OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 40, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRII. 2010

NEXT MEETING

Enid Klein

DATE:

Tuesday, April 13, 2010

TIME:

7:30 P.M.

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER:

Bobby Horvath

TOPIC:

Up Close and Personal With Birds of Prey

This month, Bobby Horvath will return to SSAS with approximately ten different species of hawks, owls, and falcons. He will discuss their history and adaptations. These birds are amazing animal ambassadors and help both children and adults reconnect with nature and the environment we all must share.

His group, WINORR (Wildlife In Need Of Rescue and Rehabilitation), is a nonprofit volunteer rescue organization dedicated to wildlife rehab and education. WINORR's goal is to provide professional care to orphaned, injured, and ill native wildlife so they can ultimately be returned to the wild. They are headed by Cathy St. Pierre and Bobby, who are state and federally licensed wildlife rehabilitators. In addition, Cathy is a veterinary technician and Bobby is a New York City firefighter. Join us!

Pre-Meeting Program on Birds. Starting at 7 P.M. most months, 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 gas station that borders Sunrise Hwy.

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

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wendy Murbach

Recently there have been two rare birds seen on Long Island that were life birds for me. At Massapequa Preserve there were a pair of Tundra Swans, generally seen far north of this area. At a marina in Great River swam a Dovekie, a small pelagic bird kin to auks and puffins, seldom seen on the coast, more generally seen out at sea.

The swans (pictured), feeding on a pond at Massapequa, have been seen by hundreds of birders and photographers since December, thanks to the weekly New York City Rare Bird Alert (212-979-3070 and, along with other alerts,

transcribed at www.virtualbirder.com) and also thanks to the statewide e-mails sent via Cornell's NYSbirds-L listserv, both of which also reported the Dovekie. Information about joining the listserv is available at www. northeastbirding.com; recent messages are posted at http://birdingonthenet/mailinglists/NYSB.html. At http://ebird.org you'll find NYS maps showing where every species has been reported. [Your editor inserted the pre-

It is always a great thrill to see a bird that is not generally seen in one's neighborhood. Sometimes, however, they are there because of some problems encountered in their lives. We don't know why the Tundra Swans showed up on Long Island, although it may be because food was unavailable where they were. We are fairly sure that the Dovekie was blown in from the sea by high winds.

ceding web addresses.]

In the Hamptons, five other Dovekies were rescued on land and taken to a rehabilitator who determined that the birds were in rather bad shape, hungry, their waterproof oil-covering sadly sparse. Dovekies' legs and feet are located far back on the bird — suitable for swimming, not for walking on land, and of course what they eat is not found on land. Those birds were in trouble and despite expert care, three of the five did not make it. That means, of course, that two of them are alive and have been

returned to the wild. The fate of the lone Dovekie at the marina is less certain.

I would like to commend the excellent work that wildlife rehabilitators do for so many stranded, injured, and diseased birds and other animals. Most of these wonderful people work as volunteers, for little or no money, dependent on grants, donations, and help from people who care about animals. Thanks to them, many make it back to the wild in fit shape to continue their interrupted lives.

May we all enjoy good birding.

PRESERVE BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

Marilyn Hamelz

Join us at the **Brookside Preserve Spring Cleanup** on **Sunday, April 18** at 1:00 p.m. The Preserve is a lovely natural area. Come help maintain and improve it. Please bring friends and family, work gloves, and a rake. Scout groups and other community organizations are welcome. Call George Peters at 868-5480 if you know of a group that would like to help.

The Town of Hempstead (on the Baldwin side) and the Village of Freeport are installing traps and a stormwater treatment system that will alleviate the problem of debris washed into the Preserve by the storm sewers. These projects are being funded by Nassau County's 2004 Environmental Program Bond Act as the result of a proposal submitted by SSAS.

On **Sunday, June 27** we will have our second annual **Walk in the Woods** at Brookside. Last year's event included guided walks, a children's nature hunt, a display, light refreshments, and a chance to meet and chat with members of the community.

Special guided programs at Brookside Preserve can be arranged, by appointment, for community and youth groups for nature walks, activities for scout badges, or other conservation interests.

