OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 39. NUMBER 3 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2008

NEXT MEETING

Enid Klein



DATE: REASON:

Monday, November 10, 2008 Library is closed on Veterans' Day

TIME:

7:30 P.M.

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: Andrew Manilt

TOPIC:

4 Steps to a Toxic-Free Lawn

It is possible to have a lush, green, healthy lawn and trees without the use of pesticides that may be harmful to your family's health. At this month's meeting, the Neighborhood Network's Research Director, Andrew Manitt, who is the editor of their Organic Lawn Guide, will lay out simple steps for an organic maintenance program; show us why "feeding the soil" helps a lawn build up natural defenses to resist disease, weeds, and insect pests; and will answer your questions. 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.

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

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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wendu Murbach

Thanks to the Baldwin Oaks Civic Association chaired by Jackie Bell, Nassau County will have a new preserve. The Coes Neck property, which was being looked at by Molloy College for use as playing fields for its college teams, is now slated to become 35 acres of natural land and lake, remaining open space in a county which is covered by developed land.

Ms. Bell and her Civic Association have worked tirelessly toward this outcome for her community. She came to South Shore Audubon's Board Meeting in June to ask for our support. Your Board of Directors voted overwhelmingly to aid their effort, because their goal fits so well with our mission to protect natural habitat.

A meeting was scheduled on Tuesday, September 16th with Thomas Suozzi, Nassau County Executive, in the firehouse where Baldwin Oaks Civic Association normally holds its meetings. Many from the Civic Association and the community attended this meeting, and I was there as was Jim Brown, your Conservation Chairperson. None of us was at all sure what the outcome of the meeting would be. So, it was truly wonderful when after asking what the community wanted to do with the Coes Neck property and hearing that the vast majority wanted it to be a forever wild preserve, Mr. Suozzi told us that the property would be handled exactly as the community wished.

Mr. Suozzi asked that a community committee be formed to decide what was wanted, to write it up, and to present it to his aides at the next meeting of the Civic Association. The committee was constituted and has been walking through the acreage, meeting to talk about it, and examining other preserves, notably Brookside Preserve in Freeport/Baldwin, Meroke/Faith Laursen Preserve in Merrick, and Mill Pond Preserve in Wantagh.

I would like to thank Jackie Bell and the Baldwin Oaks Civic Association for all their efforts, to offer our continued support, and to wish them joy in their victory.

AUDUBON CALENDARS

Therese Lucas

We are pleased to once again offer an assortment of Audubon calendars at a reduced rate of \$10 each, tax free — Engagement, Birding Trails, 365 Songbirds, Hiking America, Nature, and Wildflowers. Calendars will be available at meetings and bird walks.



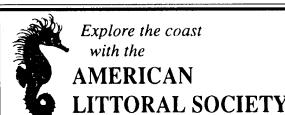
Elliatt Kutner

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.

Oct. 26	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 2	Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner
Nov. 9	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 16	Jones Beach Fishing Pier (Field #10)
Nov. 23 & 30	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Dec. 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
*******	·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+·+

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list



CHINCOTEAGUE/ASSATEAGUE (Nov. 6-9). Stay at beautiful Refuge Motor Inn and visit beach, marsh, and ponds of refuge & national seashore. See famous ponies and lots of waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. Best crab cakes & oysters. Call Don. NEW YORK AQUARIUM (Sat., Nov. 15). Meet 10 A.M. at entrance in Coney Island for a 2-1/2 hour "behind-the-scenes" tour. See sharks, penguins, sea otters, walrus, sea turtles, local & exotic fish, and Buzzy, the Electric Eel. Cost: \$25 (kids \$15). MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Jan. 9-11). Visit shorelines, walking dunes, bluffs, and woods during peak winter birding time. See scoters, loons, and seabirds galore. Cost: \$345 incl. 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 full meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, star watch, free pickup at LIRR station. FLORIDA EVERGLADES (Feb. 21-28). Visit the best wildlife areas of S. Florida, incl. N. & S. Everglades, Big Cypress and Corkscrew Swamp Preserves, Ding Darling and Loxahatchee Refuges, Wakodahatchee Boardwalk, state parks, and more. Travel by van & see roseate spoonbill, bald eagle, purple gallinule, reddish egret, wood stork, Everglades kite, burrowing and barred owls, American crocodile, lots of gators, butterflies, maybe a bobcat or river otter. Cost: \$1,795 incl. airfare, lodging, breakfasts & lunches, van, gas, park fees & guides.

