

# SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 37, NUMBER 2 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2006

## NEXT MEETING


*Enid Klein*

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 10, 2006  
**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Freeport Memorial Library  
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)  
**SPEAKER:** Tom Torma  
**TOPIC:** Barrier Island – Ribbons of Sand

A past president of SSAS, environmental educator Tom Torma will present the slide program that he describes as follows on his website ([naturehorizons.net](http://naturehorizons.net)): “Minute by minute, day by day, throughout the year, the winds, tides, ice, and rain change a barrier island. Each season brings a new view of the plants and animals, land and sky of this unique environment. This program is a photo essay that explores the changing world of barrier islands.” Join us!

**Pre-Meeting Program on Birds.** Starting at 7 P.M. each month, Scott Oglesby and Jim Remsen expand our birding horizons in the room beyond our coffee-break tables. Topic suggestions for future talks are welcome.

**Parking Lots.** In addition to the parking lot adjacent to the library, there’s a lightly used, well-lit, and fairly close municipal lot on the east side of S. Ocean Ave., on the near (south) side of the Gulf station that borders Sunrise Highway. Also, SSAS has a verbal pledge from neighboring Citibank that cars will no longer be towed from their lot during our meetings, but we can’t guarantee this.

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◆◆◆◆◆ IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE  
◆◆◆◆◆  BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS.  
◆◆◆◆◆ SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!  
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*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.*



## BROOKSIDE PRESERVE CLEANUP TIME!

On **Sunday, October 15**, starting at 1 P.M., SSAS will have its annual fall cleanup at Brookside Preserve, rain or shine. Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County that is managed (and was rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. With help from a state grant, we produced a trail guide, educational freshwater wetland guide, and video; we continue to add plantings for wildlife. The guides may be viewed at [ssaudubon.org](http://ssaudubon.org). We are hopeful that our proposal to have the adjacent Brooklyn Water Works property purchased with Nassau County Environmental Program Bond Act money will reach fruition soon.



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.

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*SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education; conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat; and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.*  
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## WHO-O-O-O IS GOING TO THE HALLOWEEN PARTY?

*Therese Lucas*



Kids and their families who want to enjoy nature crafts, a live nature program, and refreshments, that’s who-o-o-o. SSAS’s annual children’s Halloween Party will be at





## GET AUDUBON CALENDARS FROM US

SSAS will be selling a variety of discounted Audubon calendars, tax-free, at bird walks and after meetings.

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### BACKYARD SURVEY DATA NEEDED!

Joe Grupp

For several years, SSAS's Research Committee has been conducting a study to document the bird species found in the SSAS area and to estimate their numbers. We greatly appreciate input from anyone that feeds and/or observes birds in their yard or neighborhood. Please do not hesitate to submit your observations, even if you make only very few.

Simply record the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species. At the end of each month, please mail or e-mail your record to me at the appropriate address listed below, or hand it to me at our monthly meeting. Survey sheets are available at SSAS events and at [ssaudubon.org](http://ssaudubon.org) or you can create your own.

Please mail your data to Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson, 660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale NY 11553 or e-mail [Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com](mailto:Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com).

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## VINES FOR BIRDS

*Editor's note:* This article, by Kathy Piper, comes from the July/August '98 issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

For several years after I moved into my home, a pair of house finches tried to make their nests on the L-shaped ledge of a block pillar of my porch. Each time they were unsuccessful, either because the ledge was too narrow or because their efforts were sabotaged by House Sparrows.

Then, one year, I planted a Virginia creeper in front of the pillar. By the following spring, the vine had grown up to and around the ledge, providing enough support for the finches to successfully build a nest. The vine also camouflaged the nest from other prying avian eyes.

That was my introduction to growing vines for birds. Like many others, I had been oblivious to the fact that vines are an integral part of the bird garden. They supply food for birds, as well as nesting sites and cover; evergreen types give protection year-round.

Vine, as used here, is a generic term for plants that, according to *America's Garden Book*, by James and Louise Bush-Brown (Macmillan, 1996), "climb, scramble up, cling to, or in other ways attach themselves or become attached to supporting structures."

