# OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2007

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Enid Klein

DATE:

Tuesday, October 9, 2007

TIME:

7:30 P.M.

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: TOPIC: Stephen Feingold
The Beauty of Birds

Stephen Feingold has been an avid photographer since his early teenage years. He was the chairman of the photo committee of New York City Audubon and instructor for their nature photography course for 8 years. His nature presentations have been given to NYC Audubon, NYC Sierra Club, the American Littoral Society, and many camera clubs in NYC and on Long Island.

Our meeting's slide presentation will be a portfolio of birds photographed in Florida, New York, and Maine, including images of Burrowing Owls, Atlantic Puffins, and some of our commonly seen species. Places visited will include the Everglades, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Machias Seal Island. Steve portrays birds in a flattering light and composition, and looks for their unique behaviors. 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 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 | \$

#### **WATCH THE HAWK MIGRATION WITH SSAS**

Theresa Perez

Don't think late September or early October is prime beach time? Hawks and falcons do! Heading south for the winter, hundreds of these beautiful birds of prey follow the coastline in search of a quick meal as they go, and Robert Moses State Park is a popular flyover site. So popular, in fact, that a hawk-watch platform was erected years ago and is manned each and every day by dedicated volunteers (the Fire Island Raptor Enumerators) who count them for two months as they fly by.

See American Kestrels hover, then dive for mice and insects. Watch as Merlins (see p. 2), the small falcon with the big-bird attitude, chase birds three times their size. Cooper's Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, the aerodynamic Peregrine Falcon, and Northern Harriers are also likely to make appearances. If it's an extremely lucky day, we may even catch a glimpse of our national bird, the Bald Eagle. Train your eyes to identify these birds in flight, learn what makes them the efficient hunters they are, and become a part of an annual tradition that links everyday citizens with scientific research by joining SSAS on the hawk-watch platform next to Field 5 on **Saturday, October 6** at 10 A.M. Bring binoculars, sunscreen, and dress for the weather! For information and to register, call me at 473-9341 (cell).

While the program is free, Robert Moses State Park charges \$8 to park. Field 5 is the easternmost lot. Daily counts from the past two years and yearly summaries going back to 1982 can be seen at www.battaly.com/fire.

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.

#### \*\* 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 (second Monday this February) 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. 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	Judith Goebel, Bert Smith
Bellmore	Robert Arnold
East Rockaway	Helen Gunning
Farmingdale	
Freeport	H. & Alda Levander
Glen Oaks	Rajendra P. Agnish
Hempstead	Elaine Nolan
Hicksville	Richard Weedon
Island Park	Nellie Zuccaro
Levittown	Maureen Cusati, Julia Davidson,
	Ron Schacht
Lynbrook	Marion Gay, Ken Ley
Manhasset	Joan Parry
Massapequa	Thomas Noll
Merrick	Neville Hughes
Oceanside	Bonny Glavin
Rockville Centre	Leon Berman
Stewart Manor	Joanna E. Piazzini
Valley Stream	Lee M. James
Wantagh	Elaine Cioffi
Woodmere	Edna Sack
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#### **BELATED FLEA MARKET THANKS**

In last month's flea market wrap-up by Maureen Rube, your editor was supposed to add the names of people whose items he had picked up, but the *Skimmers* had already been printed by the time I remembered. Apologies to Joan Betts and her mother, Gloria & Charles Chapman, and Betsy Gulotta; we thank you for your donations, which nearly included a raccoon that went past my car's open door while I was carrying things toward it.

#### **BROOKSIDE PRESERVE CLEANUP TIME!**

On **Sunday, October 28**, 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 was rescued from oblivion and is managed 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 and have applied for county environmental bond act funds. The guides may be viewed at 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 H.S.). Please bring gloves, rakes, bags, and/or friends of all ages.

If you're interested in attending Brookside Preserve Committee meetings (which are often not announced in the *Skimmer*), please e-mail mssperling@optonline.net or call Marilyn, Betsy, or George (see back page).