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.

MY BABY SPOTTED A SPOTTED BABY

Jonathan Staller

It was the end of July and a beautiful summer day might I add. I parked my car under a tree in the parking lot of my daughter's camp. She's only two and a half, and much too young to take the bus, so I drive her to camp and pick her up.

The birds were very active that afternoon; a Northern Mockingbird was singing and a Gray Catbird was mewing. It was the chattering above me, though, that caught my attention. Looking up, I saw an American Robin perched adjacent to its nest and feeding what looked like three baby robins. The babies had their mouths wide open as their mommy passed her beak among all three.

I went into the camp to get my daughter and told some of the counselors what I saw. They seemed interested as I explained how the robins sat in line with their mouths opened wide, impatiently waiting to be fed. I took my daughter outside, lifted her up, and showed her the nest of robins. "Where daddy? I don't see it." I pointed to the nest and explained the best I could to a two and a half year old.

All of a sudden, she was very excited. "Look daddy, a baby robin!!!" How did she see it? She wasn't looking up, she was looking down. "Look daddy, it's a baby over there," and she was pointing to the ground. How I didn't see that? She was right. On the ground not far from us was a baby robin that just fledged from its nest. Its chest was spotted and it still had a couple of down feathers attached to its head.

People say that I have "eagle eyes" when I go on bird walks. I can't wait to take my daughter on a bird walk. I can't wait for her to show me my next life bird. I can't wait for my daughter to say like she always does, "daddy, I love you."



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THANKS, THANKS, AND CONGRATULATIONS

In last month's *Skimmer*, we failed to thank Marilyn Hametz for helping to organize our Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary summer camp scholarship program this past summer. While Mary Jane Russell was on vacation, Marilyn phoned all our participants the week before the camp.

We also appreciate the efforts of Joe Landesberg for organizing the awarding of an SSAS scholarship at the graduation ceremonies of Baldwin, Freeport, Oceanside, and Rockville Centre (South Side) High Schools. We congratulate and wish success to the winners: Tim White, Christopher Roca, Samantha Rosen, and Allison Boyle.

★★ WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER ★★

While National Audubon continues its transition to a new membership database vendor, we continue to wait for a list of new NAS members to welcome. So, our latest chapter-only member gets her own paragraph; we welcome Dolores Clancy of Freeport.

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BIRDS TO HELP

At www.audubonathome.org/birdstohelp are downloadable single-page PDF files for 30 species nation-wide. Species to help include Cedar Waxwing, Gray Catbird (whose sheet is below, copyrighted by Audubon), Northern Cardinal, Northern Mockingbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Song Sparrow, Brown Thrasher, Northern Flicker, and Eastern Towhee. The next two paragraphs are from the website:

Backyards and other private lands provide essential habitat for many species of birds. Ensuring that birds have good sources of food, nesting sites, clear water, and protective cover becomes more important every day, as more habitat is lost to development, degradation, and fragmentation.

Birds are important indicators of environmental health and play a significant role in maintaining the earth's ecological balance—propagating plant life as pollinators and seed dispersers, and controlling insect populations. Birds also bring beauty and enjoyment to our lives as one of the most accessible forms of wildlife. If their populations are in decline, it can mean that our natural resources

are in trouble as well. No matter where you live, there are birds that need your help.

Gray Catbirds

Melodious songbirds, Gray Catbirds nest in thickets and shrubs from British Columbia, northern Utah, and New Mexico east to the Atlantic. Fairly common in some suburban areas, catbirds can be attracted to more urbanized areas by planting native shrubs and bushes for nesting, foraging, and roosting sites.

What Gray Cathirds Need

Food: Catbirds forage on the ground and in shrubs, bushes, and low trees for fruit and small insects, including grasshoppers, beetles, and caterpillars.

Favorite fruits include blackberries, wild

cherries, wild grapes, sumac, blueberries, elderberries, serviceberries, and hollies.

