

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 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.

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 last month's Skimmer are:

- Baldwin..... Gerald Field, Cori Miller, Michael O'Connor
Bethpage Jennifer Hoffman
East Meadow Frank M. Coenen, Donna Prendergast
Farmingdale John D. Horn
Freeport Anthony Kaider
Garden City Norma Goodwin
Hempstead Irene Rutkowski
Hewlett Fred Segarra
Lido Beach Michelle Matise, Yoset Qureshi
Massapequa Joseph Gaiti, Judith Sill, Marjorie V. Valkenburgh
Mineola Francine Werther
Rockville Centre Maria Mullaly
Wantagh Fay A. Weber
Woodmere Richard Epstein



AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

KIDS' HOLIDAY PARTY AT TACKAPAUSHA

Wendy Murbach

On Saturday, December 5 at Tackapausha Museum and Preserve, South Shore Audubon will sponsor our annual holiday party for children. There will be craft tables where the kids can make nature-related items, refreshments, and, best of all, there will be a live animal show given by Dennis Fleury from the Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons.

Please bring your children, your grandchildren, your friends' children, and your neighbors' children to the party at Tackapausha on Washington Avenue in Seaford. The party is from 1-3 P.M. The museum's regular admission will be charged: \$3 for adults, \$2 for children ages 5-14, and \$0 for younger children.

BIRD WALKS

Steve Schellenger

All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Any questions? Call Steve at 987-8103. Directions and summaries may be found at ssaudubon.org.

- Nov. 22 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Nov. 29 Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)
Dec. 6 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Dec. 13 Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and Lido Preserve afterwards)
Dec. 20 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)*
Dec. 27 Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
Jan. 3 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Jan. 10 Mill Pond Park (see above)
Jan. 17 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Jan. 24 Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and Lido Preserve afterwards)
Jan. 31 Massapequa Lake**
Feb. 7 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner

*Note: The ongoing Streamflow Augmentation and Pond Restoration Project at Massapequa Preserve may result in a detour from our usual route along the paved path; if you arrive late, follow any detour signs to find us.

**For Massapequa Lake (the southern end of Massapequa Preserve), use street parking on westbound side of Merrick Road, west of Lake Shore Blvd.

HOG ISLAND AUDUBON CAMP

Wendy Murbach

Would you like to go to camp next summer? Well, maybe you can. South Shore Audubon Society will be offering a six-day camp experience for a lucky person at the Hog Island Audubon Camp on a 330-acre island along the midcoast of Maine. Those who have attended the camp count it as one of their peak experiences.

We will be raffling off a camp session for one adult during our meetings in the next few months. You must be at a meeting to buy the raffle tickets. The results of the raffle will be announced at the March meeting. This prize will be tuition to the Field Ornithology program that's being run by Project Puffin on June 13-18 or June 20-25 (we'll announce which session); travel to Maine is not included. More details to come when they're available; you can check www.audubon.org/bird/puffin/OrnithCamps.html for updates.

LONG ISLAND BIRDS http://libirding.com

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

22ND ANNUAL WATERFOWL SURVEY DATES

The dates for the 2009–2010 Waterfowl Survey are as follows, rain or shine: **Saturdays, December 5, January 2, January 30, February 20, and March 20.** Volunteers are welcome to participate in the surveys. If you are interested in spending a full or half day visiting up to 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park, call Joe Grupp, SSAS's Research Chairperson, at 481-4208.

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www.wbu.com/oakdale
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NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER SSAS Bird Walk – Jones Beach West End #2

Joe Grupp

It was a Sunday in mid-fall when I pulled into West End Parking Field # 2 at Jones Beach for one of SSAS's weekly Sunday morning bird walks. My first glance was to the parked cars and people who were gathering for the walk. When I again looked ahead to where I was driving, I made a rather abrupt stop, as not far before me there were a few hundred small birds resting on the parking field surface near, and even on, the curb, at the field's east side. I held my foot with some force on the brake, as I had not yet chosen a parking space or shut off the engine, and reached with one arm to the back seat and grabbed my binoculars. Foot still firmly on the brake, I looked through the binoculars and identified the birds as Tree Swallows. Then, looking around, I realized that I didn't really need the binoculars, as there were birds close by in the air and on the ground.