# AUDUBON NEW YORK ADDS LONG ISLAND BIRD CONSERVATION COORDINATOR

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Carolyn Spilman

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Long Island Bird Conservation Coordinator with Audubon New York. This is a new position that was designed to provide a stronger Audubon presence here on Long Island, where we have a large concentration

of state Important Bird Areas and support a substantial number of WatchList species of conservation concern. Many of the priority species found on Long Island are beachnesting birds that are found in few other places in the state, including Piping Plover and Roseate, Common (pictured), and Least Terns.

The goals of the new Long Island Bird Conservation Program are to dispel some of the myths surrounding endangered species conservation efforts, address threats to beach-nesting birds and their habitats, and to expand stewardship efforts on Long Island's beaches. My aim is to cooperate with chapter educators and Audubon volunteers to develop effective outreach activities and educational programs that address the issues related to beach-nesting bird conservation. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about this new program, visit http://ny.audubon.org/BirdSci\_CoastalBirdConservation.html orplease feel free to contact me at P.O. Box 1635, Southold, NY 11971; cspilman@audubon.org; or 631-477-6456 (phone and fax).

#### **BUDGET 2007-2008**

Bank Fees	\$100
Brookside Preserve	
College Scholarships	
Conferences	
Conservation	
Donations	
Education	
Festivals	
High School Scholarships	
Insurance	\$1,000
Library	\$1,400
Membership	\$1,000
Miscellaneous	<b>7</b> 1' <b>3</b> \$400
Office Expenses	<b></b>
Publicity	\$200
Refreshments	\$400
Skimmer	\$6,000
Speakers	\$1,000
TR Camp Scholarships/Bus	\$3,000
Total	\$23,250
*****	<b>*****</b>
(516) 887-1541	Fax: (516) 887-1553

ARTHUR C. SNOW

Certified Public Accountant

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## PRESERVING OPEN SPACE ON THE SOUTH SHORE

Jim Brown

Several real estate development projects are being considered for the South Shore of Long Island that would negatively affect the fragile environment of our barrier islands.

In Long Beach, the City Council is considering building five condominium and office towers along the community's bay front. These towers, up to 14 stories in height, would contain 500 housing units, further adding to overcrowding of the most densely populated community of Nassau County. Especially disconcerting is the fact that the initial cleanup of this brownfields site was made possible with county environmental bond act money, which was earmarked to improve the natural environment of Long Island. Also disconcerting is the fact that the City of Long Beach would be transferring public land to a private developer. This project would be an irremediable loss for the public and the environment.

Condos also threaten the barrier beach environment of Atlantic Beach. An investment group headed by Alfonse

D'Amato intends to build 100 condominium units on the property now occupied by the Sands Beach Club. The development calls for the construction of twenty buildings, two-and-a-half stories high, each unit selling for about a million dollars. This real estate scheme requires a change in zoning that would reverse a 20-year-old establishment of a "marine recreation district" in this fragile barrier island district of the Town of Hempstead. Development has historically been limited here to preserve open space and access to beaches.

Donald Trump and Steve Carl are currently building a very large restaurant and catering hall at Jones Beach State Park. The current design is approximately four times the size of the original restaurant. The expanded parking lot would eliminate open space at our publicly owned beach. Pavement would replace green space. It is estimated that the catering hall would charge approximately \$300 a plate for privately catered affairs. Why can't the State of New York get the type of restaurant it originally asked for, something more in tune with Robert Moses' original vision for our premier public beach?

The Board of SSAS urges its members to speak out and oppose these overdevelopment schemes that are threatening the fragile environment of our barrier beaches. Smart growth and sensitivity to environmental realities, not blind real estate development, are needed for our barrier islands, especially in this age of global warming and habitat loss. Write or call the officials listed below, urging them to stand up for the environment so important to us all. For more information, you can call me at 432-8156.

Long Beach:

Edwin L. Eaton

City Manager

1 West Chester Street, Long Beach, NY 11561 431-1000 x201

Town of Hempstead and Village of Atlantic Beach: Kate Murray

Town Supervisor, Hempstead 1 Washington Street, Hempstead, NY 11550 489-5000

Stephen R. Mahler Mayor, Atlantic Beach 65 The Plaza, Atlantic Beach, NY 11509 371-4600

New York State (for Jones Beach):

Carol Ash, Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 1

Albany, NY 12238

518-474-0456

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OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas\_list

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# THE OWLS WILL BE THERE! WILL YOU?