The main entrance to the Preserve is on Brookside Avenue in Freeport, just north of Sunrise Highway. To help with the Walk in the Woods or for information about guided programs at the preserve, contact Marilyn Hametz at 799-7189 or mwhametz@optonline.net.







Lighthouse Commons 911 Montauk Highway, Oakdale 631-218-BIRD (2473) www.wbu.com/oakdale Mon-Fri 10-6;Sat 9-6;Sun 11-5

★X WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ★X

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. 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:
Bellmore Betty Bradley, Wendy Gill
Bethpage John M. Stravato, Iris Zapata
East Meadow Dorothy S. Francis
Farmingdale Rosemary Kennedy
Floral Park Catherine A. Hogg, Marilyn Levy,
Claire Mansfield, ? Roselli
Freeport Dorothy Lynch
Garden City Arthur Boddicket
Hempstead Maureen Cleary, Audrey Husnik
Hicksville Olga Peterson, Storm Strongin
Levittown Michael Khan, Umberto Salustro,
Joan Ziccardy
Long Beach Kathleen Basler
Lynbrook Barbara Caccamo
Massapequa Park Romeo Cammisa, Karen Higgins,
J. Strumwasser, Margaret
Urbanowski
Merrick Cecilia Brauer, Madeline Roberts
Old Bethpage Herbert B. Goldberg
Plainview D. M. Katz
Rockville Centre Edna Gray
Wantagh Diane Higgins, Joanne Koukoulas
Woodmere Norman Strauss

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EARTH DAY LOBBY DAY

The 20th annual Earth Day Lobby Day will be held in Albany on **Tuesday**, **April 20**. Hundreds of citizens from every corner of New York State will meet with their state lawmakers and show their support for the environment. The event is being sponsored by Audubon New York, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Environmental Advocates of New York, the New York Public Interest Research Group, Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations.

The day will last from 9:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. You can sign up by filling out the form at https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dDVadmtFQWFjWEp3THFjNWgtZWpzTlE6MA. If you have any questions, please contact Bill Mahoney of NYPIRG at mahoney.w@gmail.com. In addition to registering using the form, it would be helpful if you let Audubon New York's Grassroots Coordinator, Laura McCarthy, know you are coming by sending an e-mail to lmccarthy@audubon.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HOG ISLAND WINNER!

SSAS congratulates Joanne Del Prete, whose investment in raffle tickets resulted in her name being drawn at our March 9 meeting. She will be attending the six-day Field Ornithology program at Audubon's camp on Hog Island in Maine.



SPRING BIRD MIGRATION AT JAMAICA BAY (Sun., April 25). Join retired refuge manager Don Riepe for an intimate hike around the ponds and uplands of the refuge during spring bird migration. Learn about the history, ecology, and management of the refuge as well as see many bird species. Meet 10 a.m. at refuge visitor center. For info & reservations, contact Don. Free.

HORSESHOE CRAB WALK (Sat., May 15 and 29). Meet 9 A.M. at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a hike to see the mating ritual of the ancient horseshoe crab. For info & reservations, contact Don. Free.

JAMAICA BAY ECOLOGY CRUISE (Sat., May 29, 2 P.M.). Take a 3-hour narrated cruise around the bay and backwater marshes on a 100-ft boat, the "Golden Sunshine," from Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay. See nesting herons, oystercatchers, ospreys, and peregrine falcon. Cost: \$45 incl. wine & cheese, fruit, drinks, snacks. Leaders: Mickey Cohen & Don Riepe.

MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 11–13). Spend a great weekend of natural history programs at the luxurious Manor House. Cost: \$345/person incl. 2 nights, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, star watch, and free LIRR pickup.

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.

DUR TENTH ANNUAL CENTRAL PARK WALK

On **Saturday, May 1**, SSAS is planning to be in Central Park for our annual (weather permitting) early May morning bird walk. Once again, Manhattan resident Chris Cooper, who birded with SSAS in his formative years, has

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 (47 last year, including 15 warblers; Black-and-White Warbler is pictured). Join us!

The cost of the walk is \$5, which is a tax-deductible donation to SSAS (refundable if we rain out or you cancel in advance). 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 (phone 433-0739, jdelprete47@optonline.net) by April 26.