There are several devices that vines use to achieve this attachment. For example, the clingers, such as Virginia creeper, trumpet vine, Boston ivy, and winter-creeper, affix themselves to objects by means of either rootlets or tendrils with adhesive disks. They work best on broad surfaces such as brick, block, or stone walls, wooden fences, and tree trunks.

Grapes, greenbrier, and porcelain berry are among the vines known as grabbers. These plants use either diskless tendrils or their leaf stems to grab and wind around their supports, which can be chain-link fences, lattices, or shrubs.

These same structures are also ideal underpinnings for the twiners, which climb by twisting their stems around these items. Honeysuckles, American bittersweet, silver-lace vine, and morning glories are typical twiners.

The last group of vining plants are known as sprawlers. Climbing roses, climbing nightshade, and the like merely lie on their supports, sending up progressively longer shoots. They easily scramble through shrubs and trees, and can be used on fences, trellises, and such. They may need to be tied to their supports, however, to keep them growing the way you want.

If you have limited space for a bird garden, then vines are the perfect plants. They can cover large areas of a fence or wall, yet they only take up about a foot or two of space in front of these structures.

Annual vines, such as morning glory (pictured) and cardinal climber, grow quickly, their foliage producing seasonal cover for their supports. Since they only last from spring to frost, annual climbers are invaluable for birders who are renting and therefore can't plant anything permanent.



Grapes, winter-creeper, Virginia creeper, honeysuckles, and other perennial vines supply long-lasting nesting and cover sites for a variety of birds, especially when left to grow thickly. Gray catbirds, northern cardinals, American robins, northern mockingbirds, chipping sparrows, and house finches are some of the birds that are known to nest in vines. (Climbing roses make particularly attractive nesting sites for mockingbirds.)

Besides cover and nesting, vines are also excellent sources of food for birds, in the form of nectar, seeds, and berries. Various vines offer flowers that are virtual magnets for hummingbirds, orioles, and other nectar eaters. Members of the morning glory family, including cardinal climber, scarlet creeper, and common morning glory, readily attract these birds, as do the numerous varieties of honeysuckle and the trumpet vine.

The trumpet vine's flowers give way to seeds that are eaten by chickadees, finches, and sparrows. These birds, as well as cardinals, towhees, juncos, buntings, blackbirds, pheasants, and quail, eat the seeds of the silver-lace vine. The seeds of the American bittersweet vine are enclosed in a bright red covering and are consumed by robins, cardinals, pheasants, quail, turkeys, and bluebirds.

By far, berries are the most abundant food source vines have to offer. Grapes, porcelain berry, Virginia creeper, Boston ivy, honeysuckles, greenbriers, climbing nightshade, and even poison ivy produce fruits that are eaten by cardinals, catbirds, mockingbirds, thrashers, robins, grouse, turkeys, thrushes, waxwings, woodpeckers, and others.

Climbing plants can be put to many uses around the yard. Virginia creeper, Boston ivy, and the like, grown around a dead tree or tree stump, can enhance its appearance and increase its value to birds. "You can... make an old tree stump into a great cover for birds," writes George Adams in his book *Birdscaping Your Garden* (Rodale Press, 1994), "by planting ivy plants around the base and training them over the trunk. Smaller birds, such as wrens and chickadees, will roost and find shelter in the foliage, and birds will nest in the network of thick ivy branches."

If you don't like the looks of a rock or brush pile, then let a winter-creeper, grape vine, climbing nightshade, or trumpet vine clamber over it. Vines not only improve the pile's attractiveness to you, but they also make it more alluring to birds by affording them extra cover. Similarly, vines add appeal to fences, trellises, house walls, and even a stone wall in the garden.

Anchoring your Christmas tree in the ground near a feeder after the holidays are over is a good way to provide shelter for the birds. Eventually, however, the needles fall off and you are left with a bare tree. When spring arrives, plant a perennial vine at the base of the tree; it will soon be covered by the vine, adding a permanent source of food and shelter to your yard. If you use an evergreen vine, such as winter-creeper or some varieties of greenbrier, the cover will be available all year long.

