

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 43, NUMBER 8 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAY–AUGUST 2013

NEXT MEETING

John Gagliano

DATE: Tuesday, May 14, 2013
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)
SPEAKER: Rudy Gelis
TOPIC: Birding and Conservation in Ecuador

In the past decade, Ecuador has become more accessible for ecotourism than ever before due to infrastructure improvements, plus numerous Ecuadorians are now feeding birds, making great birding trails and gardens. This month's program will explore the firm link between birding, tourism, and local efforts in conservation and environmental education. A combination of excellent photos and brief videos, the presentation is based on over a decade of living and working in Ecuador.

Our guest speaker, Rudy Gelis, earned his biology degree at Berea College in Kentucky, studied nesting Andean Condors in Argentina and penguins in the Falkland Islands, and has been a resident of Quito, Ecuador for over a decade. In Ecuador he has studied the nests and breeding behavior of Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Red-winged Wood-Rail, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, five species of antpitta, Masked and Bluish Flowerpiercers, Barred Hawk, plus many dozens more. He started Pluma Verde Tours (www.plumaverdetours.com) to offer tailor-made itineraries for both bird-watching and wildlife trips. Applying his strong background in botany and great interest in all of the natural world, Rudy leads birding and natural history tours throughout much of Ecuador and Peru. Join us!

Pre-Meeting Book Discussion. Arrive a half-hour early to participate in a discussion led by R. U. Abyrdar II (aka Paul Stessel) of the book that he reviewed in the previous *Skimmer*. This month's book is *Of a Feather* by Scott Weidensaul.

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 under-construction gas station that borders Sunrise Highway.



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

SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!

SSAS'S 42ND ANNUAL DINNER

Join us for an evening of good food and good company. Our gathering will be at Pompei Restaurant in West Hempstead on **Tuesday, June 11**. The cocktail hour will begin at 6:30 P.M. As usual, awards will be presented and raffle drawings will occur. Your dinner registration form is inserted in this newsletter. Join us!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anti-Fracking and Anti-LNG Campaigns Are Merging

Jim Brown

On March 10, I and four other members of the South Shore Audubon Society (Rich Kopsco, Diana Ihmann, Jerry Rivers, and Marianne McCarthy) took a bus trip to Pennsylvania to see firsthand the fracking sites in that state. The trip was organized by Food and Water Watch, our coalition partner in the fight against high volume hydraulic fracturing. About 30 people from Long Island were on the trip, which began very early on the first day of daylight saving time and ended back on Long Island in the evening — a long day. Other groups represented on our bus were the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society, the Long Island Sierra Club, and the North Shore Land Alliance. In Pennsylvania our bus was joined by some young people from Binghamton. If fracking ever comes to New York, it will come to the Binghamton area first — they are on the front lines.

On the trip we visited residents of Dimock and Montrose, communities in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania that have experienced the negative impacts of fracking. To see the effects of this extreme gas drilling process was eye-

JOIN OUR BIRDATHON!

Jim Remsen

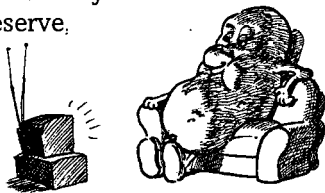
BIRD WALKS

Steve Schellenger

This year SSAS will conduct its 26th 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 height and over 125 species may be identified in our area.

If you aren't going with my team, why not try your own Birdathon? Do a variation on the usual theme of seeing as many species as you can during the count period. Use your imagination. Limit yourself to your back-

yard, a favorite park or preserve, "couch potato" Birdathon. (For this one, you count as many bird species as you can on television during the 24 hours!)



Mark the dates on your calendar if you haven't already — **Friday, May 10** from 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 11** at 5:00 P.M. — and join us (or go it alone, in which case you choose the turf). Birding expertise is not necessary and your teammates will be happy to point out the birds for you. Rain dates are one week later at the same time.

Please note: In the event of questionable weather, I will decide whether or not to cancel the Birdathon by 3 P.M. on Friday, May 10. If you have any uncertainty about whether it will be postponed, please call me at (631) 957-0949 or (631) 748-8942 by 3 o'clock.

We need Birdathon prizes! As we have done in the past, we will make everyone who brings in at least one pledge (sponsoring yourself counts) eligible for a prize drawing to be held at our annual dinner (attendance not required). If you would like to donate a prize, please contact me. Our schedule of starting places is as follows:

Friday, May 11 at 5 P.M. Meet us at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot). We will go to Jones Beach's Coast Guard station next, heading home after sunset.

Saturday, May 12. Meet us at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh at 5:45 A.M. Other planned birding locations are Alley Pond Park (76th Ave. parking lot) at approximately 8:30 A.M., followed by Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Please try to notify me so that we will know to expect you.

Sponsors are the heart of the Birdathon. These are people who agree to give you 25¢, \$1, or any amount for each species you identify (they may also give you a flat pledge not based on number of species). Ask anyone you know, and don't forget yourself!

Note on Submitting Pledges. Pledges must be received by June 10 to be eligible for prizes. Pledge forms, if you want them, are available at SSAS events or via e-mail to mssperling@optonline.net. Send pledges to James Remsen, Jr., 8 Venetian Blvd., Lindenhurst, NY 11757. Good luck!