As usual, a group of us will be aboard the local Babylon train that is due in Penn Station at 8:12; you can look for Joanne toward the west end of the platform in Massapequa, boarding at 7:14. We plan to depart from Penn's LIRR waiting room at 8:30 to meet Chris at Belvedere Castle at around 9:15. Please buy a **MetroCard** for the subway. 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. Joanne's cell (476-3761) will be on that day only.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS WANTED

Thanks to another much-appreciated donation from Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society is again offering 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 send e-mail to gulotte@ncc.edu. Applications are due by

April 30 and we typically receive just a few, so apply if you're eligible or please help us spread the word!

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Steve Schellenger

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

Mar. 28	Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern
	State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
Apr. 4	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner*
Apr. 11	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Apr. 18	Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside
Apr. 25	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)**
May 2	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north
	side of Merrick Rd.)
May 9	Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)
May 16	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner*
May 23	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve

*Note: As was the case last year, state budget cuts will result in the closure of West End #2 except for birding and fishing. Show your binoculars and/or field guide for access.

**Another 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.

SSAS BIRDATHON 2010 IS COMING

This year, SSAS will conduct its 23rd 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 peak. Birding expertise and big pledges are not necessary; anyone can join one of SSAS's teams locally for all or part of the time, sponsor themselves, and have fun while helping us find species, or you can do your own Birdathon anywhere.

Mark the dates on your calendar—Friday, May 7 from 5:00 P.M. until Saturday, May 8 at 5:00 P.M. The rain dates are one week later at the same time. Team details will be in the next Skimmer.

COPEN – PAINLESSLY

Editor's note: The following budget memo comes from Al Caccese, the Executive Director of Audubon New York and can be downloaded from http://ny.audubon.org.

As just about everyone now knows, the 2010–2011 proposed Executive Budget reduces Parks' budget by another \$29 million, which is over and above the \$46 million reduction in the last several years. As a result, Parks has developed two lists that would result in the closing of 94 Parks and Historic Sites and numerous other cuts to swimming pools and other services. All of this can be avoided for \$11 million.

To meet this latest \$29 million in cuts, NYS Parks has identified \$14 million in savings that would be realized through the attrition of 67 jobs, a reduction of \$4 million from its equipment budget, and additional Other-Than-Personal-Service reductions. It has also recommended \$4 million in increased or additional fees. This leaves \$11 million to keep all the Parks, Sites, and services open while we work on longer-term solutions.

The legislature can restore the \$11 million to the budget, but there is a real question as to whether the budget will be timely enough to avoid the closures. Campground reservations are being made NOW, lifeguards need to be recruited and tested NOW, chlorine for pools needs to be requisitioned NOW, and numerous other activities need to take place NOW to avoid these parks and sites being closed by default.

A simple and painless solution is available: The Governor, the Senate, and the Assembly leadership can agree now to bond the \$11 million in anticipation of the revenues that will be deposited into the State Parks Infrastructure Fund, which is dedicated to capital projects. This will provide a one-time infusion of operating money which will have no impact on the budget and a minuscule impact on NYS's debt ceiling. Action, NOW, by the leadership will provide the decision-makers with the time needed to determine a longer-term fix to keep our incredible facilities available to New Yorkers and their guests. This is not just a recreation or quality of life need. This has a direct relationship to our physical and mental health and is an important ingredient to the tourism industry in NY.

Tell your leader to solve this problem — NOW!

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2010-2011 SSAS BOARD

Marilyn Hametz

South Shore Audubon Society's officers are elected each year. Directors are elected for 3-year terms. The SSAS nominating committee (chaired by me, and including Gail Brown and Mary Jane Russell) will provide a list of recommended candidates in next month's *Skimmer*. Suggestions may be submitted to the committee by any SSAS member; you can call me at 799-7189, Mary Jane at 766-7397, or Gail at 432-8156, or e-mail mwhametz@optonline.net.

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 11, officers and directors will be elected for our next fiscal year, which begins July 1. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. Officers and new directors will be installed at the annual dinner on June 8.

SSAS ANNUAL DINNER ON TUESDAY, JUNE 8

Check next month's *Skimmer* for the registration form for our annual dinner, to be held once again at the Coral House in Baldwin. Save the date for a fun evening!

NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER Fox Sparrow II: Beyond an Observation

Joe Grupp

After writing in last month's column about a Fox Sparrow that I observed, I never dreamed that I would be writing about a second Fox Sparrow observation in this month's column. The pair of observations took me on a mental trip beyond what I had seen. My second observation took place when I was walking the same sections of the Greenbelt Trail where I made my first Fox Sparrow sighting a few weeks ago. The day was pretty dull even as light was being reflected off a fair amount of melting snow that covered the ground. I was not spotting many birds when all of a sudden three birds hopped up into the upper reaches of a rather tall tangle of vines and shrubs. One perched slightly higher than the other two, and was brighter and easier to see. Wanting to identify all three, I put the binoculars up to my eyes, zeroed in on the lower left bird, and quickly determined it to be a White-throated Sparrow. I moved the glasses quickly to the second lower bird and again it was a White-throated Sparrow (pictured, © Sue deLearie Adair). By naked eye, the third bird was an

obvious small diffuse light spot high in the tangle. Getting the glasses on it, it became an obvious Fox Sparrow, as the glasses resolved the diffuse light spot into a puffed out, white and red streaked breast that had a large rusty red central spot. That was about all of the detail on the bird that I saw because of our position in relation to each other. It was a dramatic observation in itself and I did not even try to observe any other details.

Slipping, sliding, and sloshing while walking down the slush-covered trail, my mind began to explore the two Fox Sparrow observations I made that were weeks apart and then it wandered to the bird's life history and beyond. I knew a little of that history but was now motivated to do a little simple library and/or online research about the species. At that point this essay was born and my sightings became more than just two observations. My observations allowed me to see the bird; my research revealed much about its life history, some of which is presented here.

The Fox Sparrows that winter here in the east are the Red form of the Fox Sparrow, which has the rusty red, gray, and white coloration that we are familiar with. Three other forms of the Fox Sparrow exist in the western parts of the continent, all of which have similar markings but vary in color. There is a Sooty form that is dark brown, a Slate-colored form that has a gray back and somewhat rusty-colored wings and tail, and a Large-Billed form that is a darker bird with a distinct large bill. Each form occupies a specific range. The western birds' ranges do overlap at their edges during breeding season and the birds do intermingle on their wintering grounds, making field identification of the forms difficult or even impossible at times.

The birds build their nests on the ground under shrubs and/or small trees, or on very low branches of small trees and shrubs in a boreal forest. They favor the woodlands' edges or areas where the habitat has been disturbed and is in the early tree shrub stage of regeneration. In years of heavy spring snows, the favored location for nesting is on lower branches near the ground, as opposed to the ground itself which may be covered with snow during nest-building time. The nest is cup-shaped; made of grasses, mosses, and twigs; and lined with fine grasses, hair, mosses, and feathers. The nest, if successful, will hold a clutch of three to five eggs that are incubated for 12 to 14 days before hatching; the young are fed another 9 to 11 days before they fledge. All that information sounds sterile as I write it; I have to picture myself spending hours in a boreal-type woodland on a hot dry day, during a late-spring snowstorm, or in a heavy rain to appreciate what the birds must endure to produce the next generation of young, and that doesn't even take into account the dangers they face from predators, etc.

My curiosity widened as I researched this bird and I began to wonder if John James Audubon had written of any experience he had with the species. I followed my curiosity and found a book in the library titled The Audubon Reader, edited by Richard Rhodes. Within its pages were excerpts from a journal that Audubon wrote while exploring in Labrador in 1833. In a June 20 entry, among other things, he wrote of spending the entire day in a cabin, drawing for 17 hours. At the end of that entry he wrote, "So sonorous is the song of the Fox-colored Sparrow that I can hear it for hours, most distinctly, from the cabin where I am drawing, and yet it is distant more than a quarter of a mile." Now I wonder what it would be like to be in northcountry Fox Sparrow habitat during breeding season. My mind keeps wandering further and further beyond my observations.

Joe Grupp

For several years, SSAS's Research Committee has been conducting a study to document the bird species found in the SSAS area and to estimate their numbers. We greatly appreciate input from anyone that feeds and/or observes birds in their yard or neighborhood. Please do not hesitate to submit your observations, even if you make only very few.

Simply record the date, time, and the number or approximate number of each species. At the end of each month, please mail or e-mail your record to me at the appropriate address listed below, or hand it to me at our monthly meeting. Survey sheets are available at SSAS events and at ssaudubon.org or you can create your own.

