

to protect America's most vulnerable birds and wildlife. Specifically, the legislation would:

**Eliminate habitat protections for endangered species.* The "Extinction Bill" would severely limit the federal government's responsibility to protect land considered to be critical habitat to insure the survival of endangered species. Instead, the legislation would require that recovery plans identify areas of "special value to the conservation of the species." Unlike "critical habitat," the term "areas ... of special value" is not defined by the legislation and is therefore subject to politically motivated interpretations of what constitutes an area of "special value."

**Benefit wealthy special interests at the expense of endangered wildlife.* Rep. Pombo worked closely with representatives of wealthy special interests who stand to benefit from a weakening of the Endangered Species Act. For example, one of the provisions in the "Extinction Bill" would force the federal government to pay developers, loggers, and other special interests for complying with the law, with no limit on the number of claims that could be brought for compensation.

**Give special breaks to polluters whose activities harm endangered birds and wildlife like the Bald Eagle.* Despite the fact that our nation's symbol, the Bald Eagle, was placed on the Endangered Species list due to threats from the deadly pesticide DDT, Pombo's bill would cut wildlife experts out of the process of approving harmful pesticides. This would take away the ability under the Endangered Species Act to stop pesticide use even when it is necessary to prevent extinction.

The U.S. Senate is now poised to take up a similar bill, so it is essential that your Senators hear from you. Birds like the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, Whooping Crane, and California Condor need the protection of this critically important conservation law. Tell Congress that you expect them to uphold the Endangered Species Act, for the critically imperiled birds and wildlife that can't speak for themselves!

Editor's sequel: The House vote was 229-193, with 193 Republicans and 36 Democrats voting aye; 34 Republicans, 158 Democrats, and 1 Independent voted no. Nassau County's Congressmen and Congresswoman voted along party lines, with one aye and two noes. You can write to Senators Clinton and Schumer at U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 or contact them through www.senate.gov. The bill was sent to the Senate's Committee on Environment and Public Works on September 30; Senator Clinton is a member of that committee.



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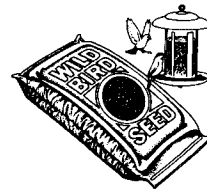


WE'RE SELLING AUDUBON CALENDARS!

SSAS is selling discounted *Audubon Songbirds & Other Backyard Birds* calendars at bird walks and after meetings for \$12, tax-free. The list price is \$12.95 for these "picture-a-day" wall calendars, which feature one large photo each month, surrounded by smaller photos.

BIRDSEED SALE REMINDER

Last month's *Skimmer* contained our annual birdseed order form and the preordering deadline was October 17, but extra seed will be available on the sale date and probably for a short time afterwards. The sale is on **Sunday, November 6**, from 9 A.M. to 2:30 P.M., in the parking lot of Tackapausha Museum (on Washington Avenue in Seaford, just north of Merrick Road). For information, call or e-mail Michael Sperling at 221-3921 or mssperling@optonline.net, or call the sale's chairperson, Paul Butkerei, at 593-1994.



BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kulner

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.

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



**Directions to Point Lookout:* Take the Meadowbrook State Parkway south to Loop Parkway (the exit is just before Jones Beach's toll plaza). The Loop Parkway ends at Lido Boulevard. Continue straight across Lido Boulevard into Point Lookout Town Park. Travel past the ticket booths (no fee) into the parking lot on the east side of the park. Park in the southeast corner, closest to the private homes of the village of Point Lookout and the beach. We will walk as a group toward Jones Inlet.

TRICK OR TREAT REMINDER

Therese Lucas

Bring the children to Tackapausha Museum and Pre-serve on Washington Avenue in Seaford (just north of Merrick Road's Pathmark) on **Saturday, October 29** for the annual South Shore Audubon Society Halloween Party. SSAS will provide arts and crafts, refreshments, and special guest Magic Bob. The party is from 1 to 3 P.M., with the magic show beginning in the auditorium at approximately 2 P.M.

To attend, you'll only need to pay the regular museum admission of \$2 for adults and \$1 for children (ages 4 to 14; free for younger children).

Please contact me at 221-3921 or tklwings@optonline.net to volunteer.

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 (third in November) 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..... Jill T. Sandhaas
- Bellmore Jennifer Magids, Robert J. Reilly
- East Meadow Paul Borgwald, Jeanette C. Rosenbaum
- Elmont Lisa Hamill, Rudy Hlawaty
- Floral Park Asha Shah
- Franklin Square Gerda Malakassis
- Garden City Franklin Perrell
- Green Oaks Marlene Corujo
- Hempstead Joseph A. Donahue
- Hicksville Judith Hargrave
- Levittown Curtis Cook, Daniel Simonson
- Massapequa Theodore M. O'Lear, Karin Piotrowski
- Massapequa Park Louise Perla



- Merrick Gregory Fariello, Dana C. Lowe
- Oceanside Rose J. Marcello
- Old Bethpage Ronald Maisch
- Stewart Manor Jeanne C. Rohrbach
- Uniondale Lewis S. Ranieri
- Valley Stream Betty Miller, Thomas & Mary Ann Newman, John T. Verity
- Wantagh Alexandra Kitch
- West Hempstead Anne L. Wuischpard
- Woodmere Esperanza Hernandez