Finally parking the car and joining the others for the walk, I realized that farther out in the dune area there were even more Tree Swallows. Some were perched on shrubs, some were rising from the shrubs or descending to perch on them, and others were flying about, most likely catching small flying insects to feed on. Others were drifting over to rest on the parking field, replacing birds that rose off the parking field to join those over the dunes. The area immediately over the dunes was filled with motion and to a lesser extent so was the air overhead.

Perhaps the most dramatic views were when a large number of birds would rise in the air and form a single flock. The motion of each single bird in that flock was identical to every other bird, and the flock appeared as a single entity as it rose and fell and spiraled through the sky. It was as if a few hundred birds were choreographed to

identically perform in such a way that the motion of the flock became a delicate dance in the sky. None of this was unusual for Tree Swallows. One just had to be at the right place at the right time to observe it.

The walk took us to the boat basin by the Coast Guard station on the inlet side of the West End strip. While making observations from the dock there, we noticed a single line of Double-crested Cormorants (pictured) flying low over the water. I didn't pay much attention to them until I realized that the line seemed to be getting longer and longer. It was growing one bird at a time and each bird was an equal distance from the one before it. Before long we realized that each additional bird in the line was coming from birds resting on the beach on the far side of the island across from the dock. Most of the resting birds could not be seen from the dock, but one by one they rose to join the line of birds in flight, and the line got longer and longer and followed the inlet waters toward the sea.



Shortly after observing the cormorants, a fair-sized flock of American Oystercatchers flew in and settled to rest on the island's sandy shore, where the shore begins to become a sandbar that has formed from the island toward the far end of the dock area. The flock created an explosion of black-and-white color as the birds came in to land. Each bird's black-and-white plumage, so evident in flight, contributed to the creation of the dynamic color pattern of the flock as they came in together to settle on the sand. Once on the sand, there was the shaking of feathers and a few small steps were taken by each bird as it positioned itself in the flock so that all the birds ended up close together and faced the same way. Then the pattern created by the flock changed from black and white to black with streaks of red. The red color came from each bird's heavy long bill that was held pointing at an angle downward toward the sand. The black in the flock's pattern appeared because most of the white that is so evident in flight as markings on the individual bird's tail and wings is hidden by the bird's black feathers when it is not flying and the wings and tail are folded.

There were many other observations made that Sunday. There were quite a few Yellow-rumped Warblers; a number of Kinglets, more Golden-crowned than Ruby-crowned; White-breasted Nuthatches; Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers; a Common Loon; an immature Northern Harrier that put on a pretty good show flying low over the area; and more. Most of what was observed during the walk were the usual birds that one might find there at that time of the year, but they were good observations nonetheless. As I drove home, I took three mental images home with me and they were the images of the flocks of Tree Swallows, Double-crested Cormorants, and American Oystercatchers. Join a Sunday bird walk with SSAS and you too may take home a mental image of a wild bird or birds or some other natural phenomena.

25 WAYS TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

The following is from an Earth Day handout, courtesy of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. You can sign up for GreenLiving e-mail at www.dec.ny.gov/public/337.html.

AT HOME

In the Kitchen...

- ☞ Set the refrigerator between 38°F and 42°F.
- ☞ Set the freezer between 0°F and 5°F.
- ☞ Microwave whenever you can.
- ☞ Don't wash dishes with the water running.

In the Dining Room...

- ☞ Use cloth napkins.
- ☞ Use washable plates, cups, and silverware.
- ☞ Serve condiments from recyclable containers.
- ☞ Provide personal glasses for soft drinks.

In the Laundry...

- ☞ Wash and dry only full loads.
- ☞ Wash with warm water instead of hot.
- ☞ Rinse with cold water instead of warm.
- ☞ Hang wash out to dry.

In the Bathroom...

- ☞ Shut off the faucet while brushing your teeth.
- ☞ Shut off the shower while soaping or scrubbing.
- ☞ Install a low-flow shower head and toilet.
- ☞ Reduce the volume of water in your toilet tank.

In the Living Room...

- ☞ Switch off unnecessary lights.
- ☞ Dress warm; don't turn up the furnace.
- ☞ Dress cool; don't turn on the air conditioner.
- ☞ Raise shades on winter days; lower them in summer.

In the Yard...

- ☞ Compost leaves and grass clippings.
- ☞ Avoid pesticides; use nontoxic deterrents.
- ☞ Follow manufacturer's instructions on applying fertilizer.
- ☞ Water the grass early in the morning.

In the Garage...