Nesting: Catbirds usually build nests halfway up in a patch of shrubs, bushes, or tangled vines less than 9 feet tall. They will also nest in foundation plantings and along fence rows.

Shelter: The catbird's roosting and sleeping behavior is almost unknown, but they are believed to use the sheltered branches of trees and shrubs.

Other: Catbirds will drink and bathe at a birdbath or small pond. They are susceptible to predation by cats and collisions with picture windows. Low-flying catbirds also frequently collide with automobiles.

How You Can Help

- Plant fruiting native shrubs and bushes, including sumacs, wild grapes, and other catbird favorites.
- Provide raisins, chopped fruits, or fresh grape jelly on a platform feeder with a red surface.
 - · May also come to mealworm feeders.
- Avoid using pesticides that may kill insects used as food, or herbicides that destroy shrubby patches used as foraging habitat.
- Plant thick patches or rows of diverse native bushes, shrubs, and low ornamental trees. Favorites include dogwoods, hawthorns, native honeysuckle, native cherries, sumacs, elderberries, spirea, and wild grapes.
- Encourage neighbors to plant bushes and shrubs to provide additional habitat.
- Maintain bushes and shrubs with minimal pruning to provide ample roosting, sleeping, and resting cover.
- Provide a birdbath or small pond for bathing and drinking. Make sure to keep birdbaths clean and free of mosquito larvae.
- Keep cats indoors to keep them safe from outdoor hazards and to protect birds. Remove feral cats from neighborhood.
- Screen windows or make them visible so catbirds can avoid colliding with them (www.audubonathome.org/ SafeWindows.html).
- Whenever possible, plant patches of shrubs for catbirds away from busy roadways.

GULLS IN ACTION

Editor's note: The following humorous article by Joseph Dutton is reprinted from Underwater Naturalist, Bulletin of the American Littoral Society, © April 2004.

As divers, fishermen, and birders know, there are two approaches to their craft — chase, or sit and wait. One can dive on a reef, hunker in, and wait for fish to come and hang around, or the diver can chase fish, which the fish don't like. The angler can walk the beach to catch fish or choose a spot and stick with it. And birders can walk and look, or sit and watch. Recently, I have taken to sitting and watching gulls. It's been worth it.

Probably my first gull study was on a beach years ago when two of us were surf fishing for northern kingfish in early summer. It was close to low tide and Herring Gulls were walking the shallow water for edibles. All the gulls except one were strolling slowly upwind (most birds, including gulls, are averse to taking wind from the rear). This one gull was standing head down on the sand just above the waterline in a non-gull-like posture. We put our rods down and walked over to the gull, and saw that its bill was held in the tight grip of a large surf clam; the gull could just about walk and couldn't take off.

To the rescue: we tossed a shirt over the gull's head to keep it calm, and while I cradled it in my arms, my friend cut the clam's adductor muscles and freed the gull's bill. What happened next took only a second or two: the gull turned and pecked a considerable hole in the back of my friend's hand, he yelled and dropped the bird, and the bird flew off. We saved the gull's life and it thanked us with a wound. Now that's a bird worth watching, I thought. Since then, gulls have been a favorite of mine. Here are some things I have seen them do:

Gulls and Telephone Wires. For almost 30 years, I drove to work along a sand spit, some places only 50 yards wide. Between the beach and the road there is a typical line of telephone poles strung with typical wires. The wires are about 30 feet off the ground, the poles 150 feet apart. Gulls routinely fly across the spit from the ocean to the bay. In 30 years of watching, I did not see one gull fly under the telephone wires. They might come across the beach 15 feet in the air; they unfailingly climbed in the air before they got to the wires, flew over them with a good 10 feet to spare, and then most often dipped quickly to their cruising altitude and flew out over the bay. This was true for Black-backed, Herring, Ring-billed, and Laughing Gulls in all plumages. (Since this was first written, I have seen one or two gulls fly under the wires, but the over and under ratio is still at least 500 to 1.)

