

relation to the private sector. Robert Moses in some cases made colossal mistakes, but during his time the government of New York State was able to do some really great things, such as create wonderful state parks like Jones Beach; public resources were successfully mobilized by the public for the public. When New York needed a new boardwalk restaurant at Jones Beach in 2006, however, it felt it needed a private partner to build it, which became Donald Trump. State money was not enough and public officials essentially had to get the funds from a private developer. Private developers, such as Mr. Trump, are focused on profit, and once that goal becomes primary, one is no longer dealing simply with providing food for people visiting a state park.

Parks such as Jones Beach were created to provide recreation, not turn a profit. In my opinion, it is a shame that public entities at all levels have to so heavily rely on private-sector resources in this compromising way. This was not always the case. This situation particularly affects parks (and preserves), whose funding seems the first thing to be cut by cash-strapped governments.

The ability of New York State to manage Jones Beach for the good of the public depends on its finances, its ability to raise money through taxes, fees, and public-private ventures such as the deal with Donald Trump. In the days of Robert Moses, taxes were the main source of government revenues, and neither excessively high fees nor public-private deals were necessary to create our state park system. Perhaps we are at the point where we should revise the tax code to accomplish an important goal: put more money into the hands of the public so that public-private ventures like the Trump fiasco are less likely. How our state parks (and national, county, and local parks for that matter) are managed should depend on public goals, not private profit.

There is discussion now about how best to replace the old Jones Beach boardwalk restaurant, and many of these ideas welling up from the public have great merit. I sincerely hope we finally get a restaurant that really serves the public and is in conformity with the democratic ethos that should characterize a public park. Jones Beach is very important to members of the South Shore Audubon Society—and to all Long Islanders and to our visitors—from the fantastic birding on the West End to the tasty clam chowder served on the boardwalk. May our gem on the ocean flourish!

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.*

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BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

R. U. Abyrdar II

This month I will be reviewing *Life List: A Woman's Quest for the World's Most Amazing Birds*, by Olivia Gentile, which is a very interesting biography of one of the world leaders in bird species listing, with over 8,000 species to her name—and she's a woman! Phoebe Snetsinger, the subject of this book, was a character, to be sure. She missed her mother's funeral and her oldest daughter's wedding to go on bird tours. People I know have very mixed feelings about this book; this is my disclaimer and voice of caution as you read this review. To be sure, I loved the book and could not put it down until I had finished reading it. So, here goes:

Phoebe was typical of the college-educated women of the '40s and '50s, who went to college for their MRS. degree! As a housewife of the '50s, she was frustrated at being relegated to the kitchen and the kids while her husband pursued his enthusiastic career, so she turned to backyard birding as a hobby. In her 40s she was diagnosed with cancer and given less than a year to live. To take her mind off that distinct possibility, she became obsessed with seeing as many birds around the world as she could. Her compulsive, competitive side kicked in. Her father had left her with a substantial inheritance to pursue this "hobby" to its fullest.

For the next few decades, she became an amateur birder par excellence. She saw over 8,000 birds from all over the world. She went on many bird tours every year, to all of the world's continents. This was some obsession! This book shows both the perils and joys of an obsession. The author, in my opinion, writes in a straightforward, nonjudgmental style, showing without telling. She quickly invites you, the reader, into the book.



As a birder, this book certainly raises questions about Phoebe's choices. Yet, she lived many decades beyond the doctor's prediction and she believed her longevity was because of her passion for birds. You could say that she was both an amazing and troubled woman. For her, an enthusiasm for birding is what kept her moving forward in a positive direction. She became, until her death in a bus accident in Madagascar at the age of 68, the world's record holder. She had lived over twenty years beyond her doctor's prediction because of her passion for this fantastic hobby. She wanted to see every bird in the world and she nearly did! This book reads like a novel *but* this is a true story. You won't be able to put it down.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

After 15 years of success in North America, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will open up to the entire world for the first time in 2013. Anyone, from anywhere on earth, can participate for free by visiting www.birdcount.org and reporting the kinds and numbers of birds they see during the 16th annual count, **February 15-18**.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with partner Bird Studies Canada, the four-day count typically receives sightings from tens of thousands of people reporting more than 600 bird species in the United States and Canada alone.

During the 2012 count, participants reported 17.4 million bird observations on 104,000 checklists. Snowy Owls (pictured) thrilled many participants when these striking birds of prey ventured south from the Arctic in record numbers. In 2013, scientists predict that U.S. and Canadian bird-watchers will see an influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches and winter finches (such as Pine Siskins) because of scarce food supplies on their northern wintering grounds.



"The GBBC is an ideal opportunity for young and old to connect with nature by discovering birds and to participate in a huge science project," said Gary Langham, Audubon's Chief Scientist. "This year, we hope people on all seven continents, oceans, and islands, will head out into their neighborhoods, rural areas, parks, and wilderness to further our understanding of birds across the hemispheres."

Participating is easy. Simply watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the number of birds you see for each species you can identify. You'll select your location on a map, answer a few questions, enter your tallies, and then submit your data to share your sightings with others around the world.

The global capacity for the count will be powered by eBird, an online checklist program for all of the world's 10,240 bird species. Participants will be able to view what others are seeing on interactive maps, keep their own records, and have their tallies recorded for perpetuity.