Please mail your data to Mr. J. Grupp, Research Chairperson, 660 Edgemere Ave., Uniondale, NY 11553 or e-mail Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com.

Phone: (516) 931-1445 Fax: (516) 931-1467 E-Mail: lgk1cpa@aol.com

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AUDUBON NY PRIORITIES FOR THE STATE BUDGET

Editor's plea: If you didn't call or write your State Senator and Assemblymember after reading last month's article about this, please do so ASAP. If you've never contacted a politician, now's the time to raise your voice, before the budget is finalized. Names and contact information for our elected officials are at ssaudubon.org. Here's the latest info from our state office:

Audubon New York, the state program of the National Audubon Society representing 27 local chapters and 50,000 members, is deeply concerned with Governor Paterson's Executive Budget proposal for FY [fiscal year] 2010–2011 and its impacts to New York State's environment. His proposal does little to stimulate the economy and keep people working through investing in environmental protection and restoration initiatives, and in some instances does just the opposite by disproportionately targeting environmental spending and environmental state agencies for cuts.

During these difficult fiscal times, continued investment in the restoration of New York's water, air, and open space resources can and should play an important role in the revitalization of the state economy. For instance, our State Parks are important drivers of local economies, supporting an ever-growing state tourism industry by providing important local destinations for the more than 55 million people who visit them each year. Yet, the longer we wait to invest in the protection and restoration of the environment, our parks, and open spaces, the more costly the problems become to fix and the return on the investment decreases. In 2010, Audubon New York strongly urges the legislature to:

Protect the Integrity of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)

Restore Cuts, Remove Offloads, and Develop a Repayment Plan

Audubon New York strongly urges the legislature to restore funding to the EPF to \$222 million, and restore cuts to the following important EPF programs: the Biodiversity Research Institute, Open Space Protection, Farmland Protection, Invasive Species Eradication, Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Initiative, the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, Hudson River Estuary Program, and the Water Quality Improvements

Program. Of utmost importance to Audubon is restoring funding for the Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquaria (ZBGA) program category.



In addition to restoring these cuts, Audubon New York strongly urges the legislature to remove the two new programs that were added to the EPF and fund them from other portions of the budget. These offloads weaken the integrity of the EPF and go against the Friends of New York's Environment Coalition position of no new EPF categories without new funding. This year, we also stand with the Friends of New York's Environment Coalition in strongly urging that the budget include a proposal to develop a multiyear repayment plan for the more than half a billion dollars that have been taken from the EPF, through an annual increase in the amount of RETT [Real Estate Transfer Tax] revenue dedicated to the EPF.

Oppose the Moratorium on Open Space Protection. One of the most shortsighted and damaging proposals regarding the EPF is the Governor's proposal to place a moratorium on protecting open space, the elimination of land acquisition funding, and the steep reduction in farmland protection funding. This proposal would seriously undermine efforts to advance conservation at a time when the opportunities to save the last remaining open spaces could not be greater. The EPF was created to offset habitat loss from development, and the land acquisition and farmland protection categories are pillars of this important fund. This irresponsible moratorium should be undone, funding to land acquisition and farmland improvements restored in a restored EPF, and the state commitments that have been made to organizations that have purchased land on the state's behest should be honored.

Oppose the Disproportionate Cuts to Environmental Agency Budgets

The Executive Budget proposal disproportionately cuts environmental agency budgets and staffing. In particular, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) budget is cut by 34% and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) budget is cut by an additional 20%, while other agencies like the State Education Department and Department of Health are only cut by 2% and 1%, respectively. These draconian cuts to the EPF and environmental agency budgets are the wrong course of action, and put at risk many projects across the state that help restore the environment and provide for ecotourism opportunities, further compounding the economic woes facing not-for-profit organizations and local governments.

Utilize 'Obesity Tax' to Offset Cuts to State Parks

Many emerging studies are showing that parks and open space help keep people healthier and play an important role in combating the obesity epidemic. However, Governor Paterson's budget cuts vital funding to parks, which will lead to many state parks closing their doors at a time when more people are looking to recreate closer to

home, get outside, and be active. We strongly urge that a portion of the proposed "obesity tax" revenue be dedicated to OPRHP to offset the cuts to their budgets, keep parks open, and develop new initiatives programs with the Department of Health to combat obesity and inspire children and their parents to get outside.

