







## CONSERVATION EDUCATION REPORT Our Scholarship Program for Disadvantaged Youngsters

Betty Borowsky

This, our *eighth* (I can't believe it) *year*, saw eleven youngsters from Freeport attend a week of summer day camp at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay.

To inform new South Shore Audubon Society members: Each summer we provide free transportation and tuition for children from economically disadvantaged families in our area to attend this program.

We want to reach bright, interested children who may not get to visit museums and zoos because their parents or guardians do not have the money or time to take them. Their families might not even be aware that these resources exist for their children. Parents may be new immigrants; they may not understand English; they may be unaware of the importance of environmental education; they may be so poor they have no fixed residence or even telephone; they may move from place to place, or from relative to relative.

As an organization dedicated to environmental and conservation education, we realized that adults either already support true environmental preservation and conservation or, although they might profess to support these things, they think a golf course is a prime example of an outdoors environment. In short — they just don't get it. We realized that true and deep appreciation and enjoyment of our natural environment seem to develop in most of us when we are children, and then only if we've been exposed to it when young. So we resolved to offer this opportunity to children who would not otherwise have it.

I believe these children live in a different world than middle-class children. It's not necessarily that they lack material things, like cell phones and televisions (actually they generally *have* these things); it's that they are in a state of insecurity a great deal of the time. In the thirties, people were so poor that many families used old newspapers for toilet paper. But if you asked them, they would say "Yeah, we were poor, but I didn't *know* it. I had a great childhood." Families remained as a unit; they tended to stay in the same neighborhood. Their lives were more stable.

It's different for many of the kids that we deal with. They're not only poor, but they live in a constant state of tension. One little boy this year told me that his family had been evicted from their home for nonpayment and they were moving into another family's house down the block, where there was little room for more tenants.

Another example: This year we were especially excited by a letter we received from one youngster that was accompanied by a drawing (fairly accurate too!) of a Downy Woodpecker. His teacher wrote a cover letter saying that this child just loved birds, talking about them all the time, making them the topic for essays, and so forth.

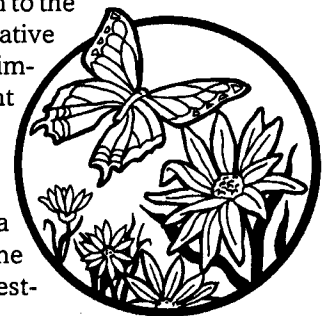
Just the kid we want to reach! We had his application papers; we had sent his family several follow-up reminder letters; everything was in order. But when I called to remind his family a few days before the camp was scheduled to begin, they told me he wouldn't be able to attend. Why? He was in Peru!

As always, a great deal of effort went into recruiting our children. It has been our policy to rotate the program amongst the school districts in our catchment area to make this opportunity available to as many children as possible. That means that each year we start from the beginning! First we approach the superintendent of the selected school district to obtain permission to conduct the program in that district for that year. I should say that, in the end, we've never been turned down. We ask that the administrator select a contact person at each school that I can work with during the recruitment process, so we all don't duplicate our activities. This year permission came from Mike Singleton, at the time Interim Assistant Executive Director for Operations. Ultimately, we worked closely with three people at three different schools. These three, in turn, worked with teachers in their schools to identify children for the program. I am especially grateful to Jessica Cruz, of New Visions School, Debra Patrone, of Archer Street School, and Carmen Tarantino, of the Giblyn School, for their hard work. They had a lot to do — sending home information to parents (some in Spanish), contacting parents to urge them to participate, and assisting the parents in preparing and submitting the necessary forms — but they always welcomed my calls.

As an aside, I would like to say that every year I have the very great pleasure of meeting some extraordinarily fine, dedicated school personnel, who really go the extra mile for their children. I would like you all to know this too — that we have some wonderful professionals working in our schools, and I, for one, am very appreciative. Truly, our program would be impossible without them. Ms. Cruz, Patrone, and Tarantino are prime examples.

I also wish to thank the staff of TR who, as always, cooperated and assisted us every way they could. First and foremost, their camp program is excellent. The program introduces the children to the enjoyment of wildlife and native habitats while stressing the importance of the environment and conservation. It gives them an opportunity to just run around in the forest, to catch butterflies, to fish in a small pond, and to examine and learn about some interesting animals at close hand.

But, in addition, TR staff always make our children welcome and allow us to make many last-minute changes. Given all the variables, it would be impossible for us to conduct the program without this flexibility. We especially





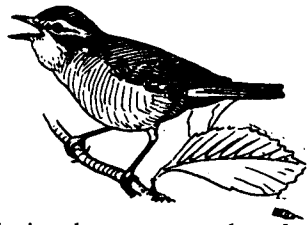
## NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER

### Red-eyed Vireo: My Bird of Summer

Joe Grupp

A species of bird slowly emerged into the confines of my psyche over the period of time from mid-spring to late summer. The bird is the Red-eyed Vireo and when I encountered my first one of the year in mid-May I didn't give it much thought. As spring turned into summer and summer moved on, the bird began to become a significant part of my awareness of the natural world, through a series of formal and accidental observations.

It might be appropriate to think of the Red-eyed Vireo as a bird of the leaves, because that is where they like to forage and spend a good portion of their day. The birds are easier to find in the early spring, when they arrive here, migrating from their winter habitat in the tropics just as the leaves are unfolding, and harder to find during the summer, when the leaves have matured and the woodlands are lush with foliage. They give away their presence by song and by following the song you can spot movement in a copse's leaves. Then sometimes the bird will appear; other times it remains hidden even as you can detect movement or just glimpse the tiniest bit of the bird.



