OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 37. NUMBER 8 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAY-AUGUST 2007

NEXT MEETING

Enid Klein

DATE:

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

TIME:

7:30 p.m.

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER:

Taldi Walter

TOPIC:

From the Black Oystercatcher to Black

Gold: Challenges and Opportunities in

<u>Alaska</u>

Alaska encompasses more than 600,000 square miles of rugged mountains, grinding glaciers, endless tundra, diverse temperate rainforests, and winding coastlines. From the Spectacled Eider and Yellow-billed Loon found in America's Arctic to the Black Oystercatcher and the Marbled Godwit (pictured on p. 3) found on the southern coastline, Alaska's birdlife diversity is astounding. Alaska also has an abundance of iconic wildlife species, including grizzlies, caribou, Bald Eagles, humpback whales, and wolves, many of which are endangered elsewhere.

The current administration and some members of Congress have advocated vastly accelerating the extraction of oil, gas, and mineral deposits in this important ecological area. Audubon seeks a balance between resource extraction and protecting internationally critical habitat.

Taldi Walter joined the National Audubon Society's Washington, DC Policy Office as the Alaska Field Coordinator after the recent completion of her master's degree in biology. Taldi will present an informative slide show, showcasing some of the important natural areas and brilliant birds found in wild Alaska. The presentation will explore some of Alaska's natural treasures set aside decades ago for the benefit of wildlife and the American public. She will highlight the imminent and compelling challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Tongass National Forest, Chugach National Forest, and National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska. Join us for our last monthly meeting until September!

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 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.
SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!

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.

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, city residents (and old-time SSAS members) Chris Cooper and Lloyd Spitalnik have agreed 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 and e-mail address,

to: Joanne Del Prete, 20 Ceil Pl., Bethpage NY 11714-4503. 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. Since Joanne does not expect to be able to join us, contact Michael Sperling at mssperling@optonline.net or 221-3921 if you need to cancel or have any questions.

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 lo-

cal 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 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!

Elliatt Kutner

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

	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 6	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
May 13	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 20	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Aug. 5	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Aug. 12	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Aug. 19	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Aug. 26	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
Sep. 2	Labor Day Weekend — No Walk
Sep. 9	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Sep. 16	Marine Nature Study Area (Oceanside)

(516) 887-1541

ARTHUR C. SNOW

Fax: (516) 887-1553

Certified Public Accountant

29 Broadway, Suite 200 Lynbrook, New York 11563-2520 e-mail: ACSnowCPA@verizon.net

SSAS'S FLEA MARKET IN JUNE

For this year's flea market, we have gratefully accepted an offer made by SSAS members and flea market veterans Nancy & Bill Youngfert to use their house as the location. The Youngferts are inviting their neighbors to participate, which should give us some additional driveway and sidewalk space if needed.

We need stuff to sell and whatever you donate can be claimed as a tax deduction. So, please keep us in mind if you have items that you no longer need. Highly recommended items include books (except encyclopedias), glassware, camping equipment, jewelry, knickknacks, toys,

curtains, gardening tools, plants, blankets, and records. Clothing accessories are welcome,

but clothing itself (i.e., anything that comes in many sizes) and large furniture are not. You can price items by yourself or leave that to us. If there are any donated items that you want back in the event that

they're not sold, please let us know; otherwise, they will be donated to other organizations.

As mentioned in recent Skimmers, the date is **Saturday**, **June 2**, with a rain date of Sunday, June 3 (call the Youngferts if the weather is questionable or call Michael Sperling the night before). The sale will take place from 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., with setup beginning at 7 A.M. If you can't be there that morning, there are several other options:

- ë Flea market chairperson Maureen Rube (352-4327) and Nancy Youngfert (352-8376) have offered to pick up items during the two weeks leading up to the sale.

Directions: The Youngferts' house is at 258 Roosevelt Avenue in Franklin Square. Directions and maps will be available at our May meeting. From Hempstead Turnpike (Route 24), take New Hyde Park Road north for a few blocks and turn left onto Tulip Avenue. Make the second right onto Roosevelt Avenue; the house is on the right on the second block. [From the Southern State Parkway, Franklin Ave. (Exit 16 north) becomes New Hyde Park Road when it crosses Route 24.]

CHAPERONES NEEDED IN AUGUST

Thanks to the efforts of Betty Borowsky, this will be the tenth year that SSAS sends disadvantaged children from a school district in our area to the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center's summer day camp program. Our objective is to give the children an opportunity to be exposed to nature and the environment for four days (**August 20–23**), and perhaps have them learn a little about conservation.

Our biggest expense is providing a bus to Oyster Bay. If you can be a bus chaperone for a few days in August or assist us in any other way, please call Betty at 764-3596 for details.