- ☞ Recycle motor oil, antifreeze, and batteries.

AWAY FROM HOME

In the Car...

- ☞ Drive at the speed limit.
- ☞ Avoid sudden starts or stops.
- ☞ Don't top off the fuel tank.
- ☞ Check the tire pressure monthly.
- ☞ Change air and oil filters regularly.



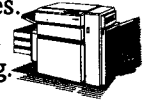
At the Store...

- ☞ Don't buy overpackaged items.
- ☞ Choose products in recyclable containers.
- ☞ Buy concentrated cleaners and detergents.
- ☞ Return empty bottles and cans.
- ☞ Bring your own string bag or cloth tote.

At Work...

- ☞ Send electronic copy whenever possible.

- ☞ Copy reports and memos on both sides.
- ☞ Circulate rather than copy paperwork.
- ☞ Reuse tubes and envelopes for mailing.
- ☞ Recycle scrap paper.



At Play...

- ☞ Carry out what you carry in.
- ☞ Hike, row, sail, ski, or paddle — don't motor.
- ☞ Build campfires with care.
- ☞ Observe, don't disturb wildlife and plant life.
- ☞ Share books, cassettes, magazines, and videos with friends, hospitals, and prisons.

At School...

- ☞ Copy bulletins and exams on both sides.
- ☞ Make notes and drafts on scrap paper.
- ☞ Reuse textbooks and school supplies.
- ☞ Serve reusable trays, dishes, and silverware.
- ☞ Compost cafeteria vegetable wastes.

CATS AND BIRDS

Note: The following is a press release that was issued on National Feral Cat Day, October 16.

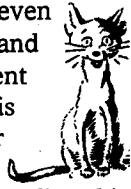
With millions of birds headed south on their fall migration, it's not only the bird-watchers who are eagerly awaiting their return: a silent and stealthy invasive predator sits, grooming paws and claws in anticipation. In cities, suburbs, and rural areas across New York and the nation, feral and free-roaming cats are having an untold and profound impact on bird populations already in steep decline. And now with colonies of feral cats growing on public parklands and open spaces, so are the concerns over the health and safety of the cats and birds alike. On National Feral Cat Day, Audubon New York is calling on cat and bird lovers to work together to protect both the birds and cats.

Nationwide, it is estimated that every year feral and free-roaming domestic cats kill hundreds of millions of protected birds, including rare and endangered species such as the Piping Plover. Feral and free-roaming domestic cats have also been estimated to kill more than a billion small mammals, some of which, like field mice and shrews, are important prey for raptors such as Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks. As habitat loss is eating up habitat for bird species, the direct and indirect threats caused by these introduced predators are putting serious strain on already fragile avian populations.

"The best approach to help both the birds and cats is for all pet owners to keep their cats indoors," said Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York. "An inside life is healthier for cats, as feral and free-roaming cats are highly susceptible to diseases, mortality from cars, and abuse, and they pose a health risk to humans, wildlife, and other pets."

In addition to keeping cats inside, Audubon New York urges cat owners to not feed feral or free-roaming domestic cats, to have their pets spayed or neutered and vaccinated, and to support measures to license or register their cats.

"Cat caretakers must take responsibility for their cats and take steps to ensure they don't contribute to the growing feral cat epidemic," added Caccese. "Because even well-fed and cared-for cats will prey on birds and other wildlife, and bells on collars do not prevent cat predation, the responsible thing to do is keep cats inside, or take them out on leashes or in an outdoor enclosure."



Unfortunately, many pet owners are not heeding this simple call, and now there are numerous unlawful colonies of feral and free-roaming domestic cats that are ballooning out of control in many state and local parks. Many of these colonies are being "managed" by cat enthusiasts using a controversial and untested program called Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR), in which the cats are captured, spayed or neutered, and then released to the public parks. In theory, this program is designed to reduce populations of cats by eliminating reproduction; in actuality, though, with many people now feeding the cats in these large colonies, this program only encourages the abandonment of more cats and TNR has not been proven effective at reducing feral cat populations. And as these populations increase, so do the threats to birds and other wildlife.

"Maintaining these invasive species on public lands through TNR programs only further exacerbates the problems facing our native birds and wildlife. The real solution is to remove introduced predators from our state and local parks," continued Caccese.