Gulls in Parking Lots. It is well known that gulls open shellfish by dropping them on parking lots; they will use hard sand beaches for openers but seem to prefer blacktop. They will use highways too, which leads us shoreline motorists to develop driving skills to avoid falling clams, broken windshields, and sitting birds. Lazy gulls hang

around parking lots and try to steal the fruits of their cousins' labors. Where I watch this performance, most of the gulls' prey is surf clams or moon snails. Here's one observation in detail: I am parked in a white pickup truck in a large almost-vacant parking lot 50 yards back from the surf. It is a cold winter day. No gulls are evident, but then an adult Black-backed (pictured) flies in from the beach,

gains a little altitude, drops a 4-inch surf clam, and flutters down to eat it. Almost immediately, two first-year Black-backeds or Herring Gulls land about 10 feet from the adult, which is busy pulling pieces of clam from the shells.

When I figure the Black-backed has about finished its

When I figure the Black-backed has about finished its meal, I start the engine and drive rapidly toward the Black-backed while tooting the horn; this forces the gull to abandon its meal and fly off. The immatures don't fly off, but walk away a few feet and wait. When I leave the broken clam, they move in to finish off what's left, small bits of adductor muscle. The adult has flown out over the beach.

I have repeated this tactic half-a-dozen times with the same result and conclude that adult gulls are king of the kill and more skittish than juveniles when challenged by loud accelerating vehicles in parking lots.

Gulls Announce Their Finds. Gulls, mostly Herring and Black-backed, do a lot of raucous calling and posturing when they come across a promising load of chow—freshly broken shellfish or raunchy sea-robin carcass. Before my recent enlightened studies, I thought this was a bragging strategy—"Look what I found." Now, it appears more than likely to be a threat of war if interlopers show up—"Stand back, it's all mine." I have reached three conclusions—big gulls are aggressive, loud, and maybe profane.

Same Parking Lot, Different Behavior. It's late fall but still warm. There are more gulls present this time, a few immature Herring and 20-30 Ring-billed, in a gang, preening or napping. I stop the truck about 25 yards away. Most of the gulls look at the truck and two Ring-billeds walk over closer, stopping about 10 feet from the driver's side. I bid them hello and toss them a French fry (I know this is bad behavior, but I'm doing research). Immediately, every gull on the lot is alert; they jump into the air, surround the truck, and yap, while one of the nearby walking Ring-billeds gobbles up the fry. I get out of the truck; the gulls back off a bit. Then I walk away from the truck, waving a fry high over my head; flying low, the gulls follow (I feel like the Pied Piper of McDonald's). I throw the fry, it hits the lot, and a Ring-billed nails it. Then I toss a bright penny and about half the gulls follow it, land near it; a few sample its taste and texture, but don't move it. I retrieve the penny and try again. This time only a few gulls express interest, and a third toss of the penny elicits almost no response. I walk back to the truck and get in. Two Ring-billeds walk over closer, stopping about 10 feet from the driver's side. I'd repeat the experiment, but I'm out of French fries.

Same Parking Lot, Experiment Number 3. Exactly 51 Ring-billeds are roosting on the blacktop roughly in a circle 75 feet across. The purpose of this experiment is to see if a patch of roosting Ring-billeds can be split in half and, if so, how long does it take for the gulls to reform the circle. I drive the truck very slowly through the circle and the gulls part, left or right. They have formed two semicircles, 27 in one, 24 in the other. Not bad gull herding for a first try. I then pull away and watch; 20 minutes later, the gulls are still in their two semicircles. Conclusions: Ring-billeds choose to roost in circles, but semicircles will do.

Gulls on Helicopter Pads. Taking off and landing helicopters create violent turbulence, tossing objects, including shattered clam shells, into the air. Shells are sharp hazards, so in some places profiles of flying gulls are painted on the pads; the theory is that a gull coming over the pad to drop a clam sees a gull below it which may steal the goodies, so it flies off to find another hard place. To test this hypothesis, I find a little-used coastal blacktopped lot in a state park, sweep a section free of shell fragments, paint three life-sized flying gull profiles on the blacktop there, and pull back 50 yards to watch from my car. When a park ranger pulls alongside to ask me what I am doing, I tell him I am looking for Ospreys and drive away. Mystery unsolved.

Gulls and Bread in the Suburbs. I live in a small suburb about five miles back from the ocean. Ring-billed Gulls (pictured) often hang around the supermarket three blocks

from where I live to pick consumables from dumpsters or off the parking lot. About once a year during a winter cold snap, a neighbor feels sorry for local songbirds

and tosses stale bread on the road. Without fail, raucous Ring-billeds are there within minutes. They seem to be able to detect signs of flying bread.