More times than not, it is the song that gives the bird away. In spite of having a repertoire of songs, its two-phrased song is usually translated to English as, "Here I am... Where are you?" Most significant is the repetitive nature of the song, as it goes on and on throughout the day with only a few pauses.

In the spring I began to observe the bird and record its numbers as I collected data for the SSAS Bird Population Study. Frequently visiting the same locations, I recorded the bird again and again. This continued from the beginning of May into September. From the end of June to the middle of August, my time was spent about equally at home and on periodic camping trips in the Catskill and Adirondack Forest Preserves.

The bird's presence began to take on new significance on our first camping trip in the Catskills, when it was almost ever-present in and around our campsite, its "Hear I am... Where are you" song accompanying our breakfast, lunch, and supper. We were probably camped at just about the edge of the bird's territory, as it frequently gave vocal battle to other birds while perched just about over our site. A second trip to the Catskills revealed the bird again by its day-long song.

In early August we camped in a log lean-to at the edge of a lake in the Adirondacks. The farthest thing from my mind as we set up camp and settled in was the Red-eyed Vireo. It was the Common Loon that I was hoping to hear wail its mournful tone, even as our camping trips did not

center on birding but on hiking, canoeing, and whatever the natural world had to offer. Just as I sat down to relax and leaned my back against the logs of the lean-to's wall, the song of the Red-eyed Vireo rang out, and it was a constant companion for the length of our stay and again when we made a second trip to the same area.

Between camping trips, I would again observe the Red-eyed Vireo as I was collecting data for the SSAS Bird Population Study. Even just before starting to write this article, I was in the field and observed a number of the birds while surveying an area. They were probably beginning to migrate back to the tropics.

All that I observed and was written here is not unusual, as the population of Red-eyed Vireos is large and is spread all over the East and into the Northwest. It is a common bird that except by its song does not advertise its presence. Observing those very facts through my experiences made it my bird of summer.

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### FIVE MORE DONORS TO THANK

Five responses to the annual fund-raising letter we sent out in April arrived after the previous *Skimmer* went to press, so we'd like to also thank Anne R. Delancy, Louise Schindler, Bill & Marion Schurade, and two members who asked to remain anonymous.

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### **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 and summaries may be found at [ssaudubon.org](http://ssaudubon.org).

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Sep. 25 | Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)  |
| Oct. 2  | Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first lot south of Southern State Parkway, south end of lot)   |
| Oct. 9  | Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve   |
| Oct. 16 | Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge  |
| Oct. 23 | Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve   |
| Oct. 30 | Point Lookout  |
| Nov. 6  | Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)  |
| Nov. 13 | Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge  |
| Nov. 20 | Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner   |
| Nov. 27 | Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner   |
| Dec. 4  | Pelham Bay for Owls [pull over to street on extreme right after going through Throgs Neck Bridge toll (Pennyfield Ave.); meet at 9 A.M.; hiking shoes recommended] |
| Dec. 11 | Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner   |
| Dec. 18 | Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner   |
| Dec. 25 | <i>Season's Greetings — No Walk</i>  |
| Jan. 1  | <i>Happy New Year — No Walk</i>  |
| Jan. 8  | Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner   |





**WILD BIRD FEED SAVINGS DAY  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2005  
TACKAPAUSHA MUSEUM  
9:00 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.**



The museum is located on Washington Avenue in Seaford and lies about 1/2 mile south of Sunrise Highway, just north of Merrick Road. Since there will be only a little extra for sale that day, preordering is greatly appreciated; an order form appears below for your use. Please keep this upper portion as a reminder of the sale date. All preorders must be received by MONDAY, OCTOBER 17. **Please make checks payable to the South Shore Audubon Society. Mail check and order form to Paul Butkerei, 268 Wallace St., Freeport, NY 11520.**

*Please note that SSAS is dealing with a new distributor this year, with a higher-grade mixed seed product. For average backyard feeding, Paul suggests using the Select Blend. The Sanctuary Blend contains a higher volume of sunflower seeds and no cracked corn; it also contains dried fruits and nuts to attract more migrants. More details are in the October issue of the Skimmer.*

*There is also a change in some bag sizes. Except for the sunflower seeds, all previous 25 lb bags are now 20 lb bags. All previous 5 lb bags are now 10 lb bags.*

Help will be needed on the sale date to process orders and to aid in unloading seed. If you wish to volunteer, call (516) 593-1994 and ask for Paul. As in recent years, we will not have another seed sale until next autumn.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My address is \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ SSAS Member?  Yes  No

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
	25 lb Black Oil Sunflower Seed	9.50	
	25 lb Striped Sunflower Seed	12.00	
	20 lb Sanctuary Special Blend (see above for info on blends)	10.00	
	40 lb Sanctuary Special Blend	9.00	
	20 lb Select Blend	8.00	
	40 lb Select Blend	15.00	
	20 lb Cracked Corn	4.50	
	20 lb Sunflower Hearts	16.50	
	10 lb Sunflower Hearts	8.50	
	20 lb Peanut Pieces	15.50	
	10 lb Peanut Pieces	8.25	
	10 lb Safflower Seed	6.50	
	10 lb Nyjer (Thistle) Seed	8.00	
	11 oz Suet Seed Cake	1.25	
	11 oz Peanut Suet Seed Cake	1.50	

TOTAL AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_

**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 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!**



Yes, I'd like to join:  SSAS only  National Audubon too

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

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