Therese Lucas

On **Saturday, October 27** from 1 to 3 p.m., SSAS will again host a Halloween party for children at Tackapausha Museum on Washington Ave. in Seaford. Tickets are \$2 for adults and \$1 for children (ages 4 to 14; free for younger children), which are the normal museum admission prices.

The afternoon event will begin with nature crafts and snacks. At 2 P.M. there will be an owl program given by Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary. A variety of live owls will be on display during the interactive presentation.

Our table of informative brochures will also be there, covering membership, birding, and conservation.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the craft table, please contact me at 221-3921 or tklwings@optonline.net.



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.



NYC AUDUBON HAWK WATCH (Sun., Sept. 30, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Meet at Bldg. 1 in Fort Tilden, Rockaway for a hike to the beach, dunes, and hawk watch platform during peak raptor migration time. Leader: Don Riepe. To reserve, call Don.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISE (Sat., Oct. 13, 4–7 P.M.). Meet in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn for a 3-hour narrated tour of the backwater marshes of the bay aboard the brand new 101-foot boat "Golden Sunshine." Learn about the history, ecology & wildlife of this 13,000-acre preserve. See egrets, herons, ibis, osprey, peregrine falcon, shorebirds, and waterfowl during peak migration time. Cost: \$45/person includes wine & cheese, fruit, drinks, snacks.

CHINCOTEAGUE/ASSATEAGUE FALL BIRDING (Nov. 1–4). An extended weekend at a great coastal preserve. See bald eagle, brown pelican, and many species of waterfowl plus wild horses, river otter, Sika deer, endangered Delmarva fox squirrel, and lots more. Cost: \$345 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, guided hikes of refuge and national seashore, plus Saturday "All-ya-can-eat" seafood dinner.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Jan. 4-6). See thousands of waterfowl during peak winter birding, seals. Cost: \$345.

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.

#### **55AS RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

Joe Grupp

During the summer months of July and August, the Research Committee surveyed the birds in Valley Stream State Park weekly; Brookside and Meroke Preserves biweekly; and the Greenbelt Trail from the Southern State Parkway to the LIE, which requires a minimum of five individual surveys, monthly.

This was accomplished through the efforts of Joe Landesberg, Steve Schellenger, Jeannette Miller, Rick Kopitsch, Mary Jane Russell, and myself. This accomplishment was a team effort, as there were times when individuals, including myself, could not participate and the surveys were done effectively by the remaining participants.

Backyard Survey Data Needed! 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.

# FEEDING TIPS Here's What Eastern Birds Like

Marlene A. Condon

Editor's note: This article (shortened a bit) came from the November/December 1994 issue of Bird Watcher's Digest.

It has been my experience that the majority of people who feed birds are not aware that the birds that frequent tube-type feeders are birds that eat only or mainly sunflower seeds, not millet. Often I have seen tube-type bird feeders filled with seed mixtures composed mostly of white millet. People assume this is appropriate because mixtures are advertised to be placed in feeders. Unfortunately, this is misinformation.

White millet is actually *very* popular among ground-feeding birds, but these birds tend not to go to raised feeders. Mourning doves, all kinds of sparrows, dark-eyed juncos, and even cardinals and red-bellied woodpeckers readily eat white millet if it is available to them on the ground, in a tray, or on a flat surface close to the ground.

If you have feeders at which birds have to land on a small perch, you should use only sunflower seeds or chips.

Tufted titmice, Carolina and/or black-capped chickadees, American goldfinches, house finches, and purple finches (and during invasion years, evening grosbeaks, pine siskins, and common redpolls) will keep your feeders busy all day long during the winter months if they are stocked with sunflower seeds. These birds simply do not eat white millet. If the mixture you bought consists of a large percentage of sunflower seeds, the aforementioned birds may pick out the millet and discard it so as to retrieve sunflower seeds, but this is a waste of their time and, therefore, a drain on their energy reserves during cold weather.

In the East, we really need only two kinds of seeds to attract most feeder birds: white millet and sunflower (niger is also very popular with finches, but rather expensive). Studies have shown some birds prefer oil-type to striped sunflower seeds, but I personally have found the birds manage with either. I usually go with whatever's less expensive, or if shelled sunflower pieces are available, I buy those, as they are easier for some birds to eat.