The Walking Gull on St. Petersburg Beach. On an early fall morning walk along the St. Pete's Beach, Florida, I see about 50 adult and immature Laughing Gulls standing or sitting, faces into a gentle breeze. They look almost too comfortable, so I decide to interfere. I walk into the middle of the flock, which parts as if to let me through. Then I pick out one immature gull and slowly walk directly at it, step, stop, step, stop. Each time I get within about 12 feet, the gull walks away to put 20 feet between the two of us. I close 8 feet and the gull moves again. Four repeats produce the same results. Conclusion: an immature Laughing Gull's zone of comfort on an autumn Florida Gulf beach is 20 feet. (Some scientists would challenge the conclusion of this observation because I sampled only one gull. I say, my conclusion stands until one of those scientists repeats the experiment.)

Gulls on Fish. Most surfcasters know that to find fish, look for birds, most often terms or Laughing Gulls which feed on baitfish — in my region it's anchovies, mullet, bunker, or silversides — that may have been driven to the surface by fish, usually striped bass or bluefish. Some-

times, gulls over fish are so thick, it's difficult to cast a lure without snagging a gull. Usually the caster's line has tangled with the gull's wing; the gull drops to the water and must be hauled in by the angler. A snagged, wildly flapping, yapping gull often draws many of its cousins, which follow the gull in toward the beach with great excitement. Some people think the free gulls are expressing concern over the snagged gull's predicament; I tend to believe they hope the gull dies so they can eat it.

Eye Contact with a Herring Gull. Many animals dislike eye contact. Here's my Herring Gull experiment: Walk along a beach at the tideline until you come across a gull standing up on the dry beach, say 25 yards away. Stop but don't look directly at the gull; instead, watch out of the corner of your eye. The gull will snap to a more alert posture and maybe take a few quick steps away from you. Now, turn and face the gull head-on and stare at it. Result: instant panic and flight. (This is a good technique for crows too, but I stray from my thesis.)

Laughing Gulls at the Cape May Ferry. These gulls (pictured) follow the ferries, usually out a mile or so, and then

go back to shore to await the next ferry. Prominent signs ask passengers not to feed the gulls, but I cheat in the interests of science. I try two baits: white bread and cheese doodles. The bread is popular; they ignore doodles.

Gulls Hawking Flying Ants. In late summer, we have afternoons when flying ants hatch and dot the sky with their temporarily airborne selves. Laughing Gulls feast on the ants, flying wildly through the swarm and then putting on the brakes to snatch a single ant. It can go on for hours. It seems like a lot of energy spent for such a small caloric intake, but it happens every year.

Finally. Finally, a quote from "The Art of Surf Fishing," one chapter of a book the Society published years ago called "Fish Stories." Here is the author, Owen Hatteras, on gulls: "I enjoy disturbing gulls. The basic beach gull likes to stand just back of the beach berm. It is facing into the wind and watching me... If I turn to look, it shifts its feet and cocks its head. If I walk toward the gull, it waddles away. If I run at it halfheartedly, it flies a few feet and sets down again. If I run seriously, it takes off and makes a wide, gentle circle downwind before settling onto the beach again. The best way to launch a large group of beach gulls is to run at them with arms spread, shouting "I want to be your friend."

To confirm Hatteras' hypothesis, I plan to replicate his experiment next year.

NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER Baid Eagle in the Catskills

Joe Grupp

It was a clear, dry, comfortably cool mid-September afternoon as my wife Dolores and I were driving through the Catskills on our way home from our favorite inn, where we spend two days each spring and late summer/early fall. We were in a relaxed mood and there was no rush to get home, so we decided to stop at the Ashokan Reservoir and take a leisurely walk. The day was just too perfect to face the three-hour drive home.

The Ashokan Reservoir is a major reservoir in the New York City water supply system. It is a large body of water, having a surface area of 13 square miles, and its construction was completed in 1912. A paved road runs over the spillway and to protect the reservoir since 9/11, that road is barricaded and closed to motor traffic. It is open to walking, jogging, cycling, etc. It is used by visitors, like us, and the local population. It is also home to Bald Eagles.