 (516) 594-0300, Ext 11 Fax: (516) 594-0801

ARTHUR C. SNOW
 Certified Public Accountant

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ANOTHER REASON TO JOIN OUR E-LIST

Michael Spelling

This *Skimmer* was scheduled to be mailed out on October 17, one day before our Pizzeria Uno fund-raiser dinner and too late to usefully inform most of you that ten days earlier, Therese Lucas and I had discovered that the Massapequa location where we'd booked the dinner was inexplicably no longer in business. We tried our best to get the word out to those of you who already had obtained the required certificates and are sorry if anyone went there in vain. We hope to schedule an alternative event soon, so please hold onto any contest posters you made.

I sent a message to our e-list about this cancellation and will do likewise for any future event cancellations (due to weather or whatever). You can sign up for free at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list; your e-mail address will not be given to anyone and will be invisible to your fellow SSAS e-list members unless you choose to send your own message to the list. The list won't fill your mailbox with messages, but will let you know a little more about what's happening in SSAS and regarding related topics that interest our members.

Mixtures of peanuts, nuts, and dried fruit are attractive to woodpeckers, nuthatches, and titmice. Relatively few species prefer milo, wheat, and oats, which are featured in less-expensive blends.

Provide Suet During Cool Weather Only. Suet (beef fat) attracts insect-eating birds such as woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. Place the suet in special feeders or net onion bags at least five feet from the ground to keep it out of the reach of dogs. Do not put out suet during hot weather as it can turn rancid; also, dripping fat can damage natural waterproofing on bird feathers.

Mix Peanut Butter and Corn Meal. Peanut butter is a good substitute for suet in the summer. Mix one part peanut butter with five parts cornmeal and stuff the mixture into holes drilled in a hanging log or into the crevices of a large pinecone. This all-season mixture attracts woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and, occasionally, warblers.

Provide Fruit for Berry-Eating Birds. Fruit specialists such as robins, waxwings, bluebirds, and mockingbirds rarely eat birdseed. To attract these birds, soak raisins and currants in water overnight, then place them on a table feeder, or purchase blends with a dried fruit mixture. To attract orioles and tanagers, skewer halved oranges onto a spike near other feeders, or provide nectar feeders.

Provide Nectar for Hummingbirds. Make a sugar solution of one part white sugar to four parts water. Boil briefly to sterilize and dissolve sugar crystals; no need to add red food coloring. Feeders must be washed every few days with very hot water and kept scrupulously clean to prevent the growth of mold.

Store Seed in Secure Metal Containers. Store seed in metal garbage cans with secure lids to protect it from squirrels and mice. Keep the cans in a cool, dry location; avoid storing in the heat. Damp seeds may grow mold that can be fatal to birds. Overheating can destroy the nutrition and taste of sunflower seeds. For these reasons, it's best not to keep seed from one winter to the next.



Discourage Squirrels from Consuming Feeder Foods. Squirrels are best excluded by placing feeders on a pole in an open area. Pole-mounted feeders should be about five feet off the ground and protected by a cone-shaped baffle (at least 17" in diameter) or similar obstacle below the feeder. Locate pole-mounted feeders at least ten feet from the nearest shrub, tree, or other tall structure. Squirrel feeders stocked with blends that are especially attractive to squirrels and chipmunks can reduce competition for high-priced foods offered at bird feeders. Locate squirrel feeders far from bird feeders to further reduce competition.

Locate Feeders to Reduce Window Collisions. In the United States, approximately one billion birds die from flying into windows each year. Protect birds from collisions by placing feeders within three feet of windows, if

possible. Mobiles and opaque decorations hanging outside windows also help to prevent bird strikes. Or attach fruit tree netting outside windows to deflect birds from the glass.

Keep Cats Indoors. Cats kill hundreds of millions of birds annually in the United States, often pouncing on ground-feeding birds and those dazed by window collisions. Responsible and caring cat owners keep their cats indoors, where they are also safer from traffic, disease, and fights with other animals. Outdoor cats are especially dangerous to birds



in the spring when fledglings are on the ground. Bells on cat collars are usually ineffective for deterring predation.

Clean Feeders and Rake Up Spilled Grain and Hulls. Uneaten seed can become soggy and grow deadly mold. Empty and clean feeders twice a year (spring and fall); more often if feeders are used during humid summers. Using a long-handled bottlebrush, scrub with dish detergent and rinse with a powerful hose; then soak in a bucket of 10% non-chlorine bleach solution, rinse well, and dry in the sun. In early spring, rake up spilled grain and sunflower hulls.

Commonly Asked Questions About Feeding Birds

Will Birds Suffer if Feeders Go Empty? Natural food supplies are typically exhausted during winter, as birds consume all the seeds and fruits at one location before moving on to the next. Similarly, if backyard feeders go empty while homeowners are on vacation, birds will look elsewhere for food. If your neighbors are also providing food, birds from your feeders will likely spend more time feeding there. Since feeders only supplement natural foods, most species will not suffer if feeders go empty for days or even weeks at a time.