It's a myth that cardinals love safflower seed. They will eat it, but only if sunflower seeds and white millet are not available. It's also a myth that several kinds of birds like peanut bits. They really love peanut butter, either as is or mixed with shortening and commeal or flour. You can easily test either of these assertions by supplying safflower seeds and peanut bits, each in their own feeders, while supplying the other foods I've mentioned. The birds will take what they prefer.

Speaking of peanut butter, another myth has to do with birds choking on pure peanut butter. This has never been shown to be the case, and indeed, I myself have hand-fed chickadees unadulterated peanut butter without ever having a problem. However, the birds seem to prefer a more "fatty" version, so I now mix one part melted shortening with one part peanut butter (plain or chunky) and three to five parts commeal (which "stiffens" up the mixture enough to make it easier to feed the birds).

The following ratings are based upon my experience of feeding birds. I hope they will make your feeding program more successful and therefore more enjoyable. (An asterisk indicates a best buy.)

\*Black oil sunflower seed. Most birds love sunflower seeds. Black oil seed is a smaller seed, which may be easier for some birds to eat. Its high oil content means lots of energy for the birds.

Striped sunflower seed. This is a larger sunflower seed, but it has less oil content. Birds with beaks capable of cracking the shell will readily eat this seed, but it's not nearly as popular as black oil. There's no harm in offering this kind, but black oil is a superior seed.

Blended sunflower seed. This is a mixture of black oil and striped sunflower seeds. I see no real advantage in offering this to the birds.

Premium wild bird seed. At best this is a mixture of 30% black oil sunflower seed and 30% millet, with the remainder

a combination of cracked corn and peanut bits. This will attract a large variety of birds, some of which you may not want: crows and starlings are strongly attracted to corn and peanut bits. Also, this is not a good mixture for seed-dispensing feeders of any type. Although birdseed mixtures are popular with people, I recommend against them. It is more economical to feed only those seeds that birds actually prefer (sunflower and white millet), and you can put the seeds in the appropriate places (sunflower in any type feeder or on the ground, millet *only* in tray feeders or on the ground).

\*Sunflower chips. Hulled sunflower seeds are attractive to virtually all birds. Birds whose beaks are incapable of cracking the shells of sunflower seeds readily eat sunflower chips. Although chips are more expensive per pound, you are paying only for edible food, and not for inedible shells. Chips are highly recommended for feeding areas where you don't want either shell litter under the feeder or numerous sunflower seedlings when spring arrives.

Safflower seed. My experience with safflower is that it is not very appealing to birds. You might want to use this if you have starling or squirrel problems, since these species supposedly aren't attracted to safflower.

Peanut bits and pieces. Some birds (titmice, Carolina wrens, blue jays) will take these, but in my experience they go rancid before being consumed. I recommend using peanut butter, which is loved by many birds—use chunky PB if you want to offer peanut bits.

\*White proso millet. Ground-feeding birds (juncos, cardinals, white-throated sparrows, indigo buntings, rufous-sided towhees, etc.) love white (not red) millet. This should definitely be offered in a bird-feeding program, but preferably on the ground or on a tray.

Niger seed. This is extremely attractive to finches. However, it's not necessary to offer this, as finches also love sunflower seeds and will come just as readily to those. Think of niger as a special treat. (Note: I don't find it necessary to offer niger in a special feeder. Any tube feeder will work. I haven't had problems with spillage from typical feeders.)

**★ BIRD WALK5** 

Elliott 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.

Sep. 23	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Sep. 30	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
Oct. 7	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Oct. 14	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Oct. 21	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
Oct. 28	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Nov. 4	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 11	Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner

#### LAUGHING GULLS AT JFK

Don Riepe

Editor's note: The following originally appeared on the Jamaica Bay e-mail list. If you want lots of e-mail (most of it not specifically pertaining to birds or Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge), you can join the e-list (and others) at the website of the Neighborhood Open Space Coalition, http://www.treebranch.com/listservs.htm. Someone asked the list about Laughing Gulls and Don stepped forward with the two replies/paragraphs below; the stuff in brackets was added by me.

