# OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

**APRIL 2007** 

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Enid Klein

DATE:

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

TIME:

7:30 P.M.

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: TOPIC: Barbara Levine Hog Island, Maine

Accessible only by boat, 330-acre Hog Island is located in midcoast Maine's beautiful Muscongus Bay and is part of Todd Audubon Sanctuary. Since 1936, it has been home to Audubon camps for adults and young people, with sessions led by some of the most respected naturalists and environmental educators in the nation. More than a few of those campers have attended via scholarships from SSAS.

Camp days are spent exploring fragrant spruce forests, fern-filled meadows, and rocky tide pools teeming with marine life. Hog Island is a half-mile from Maine's mainland; trips there may include sightings of harbor seals, Bald Eagles, various warblers, Common Eiders, Black Guillemots, and Atlantic Puffins. Join us!

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

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS.

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#### **SPRING CLEANUP AT BROOKSIDE PRESERVE**

On **Sunday, April 29**, from 1 P.M. until we're pooped (there's lots to do), 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're seeking another one), we published a trail guide, educational freshwater wetland guide, and video; we continue to add plantings for wildlife. Scanned pdf files of the guides can be downloaded from 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. You can arrive and depart anytime.

Status of Brooklyn Water Works. Although the adjacent Brooklyn Water Works was on the list of 15 properties that the previous Environmental Bond Act Program's Advisory Committee selected for preservation, Nassau County was unable to attract the interest of the developer who owns it (with a tax lien against him) and other listed properties were preserved with the limited funds. However, at a recent public meeting, SSAS was encouraged by members of the Advisory Committee to renominate the property under the new Environmental Program Bond Act and that has been done, thanks to the efforts of Brookside Preserve Committee member Christine Marzigliano.

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.

#### **GARAGE SALE ITEMS WANTED!**

As mentioned last month, SSAS has scheduled a garage sale on **Saturday**, **June 2** (rain date June 3) at the Franklin Square home of two of our members. We need stuff to sell; what you donate can be claimed as a tax deduction. So, please keep us in mind if you have items that you no longer need. If you're unable to bring your donation to the sale, we'll make arrangements to get it from you beforehand. Details to come in next month's *Skimmer*.



All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; 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.

Mar. 25 Jones Beach Fishing Piers (Field #10)

Apr. 1 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Apr. 8 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Apr. 15 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)

Apr. 22 & 29 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

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.

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As you may already know, early in the evening of March 6, the "Old Plainview" proposal to develop 165 acres was withdrawn by Charles Wang, at the beginning of the standing-room-only second part of the day's hearing. In last month's *Skimmer* and in a letter sent to the Town of Oyster Bay's politicians that would have been read at the hearing, we voiced our opposition to the proposal.

It was reported that Mr. Wang and his partners will now seek to build two office buildings totaling 650,000 square feet and 45 single-family houses, which would not require any zoning changes but would still require approval from Tobay, starting the process all over again. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared for "Old Plainview" compared it to alternatives, one of which was this scenario. The 143-acre southern parcel, which contains 95 acres of forest (the northern parcel is completely developed), would get all of the houses (at least an acre per property) plus 420,000 square feet of the office space. 58.11% of the southern parcel would become impervious (5.64% covered by pavement plus 52.47% covered by buildings), which is 6.04% less than for "Old Plainview." SSAS is advocating that the southern parcel, which was formerly owned by Nassau County, be preserved.

#### **MORTON REMINDER**

As mentioned in last month's *Skimmer*, on **Saturday**, **March 31**, we will meet at 10 a.m. at Morton National Wildlife Refuge, located on the peninsula of Jessups Neck in Noyack, which is just west of Sag Harbor. Bring or share sunflower seeds or shelled peanuts if you want to experience having Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, and maybe Northern Cardinals land on your outstretched hand a few minutes after you get out of your car and enter the main trail. We should see many other bird species too at this scenic spot.

Directions to Morton: Sunrise Highway (Route 27) eastbound (from LI Expressway take exit 70, County Road 111 and follow signs to Rt. 27 east; from Southern State Parkway, take exit 44 for Sunrise Highway). Route 27 will change from a highway to a local roadway. A few miles past the Stony Brook Southampton campus (and 17.1 miles from County Road 111), make a left at the County Road 52 intersection (the sign points left for North Sea and Noyack). Proceed 0.9 miles and turn left at a traffic light onto County Road 38. Go 1.4 miles and turn right onto Noyack Road (look for a sign on the right side of the road, "Morton Refuge 5 Miles"). The refuge entrance is on the left.