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 the last Skimmer are:

Island Park	Kathryn T. Baumann
Lawrence	Dennis Kirchner
Levittown	George Salvato
Lynbrook	Dorothy Angermann
Massapequa	Ingrid DeMilo, Paul D. Epstein,
	Emilie Misloy, Norma Paoli
Merrick	Norman Diament, Lorraine
	Mesick, Hahn Pugliese
Oceanside	Charles P. Adler, J. E. Franks,
	Gloria B. Geraci, Matty Jager,
	Rosalie Kaplan, Jennifer
	Orandello
Rockville Centre	Marilyn Dallas, P. Labato
Seaford	Carol Hefferen
Valley Stream	Sherry Ahrens, Donna Sicari
West Hempstead	Mark Kaminsky, John Lund
Woodmere	Paula Kelson
************	<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+<+
AUDUBON MEME	BERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

VOLUNTEERS I	FOR WILDLIFE (631) 423-0982

MAINE AUDUBON CAMP SCHOLARSHIP STILL NEEDS AN APPLICANT!

Despite listings in the December/January and February Skimmers, nobody returned an application for our all-expenses-paid (except transportation) scholarship for a youngbirder (age 14–17) to attend the Hog Island Audubon Center's "Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens" session from **June 24–30**. The camp's director, Seth Benz, recently offered to extend our deadline until May 4, so we are once again hoping for an applicant; half of the scholarship would be funded by National Audubon Society and half by SSAS. Here's the description from www.maineaudubon.org:

Advised by world-renowned birding expert and author Kenn Kaufman and led by outdoor educators Laurie McLaughlin and Doug Wentzel of Shaver's Creek Environmental Center in Pennsylvania, a small group of teenagers interested in birds will experience Audubon fieldwork firsthand. Learn field identification tips, birdsong recognition, conservation practices, and more from nationally known ornithologists. Alongside biologists, monitor endangered Piping Plovers at their breeding grounds and venture out to a seabird island with Audubon's Project Puffin to learn more about conservation and restoration methods. This one-of-a-kind session combines an array of field trips to various habitats with slide presentations, workshops, and use of the camp's bird-study skins, audio and videotapes, and reference library. A special guest in 2007 is author-naturalist Scott Weidensaul. Limited to 13 participants.

If you're interested in applying, contact Wendy Murbach at Wmrbch@aol.com or 546-6303 today.

JOIN THE BIRDATHON!

Jim Remsen

It's hard to believe, but this year SSAS will conduct its twentieth 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 and over 125 species may be identified by the two teams that visit about a half-dozen locations. 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 previous years; we hope you will continue and that more people will join us.

Mark the dates on your calendar if you haven't already — Friday, May 11 from 5:00 р.м. until Saturday, May 12 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 time.

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 11. If you have any uncertainty about whether it will be postponed, please call me at (631) 957-0949 or (631) 798-8942 by 3 o'clock on May 11. This may save unnecessary trips.

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 me.

Our schedule of starting places and leaders is as follows: Friday, May 11 at 5 P.M. Meet Ken and Karen Wenzel at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh; Paul Butkereit at Jones Beach's Coast Guard Station; or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot).

Saturday, May 12. Meet Ken and Karen at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8 A.M.; Paul at the Ryan Building behind Mercy Hospital at 6:30 A.M.; or Joe and Jim

at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh at

5:45 A.M. Other meeting places on Saturday for the Remsen/ Grupp team will Muttontown Preserve (most likely the gate on Route 106) at 8 а.м., Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area at approxi-

mately 11 A.M., and Jamaica

Bay Wildlife Refuge at approximately 1:15 P.M. Please try to notify me if you plan to go with one of these groups so they will know who to expect. Meeting times at Oceanside and Jamaica Bay for my team are estimates; we can be as much as 15 minutes earlier or 30 minutes later, depending on traffic conditions.

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 vourself!

Note on Submitting Pledges: Pledges submitted to me must be received (not mailed) by June 2 to be eligible for prizes. I will be away beginning June 9 and will not be at the annual dinner. If you want pledge forms, I can supply them. Let's make our 2007 Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

Birdathon Chairperson: James Remsen, Jr., 8 Venetian Blvd., Lindenhurst, NY 11757.

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

Explore the coast

with the **AMERICAN**

ITTORAL SOCIETY

JAMAICA BAY BIRD WALK (Sat., May 12, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Join leader Don Riepe during peak spring migration. Call the refuge to reserve, (718) 318-4340. Free.

