

VOLUME 45, NUMBER 1 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2014

## **NEXT MEETING**

John Gaglione

DATE:

Tuesday, September 9, 2014

TIME:

7:30 P.M.

PLACE:

Freeport Memorial Library

144 W. Merrick Rd. (at 5. Ocean Ave.)

SPEAKER:

Lorraine Bondi-Goldsmith

TOPIC:

My African Journey: How I Found My

Heart and Soul in Africa

As our summer break ends, SSAS will start the year with a PowerPoint presentation that focuses on the wildlife of South Africa, including the "big five" (elephant, rhino, lion, leopard, and Cape buffalo) and birds (African Fish Eagle, jacana, weaver birds, Grey Heron, Lilac-breasted Roller, etc.; drawings of a weaver bird and the Roller are on p. 4).

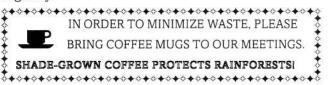
Lorraine is an adjunct Professor of Biology at Farmingdale State College with an MS in Environmental Science, and a Destination Specialist with Ntaba African Safaris. She holds a Federal Master Banding Permit and has been banding birds for 30 years; she handles birds of prey and other wildlife, with which she has done many environmental education programs. She volunteers at Tackapausha Museum and Preserve, working with the animals and assisting with programs, and is currently President of The Friends of Tackapausha, Inc.

She wrote that "Going to Africa was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. I had wanted to work with and be around animals, and see Africa, since I was 6 years old. When I went in November of 2013, the beauty and diversity of the wildlife was truly overwhelming. It is a birder's paradise! Africa changed me forever." 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 meeting's book is *To See Every Bird on Earth: a Father, a Son, and a Lifelong Obsession* by Dan Koeppel.

**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 Highway.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE What We're About

Betty Borowsky

The South Shore Audubon Society has a long and proud history of accomplishments that exemplify "thinking globally and acting locally." This is expressed in our mission statement, which appears in every issue of the Skimmer but bears repeating here: to promote environmental education; conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat; and to preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Although we are affiliated with the National Audubon Society, we function as an independent, grassroots organization that is concerned primarily with very local environmental issues in our catchment area - roughly the entire southern section of Nassau County. But while most of our activities specifically focus on and affect our own area, they contribute to the environmental well-being of the planet overall.

We are currently involved in managing Brookside Preserve, a wetlands area on the border between Baldwin and Freeport; participating in the environmental preservation efforts of other organizations, such as the Friends of Hempstead Plains (a preserve on the campus of Nassau Community College) and the new Friends of Tackapausha (a county preserve and museum in Seaford); donating native plants to parks throughout our area; surveying local bird populations; and promoting environmental education to people of all ages, by granting scholarships to

students of environmental studies in high school and at the college level, and to 4th and 5th graders in low-income communities in our area so they can attend the summer program at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay; and so many other things.

What our mission statement does not say, though, is how much fun we have. As this is my first President's Message, I thought you might be interested to know how I became involved with South Shore. One Sunday about twenty-five years ago, I was taking a bird walk in Hempstead Lake State Park and came across a group of people, also armed with field glasses, who were clearly looking at birds as well. I asked someone what group it was, and the leader of the group, who had been enthusiastically explaining something or other when I came up, said "it's the South Shore Audubon Society. We have a bird walk every Sunday. Why don't you join us?" And so I did - and have been a member ever since. (Longtime members will undoubtedly have guessed that the enthusiastic leader of the bird walk was Elliott Kutner, a founder of our chapter and an inspiration to all who knew him. He was impossible to resist!)

All that said, I would emphasize that SSAS is an entirely volunteer organization. It works because each of our members brings their unique talents and accomplishments to the chapter, and contributes what and when they can. So I invite you to come to our free monthly meetings (most often the second Tuesday in the month, at the Freeport Memorial Library), see our nature-themed programs, and

have a cup of coffee with us; come to our bird walks (we have one almost every Sunday - the schedule for the next few is in this newsletter);

and join one of our committees. Come if you're an expert; come if you've never been able to identify a bird in your life; come even if you've never been interested in knowing about wildlife or nature before. Work with us to preserve the few remaining natural places near where we live so we can continue to enjoy them, and let us ensure that they are here to enrich the lives of the generations to come.

**\*** LIKE US! http://facebook.com/SSAudubon

OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas\_list

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# HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The recipients of our annual graduation scholarships, arranged by Joe Landesberg, were Mary Ann Boyce from South Side H.S. in Rockville Centre, Martin Davidson III from Freeport H.S., and Jessica Rice from Baldwin H.S. We congratulate all three and wish them success.

## **BOOKS FOR BIRDERS**

R. U. Abyrdar II

Here it is - another season of reviewing exciting and informative books for all of us to enjoy. To begin the year

> I've chosen an extraordinary adventure saga, On the Wing: To the Edge of the Earth with the Peregrine Falcon by Alan Tennant. This book follows Peregrine Falcons on their migratory journey

up to Alaska and south to Central America. Throughout, we follow

Alan and pilot/friend (?) George Vose as they embark on this extreme "chase."

It reads as if it were written by a novelist who values the energy of a good story above all else. The author has the ability to transform this adventure into a highly readable story! Here we have two men obsessed with these fastflying (can you imagine over 200 mph?) falcons. Alan has succeeded in making deep-seated connections between man and Peregrine Falcon. It is both coherent and compelling. This is a fine vicarious adventure for all of us. Reading of falcons as individuals in the author's skillful, often lyrical, way is both a privilege and a pleasure.