Yes, the Port Authority still shoots about 2,000+ gulls each summer at the airport [JFK]. Otherwise, the National Park Service is not conducting any management program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture photographs nest sites by air with a large-format camera to census the colony. There are a lot of young Laughing Gulls in the East Pond at the refuge right now [September 7] and I am seeing quite a few in the bay. I don't think the population has been greatly reduced [this year] and it has remained pretty constant at about 3,000–4,000 breeding pairs for the last 10 years. The main limiting factor, if any, on the gulls is sea level rise and shrinking marsh habitat.

Addling the eggs [preventing them from hatching] is difficult when you have so many nests in a salt marsh. Trekking through the marsh would disturb many other species nesting there. Although no one likes killing birds, shooting the individuals that cross runways is probably the least damaging to the gull population and the marsh ecosystem. The Laughing Gull regional population is very

strong and the seasonal shooting program doesn't impact the overall Northeast population at all. Keeping some pressure on the Jamaica Bay Laughing Gull colony may

also be good for endangered species such as the Piping Plover, as Laughing Gulls (pictured) have been responsible for decimating plover eggs and chicks at the Arverne beach site [in the Rockaways]. Plus the airport is very concerned about aircraft safety and bird strikes are a serious issue. I don't like killing anything, but I'd rather they shoot some of the gulls that have a propensity for flying over JFK than tamper with the colony and impact all the other species in JoCo Marsh.

# SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM FOR FINANCIALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Belty Borowsky

It was another successful year for the South Shore Audubon Society's Day Camp Scholarship Program. Each year (and this was our tenth consecutive year!) we offer children in our catchment area the opportunity to attend the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary's summer program in Oyster Bay for one week. The Society funds a school bus as well as the tuition for all the children we send; our

members volunteer to serve as chaperones on the bus. The 2007 program was funded by our general dues and by a special grant from Audubon New York.

This year we worked with the Farmingdale School District to select the children, and in the end we were able to send seven to TR's program.

As always, there is a long list of people to thank for their efforts. First, we thank the staff and administrators of the Farmingdale School District, who selected the children and contacted their parents. Then, we thank our chaperones, Alice Blaustein, Wendy Murbach, and Laurie Raisher. I also wish to thank Gloria Berkowitz, Marilyn Hametz, Maureen Rube, and Michael Sperling, who made themselves available to substitute in an emergency. This year, the chaperones did double duty; not only making sure all the children were safe, but also helping with some clerical tasks at the Sanctuary. We send our children to TR during the week after most other summer day camp programs end, but before school begins; otherwise the children would be involved in these other activities and would be unable to attend. Unfortunately, the counselors who are in college must return to school during that same week; this year TR did not have enough clerical support during that week. Our chaperones enthusiastically pitched in and helped wherever they were needed.

And, as always, I thank most heartily the staff at TR, who make our children very welcome and make lots of allowances for the uncertainties of our program. In truth, I never really know how many children we'll be sending until I see who comes to the bus on the first day. I especially wish to thank Aaron Virgin, the Director of TR; and Chrissy Albanese, the Director of Education.

This year it rained three of the four days, sometimes quite heavily. But TR's resourceful staff managed to provide meaningful activities indoors while making sure the children got outside as soon as there was a letup in the rain.

It always amazes me to see how soon our scholarship children adapt to a situation which has to be very different from what they're used to. When they first get to the Sanctuary, they look shell-shocked. Most of them have never been in the woods. But it's not long (generally about 15 minutes or so!) before they are entirely comfortable and are actively participating in all the activities. In fact, one of the children asked me "how come it's only four days?" Well, I know all of us wish we could do more.

The most poignant thing any of the children said to me this year came from one little girl who, on the last day, when a campfire was made and each child got to roast two marshmallows, said to me "I never had roasted marshmallows before; I've always wanted to do this!" How wonderful to provide this (and lots more!) to our children.

#### **BIRDSEED SALE NEWS**

Michael Sperling

After SSAS's birdseed sale last November, Paul Butkereit considered the steadily declining number of pounds sold in recent years and thought that it might be time for us to stop running the sale, but the board decided to continue. Unfortunately, Paul has now discovered that the company that has been providing the seed is no longer able to make arrangements to leave a trailer for us and we have been unable to find a company that is willing to do so.