HORSESHOE CRAB MATING RITUAL WALKS (Sat., June 2 & 16). Meet at Jamaica Bay Refuge at 9 A.M. for a visit to the shoreline to observe hundreds of the ancient invertebrates as they come ashore to lay their eggs. Call Don. Free.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISES (Sat., June 2 & 16). Join us at 5 p.m. for a 3-hour narrated tour of the backwater marshes of Jamaica Bay. Learn about the history, ecology, and wildlife of this 9,000 acre preserve. See egrets, herons, ibis, oystercatchers, and nesting osprey, peregrine falcon, and Forster's tern. Cost: \$45 includes tour, wine & cheese,

MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 8-10). Hike the beaches, dunes, bluffs, and woods, and learn about wildlife, coastal ecology, and geology. Cost: \$345 includes 2 nights at the luxurious Manor House (heated indoor/outdoor pools, jacuzzi, spacious lobby and suites), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, star watch plus free pickup at LIRR station. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe..

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

PLOVER VOLUNTEERS WANTED

John Zarudsku

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 Ployer 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 (pictured) 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 SSAS member John Zarudsky, Conservation Biologist, at 897-4126 (work) or 486-5272.

********************************** 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 he sitate 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.

********************************** COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS NEEDED!

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 (none so far), so apply!

NOMINATIONS FOR 2007-2008 SSAS BOARD

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) has recruited the following candidates:

President - Michael Sperling

Vice President - Wendy Murbach

Treasurer – Laurie Raisher

Recording Secretary — Ruth Aptacker Corresponding Secretary - Alice Blaustein

Director — Joe Landesberg (through June 2010)

Director — Theresa Perez (through June 2010)

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************************************ OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list OUR WEB SITE (incl. online store) www.ssaudubon.org



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MAKE A RESERVATION FOR OUR ANNUAL DINNER!

On June 12; form and details on enclosed sheet!

SPRING CLEANUP TIME AT BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

On **Sunday, April 29**, from 1 P.M. until whenever (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 and funds from the county's Environmental Bond Act Program), 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.

NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER A Weekend at a Catskill Mountains Inn and a New Bird for Our List

Joe Grupp

For many years, my wife Dolores and I have spent a "get away from it all" weekend at the Alpine Inn, in the heart of the Catskill Mountains, early each spring and fall. This Nature Tale, however, begins on a Thursday in March, the day before we left for the inn and while doing a formal survey of bird populations at Valley Stream State Park along with a small group of other SSAS birders. It was there, during the small talk that usually accompanies such ventures, that Steve Schellenger, a participant in the survey, learned of our plans.

Steve frequently tracks down the rarer species of birds that have been reported, such as a Scott's Oriole in Pennsylvania, a concentration of Short-eared Owls in Fort Edward in upstate New York, Bald Eagles along the Hudson River, a Smith's Longspur at Jones Beach, a Western Tanager at a backyard feeder in Baldwin (adjacent to Brookside Preserve), and a Bullock's Oriole in the heart of the Catskills. Steve told me that the Bullock's Oriole had been regularly frequenting feeders in a backyard in the village of Phoenicia, which is only a 20-minute ride from the inn where we were spending the weekend. Serious birding was not in our plans for that weekend, but the longer he and I talked about the bird and the directions to that backyard, the more I knew that our plans would not really change but I was sure we would alter them enough to allow us to attempt to find the Bullock's Oriole. The task even seemed easy, as I was familiar with the area where the bird was found. Steve also mentioned that the bird was so regular that if you walked down the streets in town with binoculars hanging from your neck, any resident you passed would tell you where the bird could be found without even having to be asked.

On Friday, our usual three-hour trip to the inn took six hours as a mix of freezing rain and sleet made the driving treacherous, and it remained so even as the precipitation changed to snow as we traveled north. About a half-foot of snow was on the ground when we arrived at the Alpine Inn, but there was more to come. By morning, the snow depth grew to a foot and a half. The window of our room provided a frame for a beautiful winter scene as daylight fell upon a thin, lichen encrusted, tall, double-trunked sugar maple tree that was backed by a stand of large dark hemlock trees that had snow piled high on their branches. It was the type of scene that one might find on a Christmas card. Relaxed in our warm, dry room, we simply enjoyed it

By late morning, the roads had been cleared and were safe to travel on. So, with boots on our feet and binoculars in hand, we headed for the village of Phoenicia to try and find the Bullock's Oriole. A winter of snow and the previous day's foot and a half resulted in large piles of snow, from shoveling and plowing, distorting some of the town's landmarks. Seeing an obviously local man carrying a snow shovel, I stopped to ask him if we were headed toward the yard the rare bird frequented. Of course, in spite of Steve telling me that any local person in town could tell me where the bird was located, the gentleman did not even know there was a rare bird around. Sharing Steve's statement with him, we all got a good-natured laugh out of it. While chatting with him for a minute or two, I realized that the yard we were looking for, which is boarded on one side by a small firehouse's parking lot, was less than a block away.