Editor's note: If you participate in the GBBC, please share your results with SSAS's Joe Grupp (see p. 7).



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 (third Tuesday in 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. 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:

- Atlantic Beach Myra A. Stykes
- Baldwin Trini Costello, Margaret Hallden, Lois Krucher, Marie Reiss, Melissa Rose, Jan E. Ryan, Karen Rycyk
- Bellmore E. MacCone, Anne Perlson
- Bethpage Dolores Baur
- East Meadow Elizabeth Kieran, Judith Lebolt, Vivian A. Mc Cord
- East Rockaway Ellen Rehm
- Farmingdale Helga De Szalay, David Moyer
- Floral Park Frances Hornberger, Betty Moeller
- Franklin Square Edgardo Lob
- Garden City Bridgette Mastaglio, John Sofolarides, John & Kathleen Spellman
- Glen Oaks Sandy Simmons
- Hempstead Theresa R. Chodak
- Hicksville Kathy Kelly
- Levittown Joseph Ippolito
- Lido Beach Maureen Donovan
- Long Beach Bonnie Dorfman, Patricia Muzikar
- Lynbrook Paul Dechagas
- Malverne Patricia Wamser
- Massapequa Lorraine Friedman
- Merrick Jeannette Christie, Theda Febesh, Rita Forlenza
- Oceanside Margaret Turtola
- Plainview Ellen Golub
- Rockville Centre Nettie Becker, Elinor Brunswick, Annette F. Loring, Carol Maier, Ed Moss, Eleanor Muellers, Claudia O'Connor, Matthew Spahn
- Seaford Harold Fay, Mathew Kurz
- Valley Stream Linda Shemanski
- Wantagh Kevin McNamee



VOLUNTEERS FOR WILDLIFE (516) 674-0982



NAT'L AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201



NEW ACTION STRATEGIES AT NATIONAL AUDUBON

Marilyn Hametz

BIRD WALKS

Steve Schellenger

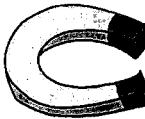
A new strategic plan is being implemented by National Audubon to fulfill its mission: "To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."

Activities and conservation strategies are now organized along the four flyways: Pacific, Central, Mississippi, and — where we fit in — Atlantic.

Audubon is focusing on 5 key strategies:

Putting Working Lands to Work for Birds & People. Partnering with landowners. *Best management practices on ranches, farms, and forests hold the key to survival for more than 150 species of threatened grassland and forest birds.*

Sharing Our Seas and Shores. Expanding the coastal stewardship program, and advancing policies and practices that will reduce threats such as overfishing and pollution from oil and other causes. Long Island Sound is one of the key areas. *Coastal areas are a magnet for birds and people alike. Overfishing, development, and sea-level rise put 60 percent of coastal birds at risk.*



Saving Important Bird Areas. Using the Audubon network to protect, restore, and advocate for these landscapes and the birds that depend on them. *Audubon has identified 2,544 Important Bird Areas in the United States, and supports work in the IBAs in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada.*

Shaping a Healthy Climate and Clean Energy Future. Advancing transformational policies that reduce carbon emissions and support well-sited green energy and leading adaptive land-management practices that will mitigate the impact of sea-level rise and climate change. *Climate change poses an unprecedented threat, not just to birds but to biodiversity and our quality of life.*

Creating Bird-Friendly Communities. Inspiring the one in five adults who watches birds to make daily lifestyle choices that add up to real conservation impact. This strategy includes Audubon at Home and citizen science monitoring. *People play a critical role in fostering healthy wildlife populations and communities.*

The full Audubon Strategic Plan and the 2012 Annual Report can be found at www.audubon.org/about-us. Printed copies of the Annual Report are available from Michael Honeywell, mhoneywell@audubon.org.

South Shore Audubon is also looking to the future and developing a long-range plan. Please contact me (marilynexpl@yahoo.com) if you would like to assist in the process.

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

LIKE US! <http://facebook.com/SSAudubon>

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.

- Jan. 27 Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
- Feb. 3 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Feb. 10 Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)
- Feb. 17 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Feb. 24 Massapequa Lake*
- Mar. 3 Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner
- Mar. 10 Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)
- Mar. 17 Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
- Mar. 24 Mill Pond Park (see above)
- Mar. 31 Alley Pond Park (76th Ave. parking lot)
- Apr. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

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

25TH ANNUAL WATERFOWL SURVEY CONTINUES

The remaining dates for our 2012–2013 Waterfowl Survey are as follows, rain or shine: **Saturdays, February 2, February 23, and March 23.** 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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TACKAPAUSA HOLIDAY PARTY THANKS

Marilyn Hametz

The Tackapausha Holiday Party is an event sponsored annually by South Shore Audubon. On December 8, the children and adults enjoyed the museum plus nature crafts, refreshments, and a live animal show which included a Snowy Owl and the porcupine that visited us at our September meeting. Many thanks to all the Audubon volunteers: Betty Borowsky, Gail and Jim Brown, Helen Buckley, Sheila Kiefer, Rich Kopsco, Anne Mehlinger, Wendy Murbach, and Laurie Raisher.

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			