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

Apr. 28	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
May 5*	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
May 12	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)
May 19	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 26	<i>Memorial Day Weekend — No Walk</i>
June 2	Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
June 9	Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside <i>Summer Break</i>
Aug. 18	Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)
Aug. 25	Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside

**Please note:* As mentioned in last month's *Skimmer*, SSAS is participating in Screen-Free Week with a special activity for children on our May 5 bird walk. For further information and to register your children, please contact Marilyn Hametz at 799-7189 or marilynexpl@yahoo.com.

REMINDER: ANNUAL CENTRAL PARK WALK

On **Saturday, May 4**, SSAS is planning to be in Central Park for our 13th annual (weather permitting) early May morning bird walk. As usual, Chris Cooper (who was featured in last year's HBO documentary, "Birders: The Central Park Effect," and traces his birding roots to SSAS) will lead us through the twisting, hilly 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 [48 last year, including Chestnut-sided Warbler (pictured) and only 8 other warbler species].



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).

A group of us will be aboard the local Babylon line 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 7:12. 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. Join us!

BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

R. U. Abyrdar II

This month's installment is the last of the season. You will have all summer to catch up on your bird reading. They're all fun to read! This month I'm reviewing *Soaring with Fidel: An Osprey Odyssey from Cape Cod to Cuba and Beyond* by David Gessner. My thanks go out to Anne Mehlinger for recommending this book to me for review. So, here goes...

The author has written a very engaging book about raptor migration—focusing on his beloved Ospreys. They are fascinating birds, filled with personality and character. He pursues them down the Eastern Seaboard as they migrate the “thermal highway” that is the ospreys’ road for their winter migration into Central and South America. The book is a triumphant adventure of Gessner’s own 7,000 mile migration into Cuba and eventually South America. What he does and whom he meets along the way make this a particularly fascinating read. It is both funny and authentic at the same time. A thrilling birding adventure!



While he does focus on only one species, the effort is about bird migration and the passion for birding as well. As he thinks migration, the vexing question for Mr. Gessner is: Why do Ospreys migrate to Central and South America every winter? And what do they do when they arrive? His tracking took him on one specific route, from Cape Cod to Cuba and back. While he delves into the science of tracking migrating birds, it's his car and binoculars approach to the subject that will hold your interest. He spends many a day watching Ospreys and chatting with other bird-watchers, both known and unknown. His writing is beautiful and spiced with grace and humor. While the author describes the birds’ antics, he also writes about the people he meets on his journey. These assorted birders are a kind, colorful, sometimes brilliant, nature-loving group. Gessner provides the reader with a thoughtful and loving examination of these “fish hawks,” whom he portrays as beautiful creatures.

This is a true-life adventure in which he blends ornithology, international intrigue, beer, smokes, and derring-do into a terrific book that teaches us all to devour life while at the same time pursuing science. This book is a wonderful page-turner that you won't be able to put down! His memorable descriptions of Osprey behavior will brighten your birding passion. These adventures, following a variety of Ospreys, made incredible reading for me! This book has given me wings; read it and ENJOY!!

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SEE ANY BANDED OYSTERCATCHERS?

Audubon New York's Long Island Bird Conservation Coordinator, Kerri Dikun, asks us to keep an eye out for the 3000+ American Oystercatchers that have been banded since 1999. You can help promote the conservation of this Atlantic Coast species by reporting bands to the Working Group at <http://amoywg.org/banding-re-sighting>.

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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JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISES (Sat., May 25 and Sun., June 23, 5–8 P.M.). Meet at Pier 2 in Sheepshead Bay. Enjoy narrated cruise aboard 100-foot “Golden Sunshine.” Visit backwater marshes near JFK Airport & learn about 13,000-acre Wildlife Refuge. See nesting peregrine falcons, ospreys, egrets, shorebirds & waterfowl. Cost: \$55 incl. refreshments.

MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 7–9). Cost: \$385 includes 2 nights lodging at the luxurious Manor House (indoor/outdoor heated pools, jacuzzi, spacious lobby), 5 full meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, and star watch.

CAPE ANN WHALE WATCH (August 15–18). A fun-packed, nature-focused weekend in beautiful Cape Ann, Massachusetts. We hope to see pelagic species such as sooty and greater shearwater, Wilson's storm petrel, and common eider — not to mention minke and humpback whales, basking shark, and family pods of dolphins. Includes three nights' stay in historic Gloucester, a half-day whale watch boat trip, an evening Essex River cruise, easy canoeing on Ipswich River, birding at Parker River Wildlife Refuge, guided hikes, plus a lobster dinner. Cost: \$395. Limited to 40. Leaders: Don Riepe, Mickey Cohen.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (917) 371-8577, donriep@gmail.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alsnyc.org.

South Shore Audubon Society
P.O. Box 31
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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 \$20 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 by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS (we get \$0 from your dues 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.

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: _____

_____ (Zip+4)

PHONE NO.: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Chapter Code C3ZR150Z (South Shore Audubon Society)

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