I contacted Huntington Audubon Society for possible alternatives, but there were none that would fit our needs. They are having a sale, however, on Saturday, November 3, 2007, at Huntington High School off of Oakwood Road, and "sell high quality seeds as well as feeders and other nature related items." If you would like to have a prepaid seed order reserved for you, have any questions, or need directions, you can contact HAS's Sharon Brody at (516) 433-5590; preorders are due October 10. A limited quantity of extra seed will be available on the day of the sale. The majority of the proceeds go to support the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay.

Paul also discovered that our longtime advertiser, Wild Bird Feed Barn in Farmingdale, has started a two-month going-out-of-business sale (50% off everything except seed as of September 8).

SSAS's first Bird Seed Savings Day took place in November 1976, long before nurseries, home improvement chains, supermarkets, websites, wild bird stores, etc., were selling high-quality seeds. At its peak, we held sales each autumn and winter, selling over 50,000 pounds of seed, most of it to nonmembers; last year we sold 14,000 pounds. On behalf of the board, I want to thank Paul for running the sales for three decades and for scheduling good weather for nearly every one of them.

#### 

Joe Grupp

Very early this summer, we had the good fortune to visit Yellowstone National Park for the third year in a row. One day while there, we found a small (less than a mile long) nature trail located in the northeast section of the park. We found it while driving aimlessly, searching for points of interest, outstanding scenery, wildlife, and whatever Yellowstone had to offer that day.

The trail is located among some grand scenery and a diverse habitat, and its setting compelled us to stop to explore it. The trail winds through the edge of a sagebrush flat and an old burn that once was forest and is now going through the revegetation process. The expansive view looking over the sagebrush is cloaked in the gray-green of the sage and the green grasses of the more open areas, with a hint of tan from the soil they are growing in. Looking

out over the sage, it feels as if the landscape is flowing away from you. The old burn is a combination of densely packed young trees and shrubs and some open areas. Weathered, gray, branchless trees killed by the fire stand tall among the new growth, while others lie tangled among the same new growth on the ground.

Two things were evident as we walked down the trail—a soft cool breeze which provided delightful relief from a hot sun and the fairly loud song of a not-too-distant bird. It was not long until we spotted the singer on a small snag. It must also have seen us, because it dropped to the ground to be hidden in the vegetation. We took a few more steps down the trail and we found it again, singing from the top of a sagebrush shrub, but then it also dropped out of sight before we could get our binoculars on it. Finally, after a few more singing and dropping episodes, we got an excellent view of the bird.

The song of the bird even before we saw it suggested thrasher to me. Observing it through binoculars suggested the same. The bird had a thrasher's conformation, a dull gray-brown back, a heavily striped breast that almost appeared to have a shadow across it when viewed from the side, and some white spots on the lower tail edge. Standing there as the bird sang, I flipped through the pages of my western field guide and quickly identified the bird as a Sage Thrasher. My satisfaction was twofold, as not only did I see a bird new to me but its name perfectly fit the setting in which we found it.

For a birder, things don't get much better than a good observation of a "new" bird, but this trail provided us with even more. At one point we were as close to small Unita ground squirrels as possible, as they scurried under and out from under the boardwalk where we were standing. At a different spot, we were no more than ten yards from a



coyote as it moved down a very shallow draw away from us. It occasionally sniffed the ground or vegetation, and at times paused as if ready

to pounce on an unsuspecting critter to obtain a meal. We watched it until it rounded a bend and was out of sight.

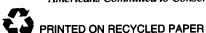
As we approached the car, it seemed as if our observations were over. Then we got a surprise that made a great walk even better. A park biologist stood in the parking area holding a radio antenna in the air. I asked him if he was tracking radio-collared wolves, and he replied yes and invited us over. He turned the volume of his radio receiver up and we heard PING — ping ping, PING — ping ping, over and over. The signal producing the pings came from the collar of a single wolf about a mile and a half from where we were standing.

We drove away from that trail in a mood that may best be described as excited satisfaction.

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation



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