Parking in the lot, we trudged about ten yards to a splitrail fence and stood in snow over our boots. It was a cold, but thankfully not bitter cold, day. The yard had a number of feeders in it. All of them looked empty, even as a number of Dark-eyed Juncos (pictured) seemed to be getting food from one or two. The snow in the yard had not been

broken, which made me wonder if the feeders were still being filled. What I was really wondering, especially as minutes passed with no sign of the ori-



ole, was did it abandon the area for lack of a food supply? What gave me hope, though, was there were three half grapefruits mounted on feeders. Two looked mostly eaten and one was not touched. Orioles love grapefruit and that gave me some confidence that the bird was still around.

After standing in the snow for a good length of time, we began to feel the cold seep into our boots and I turned to head back to the car, planning to come back later. As I

turned and took a few steps towards the car, Dolores exclaimed, "There it is! It just flew into the thicket on the other side of the property." I had trouble finding it at first, as in spite of its bright orange color it was perfectly camouflaged as it perched in the foliage of the thicket, but it was not long before the bird was out feeding at the grapefruit and at another feeder. We spent a good deal of time observing the bird as it moved about. We could not have asked for better observations than those that we got.

The Bullock's Oriole is an orange bird that has black wings that have large white patches; a black back, cap, and throat patch; and a black line through the eye. The observations were enhanced by the snow-covered ground and the light it reflected onto the bird. The bird is a western species found in the breeding season west of the Great Plains. Where its range overlaps with that of our familiar Baltimore Oriole, the two species sometimes mate, producing hybrid offspring. Not too long ago, the Bullock's and Baltimore Orioles were considered to be a single species and were called the Northern Oriole. Today they are recognized as individual species. Their winter range is in the southern U.S. down through Central America to the northern area of South America. What was a Bullock's Oriole doing here? Who knows?

We left the Catskills with a warn feeling, knowing that we had a good weekend. We had spent relaxed time in a good inn, the snow added to the beauty of the woodlands and mountains, the food was excellent, AND WE GOT A NEW BIRD. Thanks Steve!

FIRE ISLAND WILDERNESS UPDATE

At the end of February, the following update was sent to us by Joe Zysman of the Fire Island Wilderness Coalition (which, as mentioned in the December/January Skimmer, includes SSAS):

This is to relate the good news that we have made some significant progress in our efforts to get the National Park Service (NPS) and Fire Island National Seashore (FINS) to include a full Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) in the General Management Plan (GMP) they are developing.

We recently received a letter from the NPS Regional Director containing a commitment to include a Wilderness Management Plan as part of the General Management Plan, in the following language:

"There is general agreement at both the Regional and Washington levels that updating the 1983 Wilderness Management Plan within the context of the General Management Plan is feasible and desirable. Fire Island's GMP is expected to define management conditions and strategies for the federal wilderness area and will supersede the 1983 Wilderness Management Plan."

This was the main objective of the joint coalition letter to Superintendent Reynolds that almost all member groups signed onto, and copies of which were sent to the Regional Director and to our federal legislators. There is little doubt

that this decision has been in response to that group letter, along with the many individual group scoping comments sent to FINS which underscored the importance of that objective.

This is a major step, but it is still only a step. Procedurally, the letter does not indicate precisely what form the WMP will take. For purposes of clarity and to facilitate the ability of the public to assess its contents, the WMP should be a distinct entity — a separate chapter or appendix in the GMP — and not dispersed in different subject area components of the overall plan.

At the same time, there is also no evidence in the letter as to the level of detail that the WMP will contain. "Define management conditions and strategies" is somewhat imprecise — there needs to be a further commitment to the WMP's inclusion of full discussion of all relevant wilderness planning issues, and not leaving some issues or components of some issues for consideration at a later date.

In the coming months, we will be following up with NPS and FINS staff to secure clarification and commitment regarding the procedural issues raised above. We will also be meeting with our federal legislators to convey these concerns to them. And beyond these procedural considerations, the substantive content of the plan, when a draft is issued, will be critical.

Now that the period for public scoping comments is over, the Planning Team will be working on their "Foundation" document, which will contain information about the Park's overall purposes, significance, and themes, prior to developing alternatives for public review in a draft plan. It is not clear if there will be any public involvement at this stage, prior to the issuance of the draft plan.

THANKS FROM YOUR EDITOR

Michael Sperling

This issue finishes my 17th year as your newsletter editor, but it sure doesn't feel like I've been doing this for nearly that long — and that's because I've had plenty of support along the way. I thank everyone who contributed



to the past year's eight issues. In addition to the people whose names appear in the articles (especially word-count champion Joe

Grupp), I want to thank the ones who have helped out behind the scenes: Bill Eichholz for making many trips to F&B Printers and spoiling me by making several deliveries to my house; Christine Kelly and Dolores Rogers for their F&B trips; Wendy Murbach for maintaining our membership database; and Wendy and especially Therese Lucas for helping with the labeling.

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

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

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