The parking fee is \$4 per vehicle, payable by inserting a check or cash in an envelope. Any questions? Call Wendy Murbach at 546-6303. Heavy rain cancels.



Explore the coast with the

## AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK AQUARIUM "BEHIND-THE-SCENES" TOUR (Sat., March 31). Meet at aquarium entrance at 10 A.M. sharp for a 2-1/2 hour tour led by marine educator Bob Cummings. See sea otters, penguins, sharks, walrus, sea turtles, local & tropical fishes. Cost: \$25 (kids \$15). Contact Don to reserve.

**EARTH DAY EVENT: Plumb Beach Restoration — Cleanup & Planting, Jamaica Bay** (Sun., April 22). Meet at the Plumb Beach parking lot on the Belt Parkway near Knapp St (Exit 9). This project will continue through April 27. Groups welcome.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISES (Sat., June 2 & 16). Join us at 5 P.M. for a special 3-hour cruise along the backwater marshes of the bay aboard the 96' boat "Dorothy B VIII" out of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. Learn about the history & ecology of the refuge and see nesting peregrine falcon, osprey, oystercatcher, egrets, ibis, and many other species. Cost: \$45 includes narrated tour, wine & cheese, fruit, snacks.

MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 8-10). Enjoy a weekend at Montauk during peak orchid, beach rose, and heather blossom time. Cost: \$345 incl. 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 hikes, 2 evening lectures, star watch, and free pickup at LIRR station. Activities incl. birding, botany, geology, tidepools, seining, optional whale watch.

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

#### **SSAS BIRDATHON 2007 IS COMING!**

This year, SSAS will conduct its 20th 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 has become 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. Birding expertise and big pledges are not necessary; anyone can join one of SSAS's teams and help us find species, or you can do

your own Birdathon anywhere.

Mark the dates on your calendar — **Friday, May 11** from 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 12** at 5:00 P.M. The rain dates are one week later at the same time. Team details will be in the next *Skimmer*.

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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 (September through May) 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.

Editor's Note: National Audubon Society recently switched to a paperless and currently very imperfect system of informing chapters about new members, renewals, address changes, etc. As far as we can determine, our brand-new members to welcome (plus two spelling corrections; oops) are:

Atlantic Beach ......... Ms. Phyllis J. B. Jonas
Baldwin ........... Ms. Helga F. Pacella
Bellmore ........... Ms. Nina Fatta, Mr. John Nicolosi

Bethpage S	Sandy Kimball
East Meadow N	
Hempstead M	Mr. Walter J. Madden
Hicksville I	Deepak K. Arora (1937) SODS
Island Park N	Mr. Billy Barton Man 1033 1033 1033 1033 1033 1033 1033 103
Lawrence M	Ms. Lynne Moloney 🕏 💝 👙 🌂
Levittown I	Mrs. R. A. McGlinchey
Long Beach I	Mr. Brian Frazee
Lynbrook I	
	Ms. Rosemary Lankenau, Joanna
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Magazanagua Bark	
wassapequa raik A	Andrea Barrett, Ms. Linda Czyzak
Merrick 1	=
	Ms. Nancy Comer
Merrick I Oceanside I	Ms. Nancy Comer
Merrick I Oceanside I	Ms. Nancy Comer Ms. Lora Tryon
Merrick I Oceanside I	Ms. Nancy Comer Ms. Lora Tryon Mr. David Lyon, Carol & Lance Meschkow
Merrick I Oceanside I Plainview I	Ms. Nancy Comer Ms. Lora Tryon Mr. David Lyon, Carol & Lance Meschkow
Merrick I Oceanside I Plainview I Valley Stream I	Ms. Nancy Comer Ms. Lora Tryon Mr. David Lyon, Carol & Lance Meschkow Ms. Jane O'Connor,
Merrick	Ms. Nancy Comer Ms. Lora Tryon Mr. David Lyon, Carol & Lance Meschkow Ms. Jane O'Connor, Mrs. Constance Oro

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Editor's note: This article, by Edward Kanze, originally appeared in the January/February 2000 issue of Bird Watcher's Digest.