On one side of the road, the lake, with hardly a ripple on it, spread out and away for a long distance before reaching the far shore, which rises gently to become one of the higher mountain ridges in the Catskill Mountains. The gracefully undulating ridgeline, which revealed a scattering of autumn color, separated the lake and mountains from a clear blue sky. The water level in the reservoir had dropped a bit, as it often does in a working reservoir, and an area of dry lake bottom rimmed the lake and was, in places, covered with rocks about the size of a child's wagon — a few were larger, many much smaller.

We carried binoculars as we walked, hoping to see a few birds and hopeful of finding a Bald Eagle. There was not much activity as we walked. A couple of Double-crested Cormorants were observed; that was about all and they left as fast as they came. The day and the scene were so pleasant that even as there was a lack of birds, it was a great place to be and the binoculars were useful in viewing distant objects and scenes.

At the far end of the spillway, the road climbs a small rise as it passes into a woodland, and the shore curves out and away from the road. We were just about ready to turn back

as we approached that juncture and I had pretty much stopped scanning for eagles when Dolores called, "What is that among the rocks by the waterline? Could that be a Bald Eagle?" I had trouble locating the spot but finally found it. Then even with both of us observing, all we could see was something dark brown that occasionally moved slightly. We changed our position to get a

better angle on the object and still were not sure of what we had until a pure white head with a large, fierce looking, bright yellow bill lifted above the rocks. Changing positions again, we got to see the entire bird as it was pulling flesh off a fairly large fish and enjoying a fish dinner.

Bald Eagles are a good story in New York State because their numbers, not too long ago, were diminished due to the effects of DDT in the environment. In 1960 there was only one known nest in New York and the population of wintering Bald Eagles was diminished to less than 100. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) began a successful restoration program in 1976. Young eaglets were brought down from Alaska and were reared in cages that were built high in appropriate habitat. The eaglets were fed and cared for in a manner that they were not aware of their human caretakers and then released into the wild.

I can remember viewing the small eaglets through a scope at a viewing station set up by the DEC for public use. The cage was some distance away from the viewing station and the image of the birds through the scope was small. I was thrilled at seeing the small eaglets and wondered what the future of the Bald Eagle in New York State might be. When the program closed in 1989, it was a success and Bald Eagles once again nest at the Ashokan Reservoir and other locations in the state. Our bird most likely was the result of that restoration program.

We observed the feeding eagle for a long time. At one point, a pair of American Crows landed near the eagle. Slowly one moved toward the eagle and its fish, one hop at a time, with a cautious pause between each hop. The other crow was much more timid and just stood a good distance away. Hop, hop, hop, and the less timid crow got close to the fish-feeding eagle. Then just a very short distance from the eagle, the crow stopped and did not move any closer. Both crows stood tense and alert. The eagle seemed not to pay any attention to them at all, and when the eagle was finished eating it made a short hop to a rock at the water's edge, where it occasionally cleaned its talons and preened, but mostly just rested. The crows never moved any closer to the remains of the fish.

We waited to see the eagle fly, but it rested longer than we wanted to wait, especially as we still had the long drive home facing us. As we were walking back to the car, we frequently turned to get yet another look at the bird. Then one time, when I turned around, it was gone. Our walk was a good one! Our Bald Eagle observation was a privilege! A privilege because if it were not for the restoration program, there most likely would not have been a Bald Eagle at the Ashokan Reservoir that day and possibly no Bald Eagles to see in New York State at all.

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 wild-

SSAS BACKYARD BIRD SURVEY

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.

To participate, simply record the birds that you see in your yard, neighborhood, or at your feeder; the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species; and fill in the table provided below. If you have more recordings than lines in the table, please attach an additional piece of paper to the table and submit the additional recordings in the same manner. 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. Additional survey sheets are available at SSAS events.

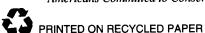
Please do not hesitate to submit your observations, even if you have been able to make only very few. WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Dates: Fr	om	to						
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				Please	send to: M	r. J. Grupp, Research Chair	person	
				660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale NY 11553 or				
				E-mail: Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com				

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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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!

NAME:						
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Chapter Code R15 7XCH (South Shore Audubon Society)						