Promote and Expand Ecotourism Opportunities

Bird and wildlife watching is the fastest-growing outdoor recreation in New York State, with over 3.8 million bird-watchers contributing over \$1.6 billion to the state economy each year! To enhance the state's image as a destination for bird and wildlife watching, Audubon New York urges the state to create an "I BIRD NY" program, similar to other "I Love New York" campaigns. Such an initiative should provide promotional assistance to local governments in their efforts to promote ecotourism and wildlifewatching opportunities, and enhance promotion of voluntary conservation funding programs like the Habitat Access Stamp and Return a Gift to Wildlife programs.

Consider Other Revenue-Generating Ideas

To increase revenues in the state and offset environmental damage, Audubon urges the creation of a cleanwater surcharge on the sale of nonagricultural, aesthetic lawn-care pesticides and fertilizers, which could be used to generate additional funds for water-quality improvements and wastewater infrastructure upgrades. Additionally, the state should consider instituting application fees for permits to modify freshwater wetlands.

Expand Severance Tax for Natural Gas Drilling

To offset the many negative and destructive environmental impacts from expanded drilling for natural gas, strong mitigation requirements and funding must be put in place. Audubon New York strongly believes that any severance tax considered by the state must apply not only to expanded drilling, but to existing wells already in production and provide funds for the protection of unfragmented forests, restoration of wetland habitat, and improvement of water quality, in addition to providing increased staff to the DEC and other agencies. The Governor's proposed severance tax does not go far enough to mitigate the environmental destruction that will occur if this expanded drilling is allowed, and must be amended to ensure this funding is used to protect and restore New York's environment.

Oppose the Elimination of Certain Boards and Commissions (S.6613/A.9713)

We urge the legislature to retain the Bird Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Invasive Species Advisory Council, neither of which have any state costs associated with them.

For more information on these proposals and to see a copy of the budget testimony, visit http://ny.audubon.org/PDFs/Testimony 10 11.pdf.

RECORD-SETTING YEAR FOR PEREGRINE FALCONS

Editor's note: The following comes from a March 10 press release.

2009 proved to be a record-setting year for Peregrine Falcons in many productivity categories according to a new report released today by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). DEC surveys found that there were 73 territorial pairs of state-endangered Peregrine Falcons present in the state in 2009, with 42 pairs recorded upstate. That's a slight increase from 2008, when 67 pairs were recorded statewide. In 2009, 61 pairs bred and produced 132 young, also slightly up from 2008. New York State has the largest population of peregrines in the eastern United States.

Peregrines raise one to five young in nests located mainly on cliffs, bridges, and buildings. They are known for their high speed — over 200 mph — dives on their bird prey.

These birds had disappeared as nesting birds from the eastern United States by the early 1960s due to pesticide (DDT) residues which caused eggshell thinning. Once DDT use was banned in the United States, an experimental restoration program began involving widespread releases of captive-raised birds from the Peregrine Fund, a global nonprofit organization focused on conserving birds of prey. Through this program, 169 young peregrines were released in New York State from the mid-1970s through the late 1980s.

In 1983, the first new pairs nested at two bridges in New York City, and in 1985 two pairs returned to nest on

Adirondack cliffs. The population has grown steadily since then. There are now about 20 pairs in the metro New York area and 27 in the Adirondacks, a pair at every major bridge between NYC and Albany, and about 10 pairs scattered through the rest of the state.

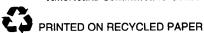
At many of the urban nest locations, wooden nest trays have been placed to increase the falcons' productivity. Peregrine Falcons do not build nests of sticks like most raptors, but instead lay their brownish eggs in whatever substrate is available. Protection and management is necessary to continue this species' success in New York, which means working with building and bridge authorities so that whenever possible their work is done in a way that does not negatively impact nesting Peregrine Falcons. DEC has had excellent cooperation from many agencies and volunteers in protecting, managing, and monitoring this endangered species.

Webcams operate during the nesting season at several sites in New York State. For links to these sites and other information, including a link to view the new 2009 Peregrine Falcon report in full text, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7059.html.

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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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.

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