Some birds come and go like college students, here in summer, gone when the weather turns cold, back again when the mountain laurel blooms. Others remain faithful to old homes and haunts. Among the second group, the most widely known representative in North America is probably the Black-capped Chickadee, *Poecile atricapillus*.

Henry David Thoreau, the Massachusetts naturalist and author of Walden, spent most of his life close to home. He was, he said, "widely traveled in Concord." A similar statement could be made about the Black-capped Chickadee. As a species, the bird ranges from Alaska to Newfoundland and south to New Mexico and North Carolina, but individuals rarely leave the neighborhoods in which they are born.

Perhaps as a result of their parochial tendencies, Black-capped Chickadees are among the few birds recognized by people with little knowledge of birds. It helps that chickadees live up to their names, which is more than one can say for some birds. At all times of year, a Black-capped Chickadee sports a black cap, as advertised. Lest we forget its identity, the bird also says *chick-a-dee-dee-dee* virtually 365 days of the year.

"The chickadee has a call," wrote the naturalist John Burroughs in his 1879 book, Locusts and Wild Honey, "full of unspeakable tenderness and felicity." Burroughs refers not to the chick-a-dee call the birds use to keep track of each other and maintain flock identity, but to the loud but plaintive fee-bee song Black-capped Chickadees use to declare territories and drive off competing males. To hear these notes on a warm day in February is to enjoy relief that spring is on the way.

Black-capped Chickadees make other calls, too. Ornithologists have identified 15 different vocalizations, among them gargling sounds, a *dee* sound uttered by begging fledglings, a hiss, a snarl, and a shrill alarm note. In a book titled *Far and Near* (1904), Burroughs describes the Black-capped Chickadee's alarm: "The trick of the bird is apparently to draw in its breath till its form perceptibly swells, and then give forth a quick, explosive sound, like an escaping jet of steam."

Hummingbirds, tanagers, and orioles may display more dazzling color, but the Black-capped Chickadee with its earth tones nonetheless presents a handsome appearance. Ebony of crown and bib, alabaster of cheek, and with a gray back, matching gray wings, and tawny streaks on its flanks, the chickadee gives us the very picture of elegance. Its head curves gracefully. Its body is as round as a native persimmon. Its tail, long for the bird's size, suggests a gentleman dressed for a society dinner.

Of course, there is more to the Black-capped Chickadee than good looks. For one thing, the birds are masters of survival. They endure winter nights in cold climates not only by fattening themselves on rich foods, but also by having the good sense to take refuge in tree cavities and dense vegetation. On really frigid nights, the Black-capped Chickadee may also enter a state that scientists call "regulated hypothermia." This means that the bird lowers its body temperature for short periods. The result is a state something like a brief hibernation. The benefit is a conservation of energy the chickadee can ill afford to lose.

Restless by nature, Black-capped Chickadees spend a great many of their waking hours searching forests and woodland edges for food. In winter, they eat a nearly

balanced mix of animal and plant matter. In summer, the bird's diet shifts to 80 or 90 percent insects and spiders. Animal food is typically collected by gleaning items from bark and leaves. Chickadees also probe like woodpeckers, hover (albeit briefly)

like hummingbirds, and dart after airborne insects in the manner of flycatchers. A typical pose for a Black-capped Chickadee is dangling upside down from a leaf, pecking at bugs on the underside.

A few days ago while hiking through some woods, I spied a Black-capped Chickadee that looked peculiar. Its bill appeared unnaturally long, more like a woodpecker's than a chickadee's. The bird was behaving like a woodpecker, too — tapping its unusual bill against a tree.

Binoculars solved the mystery. The attenuated beak was an illusion created by a long, black seed projecting from a bill of normal proportion. I continued to watch. One moment the bird clenched the seed, the next it was gone. The chickadee had had no time to peck open the seed. What happened was this: the chickadee had tucked its treasure in a crevice, leaving it there for a hungrier day or hour.

Chickadees, it seems, cache not only seeds but insects. An individual bird stores food not in a few grandly stocked hoards, as a chipmunk does, but tucks seeds, berries, bugs, and spiders in more haphazard fashion, one here, one there. One study found that Black-capped Chickadees remembered the locations of storage sites after 28 days. This habit of saving food for leaner times is also practiced by Black-capped Chickadee relations such as the Carolina Chickadee and the Tufted Titmouse.