How Soon Can Birds Be Expected at New Feeders? It may be a matter of hours before birds discover new feeders — or a matter of weeks. The variation depends on the distance to bird habitat, density of nearby feeders, and the kinds of birds that might chance on the new feeder (chickadees, titmice, and House Sparrows are especially quick to locate new feeders). If there are many feeders in your neighborhood, birds may find new feeders more readily, as they already associate feeders with an easy meal. If birds are slow to find feeders, scatter sunflower seeds on top of the feeders, and on nearby surfaces such as bare soil. Bird decoys may help to lure the first visitors, and other birds will soon notice the new food source.

What Are the Best Times and Weather Conditions to Watch Feeders? Birds visit feeders most often in the early morning, and again just before dusk. They use feeders less often in the afternoon and during rainy weather. In contrast, snow-covered ground forces sparrows and juncos to congregate at feeders, as these species typically feed on bare ground.

JERROLD AXINN, D.D.S., F.A.G.D., P.C.

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**GARDENING FOR LIFE
IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

Editor's note: I recently received a copy of *The Audubon At Home Guide to Gardening for Life in Southeastern Pennsylvania*, which was published this year by Bucks County Audubon Society and National Audubon Society. The 84-page spiral book, which includes photographs and various lists of recommended plants, can be downloaded for free (in ten pieces) from http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/GuidetoGardeningForLife_PA.html; purchased for \$9.95 from Bucks County Audubon Society, 6324 Upper York Road, New Hope, PA 18938; or ordered by writing to AudubonAtHome@audubon.org. Here is a list of the ten pieces.

1) Introduction, Table of Contents, How to Use This Book

2) Habitat Gardening – Create a lively yard by making a plan, deciding what you want to keep, what you want to add, and implementing some healthy yard practices. See how an incredible private garden combines suburban practicality with features specifically placed for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

3) Lawn Alternatives – Reducing your lawn is a key element to creating a healthy yard. Cutting down on lawn size will subsequently reduce water use, the need for pesticides and fertilizer, and hours of maintenance. Read about residents of an urban dwelling on a small lot and how they transformed their grassy areas into models of biodiversity.

4) Living with Wetlands – Restoring riparian buffers (streamside vegetation zones) is an important conservation issue in this region and many others. The value of streams, creeks, rivers, and ponds cannot be overstated... many bird species, aquatic wildlife, and other animals depend on the health of such systems.

5) Working With Rain – With an average of 42 inches per year falling in the Philadelphia region, rain presents a number of challenges: flooding, erosion, gardening. There are some creative and practical ways to avert these issues, including the creation of a rain garden, where water-loving plants persuade water to slowly seep into the ground, instead of running down the street picking up pollutants along the way.

6) Large Spaces – Big buildings on big land is a common sight throughout the northeast. The burden that lawns present on smaller lots is multiplied many times over on corporate campuses and other large developments.

7) Deer – In a word, trouble. Their ravenous appetites and overgrown populations are wreaking havoc on ecosystems and home landscapes throughout the northeast. The guide offers some hard facts and a vegetation list culled from regional resources that offer “plants deer like least.”

8) Ecology, Soil, and Plant Communities – Here’s a new perspective on gardening... one that takes into account the interaction between plants, insects, and other organisms. Putting in some native plants is great, but creating self-sustaining plant communities is something even greater. It is not complex... it’s natural.


9) Wildlife Lists — From birds to beneficial insects and everything in between, this section provides lists that make up the living heritage of our region.

10) Contacts, Resources, and Contributors

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

OUR WEB SITE (incl. online store) www.ssaudubon.org

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ASSATEAGUE FALL WEEKEND (Nov. 3–6). Visit Chincoteague Refuge and Assateague National Seashore, Virginia. See bald eagle, river otter, sika deer, snow geese, wild ponies, shorebirds, raptors, other migrating birds. Cost: \$325 incl. Refuge Inn, marsh boat tour, guided hikes, etc.

NEW YORK AQUARIUM (Sat., Nov. 19). Meet 10 A.M. at entrance in Coney Island for a 2-1/2 hour "Behind-the-Scenes" tour. See beluga whale, walrus, sea otter, penguins, sea turtles, sharks, lots more. Cost: \$20 (kids \$10). Call Don.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Jan. 6–8). See thousands of waterbirds, incl. loons, eiders, long-tailed ducks, scoters, etc. Cost: \$325 incl. luxurious Manor House (heated pool, Jacuzzi, spacious lobby with fireplaces), 5 meals, 5 hikes, 2 evening programs, and star watch. Free LIRR pickup.

SOUTH FLORIDA (Jan. 28 to Feb. 5). Visit the best birding and wildlife areas, incl. Everglades, Ding Darling, Loxahatchee, Corkscrew Swamp, Big Cypress Preserve, Wakodahatchee boardwalk, Okeetee County Park. Cost: \$1,595 incl. airfare, lodging, park fees, vans, guides, sunset boat cruise, welcome barbecue, and most meals.

ICELAND (July 12–24). Our 6th trip to this natural wonderland.

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.alnyc.org.

South Shore Audubon Society
P.O. Box 31
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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!



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