Recently, efforts to control burgeoning populations of feral cats on Long Island have yielded some positive conservation gains. At Cedar Beach in Mount Sinai, a colony of feral cats grew from 7 to 33 individuals over the last several years while being actively "managed" using TNR. During this period, Piping Plovers that nested on the nearby beach were unable to reproduce due to predation and harassment by the feral cats. In 2008, the Town of Brookhaven acted to remove cats from the park and immediate positive impacts on the endangered species were observed. Due to the removal of these cats, a pair of Piping Plovers was able to successfully nest, hatch, and fledge one chick for the first time in seven years.

"This successful nesting clearly shows the environmental benefits of removing feral cats from public parks," said Carolyn Spilman, Long Island Bird Conservation Coordinator for Audubon New York. "We urge other parks throughout Long Island and the rest of the state to follow the lead of the Town of Brookhaven and implement strategies to remove these invasive predators before it's too late."

For more information and tips on keeping your cat healthy and happy indoors, visit the American Bird Conservancy's "Cats Indoors!" website at: <http://www.abcbirds.org/cats>.

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

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

SSAS President Wendy Murbach will again be the team leader for the Northern Nassau Christmas Bird Count (CBC) quadrant that is surveyed from Gerry Park in Roslyn to Garvies Point in Glen Cove. This CBC is run by North Shore and Huntington Oyster Bay Audubon Societies (the Southern Nassau CBC is several decades older than SSAS and consequently is not organized by us). If you're interested in participating (for the usual CBC fee of \$5 for adults), contact Wendy at Wmrbch@aol.com or 546-6303.

The **Saturday, December 19** count will begin at 8 A.M. and continue through the day; you can join it after lunch if preferred (ask for Wendy's cell phone number in order to locate her team).

Phone: (516) 931-1445
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ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY (Sat., December 5). Join ALS members & others for a fun day/evening at VFW Hall on Shad Creek Road in Broad Channel. Cost: \$45 incl. food, drink, "Ugly Auction," flamenco troop performance, exotic (a.k.a. belly) dancer. Come early and meet at 3 P.M. for a nature walk through Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; party starts at 5 P.M.

WINTER BIRDS & WILDLIFE (Sun., December 6). Meet 10 A.M. at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for hike around the ponds and woodlands. Call 718-318-9344 to reserve. Free.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (January 8-10). Spend weekend at luxurious Manor House. See hundreds of sea ducks, loons, scoters, eiders, and visit seal haulout sites. Easy hikes along beach, woods, and bluffs. Cost: \$345 includes 2 nights, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, star watch, and free pickup at LIRR station.

NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACHWALKS (11 A.M.) Join groups at Jones Beach West End 2, Fire Island lighthouse, or Fort Tilden, Breezy Point for a brisk hike to start off the new year.

MERRITT ISLAND REFUGE & NORTHERN FLORIDA (April 17-24). See Florida scrub jay, sandhill & whooping cranes, manatees, eagles, roseate spoonbill and lots more wildlife.

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

SSAS 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: From _____ to _____

Date	Time	Species	No.		Date	Time	Species	No.

Submitted by: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Please send to: Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson
 660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale NY 11553
 or
 E-mail: Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com

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

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Americans Committed to Conservation



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Steven Schellenger, Vice Pres. & Field Trips	987-8103
Laurie Luxner Raisher, Treasurer	378-4025
Doreen McCrystal, Recording Secretary	249-5646
Joanne Del Prete, Director (6/12).....	433-0739
Don Temple, Director (6/12)	420-1244
Barbara Levine, Director (6/11)	741-3386
Therese Lucas, Dir. (6/11) & Greeningof L.I.	221-3921
John Gaglione, Director (6/10)	731-5012
Joe Landesberg, Dir. (6/10) & H.S. Scholshps.	536-4808
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Anne-Marie Conn, Electronic Communications ...	671-7685
Joseph Grupp, Research	481-4208
Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve Co-Chair & College Scholarships	546-8841
Marilyn Hametz, Publicity	799-7189
Enid Klein, Programs	561-0004
Elliott Kutner, Birding Consultant	486-7667
George Peters, Brookside Preserve Co-Chair	868-5480
James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon	631-957-0949
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming	599-1224
Mary Jane Russell, Hospitality	766-7397
Michael Sperling, <i>Skimmer</i> Editor	221-3921

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!



Yes, I'd like to join: SSAS only National Audubon too

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NO.: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Chapter Code R15 7XCH (South Shore Audubon Society)