Most birds cough up pellets containing indigestible materials, and Black-capped Chickadees are no exception.

You can search the ground under a bird feeder and find evidence of what local chickadees are eating. Often chickadee pellets contain the shiny wing covers of beetles and the waxy husks of berries.

At no time of year do Black-capped Chickadees hunt for food more unceasingly than during the nesting season. Chickadees nest in tree hollows, sometimes appropriating cavities chiseled by woodpeckers, other times carving out their own holes in wood softened by decay. Bird houses attract chickadees, too, especially if the entrance hole measures between an inch-and-an-eighth and an inch-and-a-quarter. Black-capped Chickadees are a bit like people in that they prefer furnished houses to empty ones. Put a few handfuls of soft wood chips or sawdust in a chickadee house, and you'll greatly increase your chance of finding takers.

After a nest site is chosen, the Black-capped Chickadee female makes it comfortable. She generally starts by fashioning a cup of mosses, and she finishes with a soft lining of fur. Eggs are usually laid one daily for up to eight days. During incubation and the brooding period that follows, the male makes frequent deliveries of insects and fruits.

If all goes well, most of the eggs hatch, and four or five young typically survive to fledge. Males and females share in the raising of offspring. The work is considerable. Mouths must be fed, the nest and offspring require defending against predators, and diapers must be removed. Like other songbirds, chickadee nestlings defecate in neat bundles called fecal sacs. The parent birds carry the sacs away, often eating them in the early days but later discarding them far from the nest. Keeping the nest cavity clean probably helps reduce its chance of discovery by predators such as raccoons and snakes.

In general, Black-capped Chickadees raise only one brood of young each year. Hatchlings grow swiftly in the nest, nourished on a high-protein, high-fat diet consisting mostly of insects. Somewhere between the 12th and 16th day after the last egg bursts open, the nestlings take off. Generally they fly capably at the start. Yellow edges around their mouths identify the fledglings for a few days, but the telltale color vanishes quickly. The young birds look nearly identical to their parents.

For several weeks, the juvenile chickadees stay near the parents and are fed by them. But somewhere around the third or fourth week after taking wing, the fledglings venture off on their own. In late summer and fall, they work their way into flocks that occupy loose territories throughout the winter.

Most Black-capped Chickadees pass the winter within a single chickadee flock, each bird occupying a particular place in the pecking order. A few chickadees, however, move among as many as six flocks and are called "floaters." These birds are juveniles and lack mates. In each flock that it joins, a floater takes its place in a hierarchy. If the member of the flock immediately above the floater

succumbs to winter starvation or dies in the clutches of a predator (small owls such as Saw-whets and Screeches, and pint-sized hawks such as Sharp-shinneds, dine routinely on chickadee flesh), the floater typically moves in, fills the vacant niche in the pecking order, and pairs with the vanished bird's mate.

Black-capped Chickadees appear to be mostly monogamous. In other words, one male tends to mate with one female. Yet the picture may be more complex. A study by the ornithologist Susan Smith published in 1988 in the Wilson Bulletin found that female chickadees sometimes slip away in the early morning to mate with males that ranked higher than their mates in the most recent winter hierarchy. The fact that these trysts usually occurred in the territories of the females' "lovers" led Smith to speculate that the wayward female ventures out in order to initiate the liaison.

In winter, Black-capped Chickadees often associate with other songbirds in mixed flocks. Those of us who wander afield in the cold months know that when we find chickadees, we may also discover kinglets, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and brown creepers. "Birds of a feather stick together," the old saying goes. Songbirds may locate food more effectively in groups, and they also enjoy a degree of safety in numbers. Hawks and owls moving in on birds in mixed flocks are likely to be discovered before doing harm.

The Black-capped Chickadee is one of seven chickadee species found regularly in North America. In northern evergreen forests, Boreal Chickadees breed from East to West, and in Alaska the Siberian Tit also occurs. In the Pacific Northwest, the Chestnut-backed Chickadee ranges northward from California, and a few Mexican Chickadees nest in montane forests along Mexico's border with Arizona and New Mexico. There are Carolina Chickadees in the South that are nearly identical to Black-cappeds, and Mountain Chickadees in the West.