Vines can also be allowed to grow as they would naturally, making their way up through the branches of shrubs and trees, and in hedges and hedgerows. When grown this way, many become perfect guests, their flowers, fruits, and leaves complementing that of their hosts. You do need to be wary of which vines you grow like this, however. Some become like the visitor that never knows when to leave — they take over everything and do more than make themselves at home. For instance, Asiatic bitter-

sweet, wild grapes, and Japanese honeysuckle are so invasive that before long they will completely engulf other plants. The resulting tangle becomes a haven for birds, but it ultimately kills the host plant, something you may not appreciate.

Wherever and however you use vines, they are sure to attract birds. Then you, too, can enjoy a scene like that depicted by Helen Van Pelt Wilson in her book *Color For Your Winter Yard & Garden* (Scribners, 1978): "In time, Virginia creeper and Boston ivy will completely enframe the windows of a brick house, and thrushes, robins, finches, and sparrows can often be plainly seen resting or pausing on the windowsill."




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**JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE** (Saturday, Oct. 7th). Meet 4 P.M. at Pier 6 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn for a 3-hour narrated eco-tour of the backwater marshes of the bay aboard the 96' boat "Dorothy B VIII." See herons, ibis, oystercatchers, shorebirds, raptors, and waterfowl as they migrate through this 9,000 acre preserve. Cost: \$35 includes guides, wine & cheese, snacks. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe. Call or e-mail Don to reserve.

**CHINCOTEAGUE/ASSATEAGUE WEEKEND** (Oct. 12-15). For more info call Don. E-mail: [pat@littoralsociety.org](mailto:pat@littoralsociety.org).

**NEW YORK AQUARIUM** (Saturday, Nov. 4th). Meet 10 A.M. at aquarium entrance for 2-1/2 hour "Behind-the-Scenes" tour. Cost: \$25 (kids \$15). Call Don.

**MONTAUK WEEKEND** (Jan. 5-7, 2007). See thousands of waterfowl & lots of seals, plus evening programs. Cost: \$345.

**COSTA RICA** (Jan. 27-Feb. 4, 2007). Visit three of the best wildlife areas and see resplendent quetzal, scarlet macaw, toucans, trogons, blue morpho butterflies, and many other species of wildlife. Cost: \$2,400 (approx.) includes airfare, lodging, bus/driver, local guides, 2 river cruises, aerial walkways, park fees, most meals.

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For information and free field trip brochure,  
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28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; [www.alsnyc.org](http://www.alsnyc.org).





**WILD BIRD FEED SAVINGS DAY  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2006  
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 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17. **Please make checks payable to the South Shore Audubon Society. Mail check and order form to Paul Butkereiit, 268 Wallace St., Freeport, NY 11520.**

*Sanctuary Special Blend:* black oil sunflower, white proso millet, peanut hearts and pieces, safflower, striped sunflower, sunflower hearts, canary seed, thistle (nyjer), tree nuts, dried fruit (raisins or cherries), and grit (to aid digestion)

*Select Blend:* white proso millet, black oil sunflower, striped sunflower, sunflower hearts, cracked corn, safflower, thistle (nyjer), and peanut hearts

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.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
	25 lb Black Oil Sunflower Seed	11.00	
	25 lb Striped Sunflower Seed	12.50	
	40 lb Sanctuary Special Blend (see above for info on blends)	19.50	
	20 lb Sanctuary Special Blend	10.25	
	40 lb Select Blend	15.25	
	20 lb Select Blend	8.25	
	20 lb Cracked Corn	7.25	
	10 lb Sunflower Hearts	8.25	
	10 lb Peanut Pieces	8.50	
	10 lb Safflower Seed	6.50	
	10 lb Nyjer (Thistle) Seed	8.00	
	11 oz Plain Suet Cake (No Seed)	1.30	
	11 oz Peanut Suet Seed Cake	1.60	

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

**South Shore Audubon Society**  
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**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!**



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