's envelopes, and particularly Marianne Peters for arranging to have AHRC do this (for free).

#### **NOMINATIONS FOR 2004-2005 OFFICERS**

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 11, officers will be elected for our next fiscal year, and two directors will be elected to three-year terms. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee, chaired by Jim Remsen, has recommended the following candidates:

President — George Peters
Vice Presidents — Therese Lucas & Wendy Murbach
Treasurer — Laurie Raisher
Recording Secretary — Christine Schmitt
Corresponding Secretary — Alice Blaustein
Director (to June 2007) — Kathy Asmus
Director (to June 2007) — Ralph Matragrano

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An enjoyable evening awaits everyone at our 33rd annual dinner, which will be held at Pompei Restaurant and Catering in West Hempstead on Tuesday, June, starting with cocktails (open bar) and an nour of hot hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m. Smoking will be prohibited, wine and soda will be unlimited, and once again we're planning a raffle/auction. Pompei is located at 401 Hempstead Ave. Take Southern State Parkway Exit 17 north about 1-1/2 miles. Please join your fellow South Shore members and bring your friends.

Advance registration is required; the cost is \$27 per person (\$22 for ages 18 and under), which also includes salad, cake, and coffee. Please mail the following form and your check, payable to *South Shore Audubon Society*, to: Shirley Kutner, 461 Dunster Ct., West Hempstead, NY 11552-2805. Any questions? Call Diane Singer at 561-6118 or Shirley at 486-7667.

×*************************************
NAME:
ADDRESS:
AMOUNT OF CHECK:
NUMBER OF PEOPLE:
NUMBER OF EACH MENU CHOICE:
Chicken Marsala
Grilled Chicken
Filet of Sole
Roast Beef
Eggplant Rollatini

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



DATED MATERIAL



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## 2003–2004 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

George Peters, President 868-5480
Therese Lucas, co-VP & Envtl. Festivals 631-225-6377
Wendy Murbach, co-Vice Pres. & Membership 546-6303
Laurie Luxner Raisher, Treasurer
Christine Schmitt, Recording Secy. & Educ 887-7713
Alice Blaustein, Corresponding Secretary 221-1870
Doreen Remsen, Director (6/06) & Birdathon 764-5168
Michael Sperling, Dir. (6/06) & Skimmer Editor 541-0805
Lou Paolillo, Director (6/05)
Ann Marie Pozzini, Dir. (6/05) & Special Trips 579-3353
Enid Klein, Director (6/04) & Programs 561-0004
Betty Borowsky, Conservation Education 764-3596
Joan Butkereit, Conservation Legislation 593-4554
Paul Butkereit, Wild Bird Feed Savings Day 593-4554
Anne-Marie Conn, Electronic Communications 671-7685
Michele DeCaprio, Youth Representative 707-7698
Joseph Grupp, Research 481-4208
Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve 546-8841
Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips
Annie F. McIntyre, Educational Media 379-2206
James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon 631-957-0949
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming 599-1224
Mary Jane Russell, Armchair Activist 766-7397
Marcia Specht, Publicity 694-8229
Jonathan Staller, Hospitality 482-7963

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

Option 1. You can join SSAS for a year by sending \$15 payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** using the form below. Our address is P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

Option 2. To join NAS and your all-volunteer local chapter, 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 \$0 unless you join through us). Mail the form below and your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to SSAS at the address above. The special rate for the first year is \$20 per household; \$15 for students and seniors.

Renewing? Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS (we now get \$0 for all NAS renewals).

Donations to SSAS are always welcome!

NAME:		
ADDRESS:		
PHONE NO.:		
E-MAIL:		
Chapter Code R15 7XCH (South Shore Audubon Society)		