Like all living things, chickadees eventually die. Banding studies tell us that the average life span of a Black-capped Chickadee is less than three years. Of course, every animal produces among its number an occasional Methuselah. The oldest Black-capped Chickadee on record lived an extraordinary 12 years, five months.

At the end of life, a chickadee may well suck its last breath in the same corner of the world where it first crawled out of an egg. Like Thoreau, who died of tuberculosis in his own bed, the Black-capped Chickadee usually ends life almost exactly where it began — in a woodland not far from a sunny edge, surrounded by the familiar sights of home.

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## NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER A Visit to Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

Joe Grupp

This past fall was really warm, almost summerlike, and as a result it was in a very light jacket that we boarded a plane for Des Moines, Iowa. It was winter when we stepped out of the airport there to pick up our rental car in an outside parking lot. There were spots, in sheltered areas, with loose, icy, granular snow. A Midwestern wind had blown the snow away from the exposed areas on the ground. That same wind also took the warmth that was trapped under our light New York weather jackets and replaced it with cold winter air. Winter had come to Iowa.

The following morning, we drove through the entrance to the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge and Prairie Learning Center in Prairie City, Iowa, a short distance from Des Moines. History reveals that tallgrass prairie once covered 85% of the Iowa landscape, while today only 0.1% of Iowa's 36 million acres remain tallgrass prairie. The plow and development have changed the landscape, and very little of what was at one time natural remains. The Neal Smith Refuge is dedicated to restoring as much of the old prairie as possible.

Tools such as controlled fire (to reduce the nonnative prairie plant species and encourage the growth of long-dormant seeds of native plants) and the planting of prairie plant seeds are used in that effort. The seeds used are gathered from tiny pockets of old prairies found in out-of-the-way places and are used to reestablish what once was there. Some of the seeds gathered are even "farmed" on the refuge, to produce a crop of seeds to be harvested and used in the restoration.

The wind was as cold as it was when we arrived as we made our first stop and walked a trail through a wooded area of scattered trees spaced far enough apart so that sunlight reached the ground. There the prairie grasses and flowering plants grow under the trees, creating what is known as a prairie savanna. Layers of clothing kept us warm as we walked the trail and began to observe a few scattered birds among the trees. Our bird observations did not live up to expectations, as we listed Downy and Redbellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal, and, in the open grasslands, small flocks of American Tree Sparrows and a few other species. The birds we would have liked to have seen, the Eastern and/ or Western Meadowlarks (both are listed as being on the refuge), Common Nighthawks, Bobolinks, and other grassland birds, were gone for the winter.

Our exploration took us on a second trail through open grassland on rolling hills. The vegetation everywhere was dry, the sky overcast and dull, and the wind gusty. There were times when you could trace the gusty wind's path as it bent the grass over. forming a wave that moved across the dry landscape. The dry vegetation colored the landscape with expansive areas of gray-brown, soft yellow,

dull red, tan, and brown. The vegetation bounced in the wind. At one point, we stood in utter silence as among the distant grasses a herd of buffalo, some of its members grazing, some of them wandering, and others simply lying

down resting, appeared on the side of a hill. Lower on the hill and off to the side, a small herd of elk rested. Closer to us, a Redtailed Hawk settled into a tree and, above the hill, seen against the dull sky, a Northern Harrier glided across the landscape,



rocking side to side as harriers do when buffeted by the wind. We were standing in a past environment or at least as close to a past environment as is now possible.

To visit the refuge when we did may not have been the best of time to do so. In doing so, we missed the flowers, butterflies, new grasses, birds, etc., of summer. Then again, visit in the summer and you miss the prairie as it appears during the winter, with its snow and storms; the colors of fall; and the new growth of spring. We simply took advantage of an opportunity we had. Even stable environments are ever-changing in appearance and stages of life, as the cycle of the seasons repeats itself over and over again. This refuge would be worth a visit again especially in the summer and maybe a time or two after that. Who knows; maybe we will do just that and visit again, and maybe it will have been just that one time.

Editor's note: Neal Smith NWR was established as Walnut Creek NWR in 1990 and renamed eight years later after a Congressman who had provided funding for it.

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The annual Spring Festival in Fields 1 & 4 at Heckscher State Park in East Islip is scheduled for the weekend of **April 21 & 22**, from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., weather permitting. SSAS, other environmental organizations, and various agencies will provide information, displays, crafts, wildlife exhibits, etc., while celebrating Earth Day.

#### 

Thanks to the continuing generous support of longtime member Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society will again be awarding two \$750 Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships this spring to college juniors, seniors, or graduate students who are continuing their studies toward a degree in an area of biological or environmental science, such as wildlife management, forestry, animal behavior, ecology, marine biology, oceanography, mammalogy, or ornithology. For information, call Betsy Gulotta at 546-8841 or e-mail gulotte@ncc.edu. Applications are due by April 30 and we typically receive only a few, so apply!

#### **ANNUAL CENTRAL PARK WALK**

On **Saturday, May 5**, SSAS will be in Central Park for our annual (weather permitting) early May bird walk. Once again, Manhattan residents (and old-time SSAS members) Chris Cooper and Lloyd Spitalnik have been asked to lead us through the twisting maze of the Ramble and adjoining areas of the park. In previous years, we've recorded 45 to 70-plus species in under three hours (49 last year, including 16 warblers).

The cost of the walk is \$6 for members and \$8 for nonmembers; all proceeds will be used to support SSAS. Please send your check payable to South Shore Audubon Society, along with your phone number, to: Joanne Del Prete, 20 Ceil Pl., Bethpage NY 11714-4503 (phone 433-0739). Registration is required by *Friday*, *April 27*. If you meet us on the train or in the park and have not previously registered, your cost will be \$8 if you're a member and \$10 if not, so register early!

Per the SSAS Field Trip Guidelines published in the Skimmer three years ago, if you find that you cannot make the trip, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance to have your fee refunded. If the trip is canceled by the leaders or due to weather, all fees will be refunded.

For train schedule information, you can contact the Long Island Rail Road at (516) 822-5477 or http://lirr42.mta.info/index.asp; there are a group of members that will be in one of the front cars of the local Babylon line train that is scheduled to depart from Massapequa at 7:28



and arrive in Penn Station at 8:27. Please note that at many of the LIRR stations, including Massapequa, ticket windows are now closed on weekends. Regardless, a penalty fare of \$4.75 to \$5.50 is charged by the conductor (pictured!) if you do not purchase a ticket at a window or using the

machines located at the stations. A \$4 MetroCard is required for the subway to and from Central Park; it too can be purchased from the LIRR's ticket agents or machines. You can save 5% if you order WebTickets at www.lirrticket.com (the tickets are sent, postage free, via the U.S. Postal Service).

We plan to depart from Penn Station's LIRR waiting room at 8:45 to meet our leaders in Central Park around 9:30. The walk usually ends around noon. You can bring lunch or buy it in the Park, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. We look forward to seeing you!

#### 

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 8, officers and directors will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS nominating committee (chaired by Wendy Murbach) will provide a list of recommended candidates in next month's *Skimmer*.

#### **SSAS'S 36TH ANNUAL DINNER**

Therese Lucas

Join us at the Coral House at 70 Milburn Avenue in Baldwin on **Tuesday**, **June 12** for our 36th dinner celebration. The cost is \$37 per person, which includes a cocktail hour with hot hors d'oeuvres; appetizer; salad; choice of three entrees; dessert; and soda, coffee, or tea. A vegetarian entree will be available and there will be a cash bar.

There are no sales at the door; reservations must be made in advance. Please send your check and the form below to me at 983 Bellmore Rd, North Bellmore NY 11710-3714.

We will be offering a unique assortment of auction and raffle items, including works by well-known artists. A 50–50 drawing, which will be open to all dinner guests, will be held. The Birdathon drawing will be held for all those who participate in that fundraiser.

Toby Tobias will join us again this year, entertaining us with his smooth voice and lilting guitar (visit www. tobytoby.com to read about him).

See you at 6:30 P.M. in Coral House's Colonial Room!

#### 

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 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.

#### **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

#### RESERVATION FOR CORAL HOUSE ON JUNE 12

NAME:	
PHONÉ #:	
ADDDECC.	
NUMBER OF PEOPLE:	
AMOUNT ENCLOSED:	

### 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



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Laurie Luxner Raisher, Treasurer	378-4025
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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!

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NAME:		
ADDRESS:		
PHONE NO.:		
E-MAIL:		