The story begins on Padre Island, off the Texas coast, where Alan is doing falcon research in conjunction with the Army. It continues north through Canada and Alaska, and south into Mexico and beyond. Through it all you can't help but be excited for the two men, numerous falcons, and the "chase." The author shares his obsessive, madcap, death-defying and often illegal "chase" with all of us. These majestic, endangered birds are seen, as never before, as they are radio-tracked on their splendid migration.

In some ways this is a cautionary tale. Mr. Tennant is a gifted naturalist who details this unprecedented effort at following Peregrine Falcons from the air (this is where Mr. Vose comes in). His falcons have names — Amelia, Anukiat, Gorda, and Delgada. This is a high-spirited story if ever there was one! In Mr. Vose's Cessna Skyhawk (what better name?) number 469, we see the landscape of this migratory route as only the falcons see it! Fascinating. The Peregrine Falcon is the best known, historically, of all the world's raptors.

Like his falcons, Alan likes living life "on the edge." In this book we meet old friends like Sharon Matola in Belize from The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw. Alan and George develop an interesting dynamic as a result of their shared falcon research. You will learn a lot about the geography of Alaska and other interesting places. This book is recommended for all of us who are interested in birds and their survival in the world. This is both a loving and moving book. It reminds us that we humans come and go, but nature is forever! Read it and ENJOY!

NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306 

# SSAS THANKS ITS ANNUAL DINNER RAFFLE

⇒ Flora Allen ⟨
□ ⇒ Bird Watcher's Digest <>> ⇒ Gail & Jim Brown <</p> ⇔ Emma Carpenter ⟨□ ⇒ John & Denise Gaglione <</p> ⇒ Dolores & Joe Grupp 
⇔ Rich Kopsco 🖒 ⇒ Therese Lucas & Mike Sperling 
⇒ ⇒ Wendy Murbach <</p> ⇒ Panera Bread <>> Piccolo Ristorante <</p> □ Dolores Rogers <□
</p> □ Tom Stephenson & Scott Whittle (authors of The Warbler Guide) 
 □ ⇒ Paul Stessel & Nancy Strong <>> ⇒ Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace ·····

## PASSENGER PIGEON CENTENNIAL

Editor's note: I thank Joanne Del Prete for alerting me that September 1 marks the 100th anniversary of the demise of Martha, the world's last Passenger Pigeon. The National Museum of Natural History has an article with photos at www.mnh.si.edu/onehundredyears/featured\_objects/martha2.html and provides a 360-degree view of Martha at http://vertebrates.si.edu/birds/Martha/index.html. I excerpted the following from those Web pages.

Martha passed away on September 1, 1914, in the Cincinnati Zoo. She was believed to be the last living individual of her species after two male companions had died in the same zoo in 1910. Martha was a celebrity at the zoo, attracting long lines of visitors. When she was found dead on the floor of her cage that afternoon, she was immediately frozen into a 300-pound block of ice and shipped by fast train to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where her body was carefully preserved as a taxidermy mount and an anatomical specimen. The Passenger Pigeon had been the most abundant species of bird in North America only decades earlier. Its extinction helped to inspire our modern conservation ethic.

The specimen made from Martha's remains is one of the most treasured possessions of the Smithsonian Institution. In recognition of the centenary of her death, we have placed Martha back on exhibit on the ground floor of the museum. The exhibit, titled "Once There Were Billions," also features other iconic extinct North American birds as well as books about them, and runs from June 2014 to September 2015. The exhibit and its Web page provide more information about the birds and related special programming this year: http://library.si.edu/digital-library/exhibition/once-there-were-billions.

Passenger Pigeons lived in enormous colonies, with sometimes up to 100 nests in a single tree. Migrating flocks stretched a mile wide, turning the skies black. With

such abundance, it seemed unimaginable that the Passenger Pigeon could ever become extinct. But due to overhunting, habitat loss, and possibly infectious diseases that spreadthroughthecolonies, they became increasingly rare by the late nineteenth century. The last confirmed sighting of a wild Passenger Pigeon was in 1900. After that, only a few survived in captivity. Martha, who lived her whole 29-year life in the Cincinnati Zoo, was the last.

Her skin was mounted for display by the Smithsonian taxidermist Nelson Wood. Her internal parts were preserved as part of the fluid or "wet" collections of the National Museum of Natural History. Today the Smithsonian's Bird Collection is one of the largest in the world, numbering some 625,000 specimens.

# COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Betsy Gulotta

This year there were three winners of our Jerry Bishop Memorial College Scholarships.

Joanna Wells of North Bellmore is going to be a senior at Adelphi University, with a major in Environmental Studies and Anthropology, and a minor in Forensic Anthropology. She has done research on the effects of Sandy on the sedimentation of Long Island's south shore and will use her scholarship toward doing field work in Alaska.

Megan Ossman of West Babylon is going to be a junior at Adelphi with a major in Environmental Studies. She has volunteered at Garden City Bird Sanctuary and works with Joanna on research involving the effects of Sandy. She wants to use her scholarship toward travel to Australia to do field work on the Great Barrier Reef.

Sarah Cinquemani of Manchester, Connecticut, is going to be a senior, also at Adelphi, with majors in Environmental Studies and Political Science. She has done research in Australia and the Virgin Islands, as well as on Long Island, where she studied the effect of metal contamination on mud snails along the south shore. She intends to use her scholarship to find local internships in her field of study.

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#### 29TH ANNUAL NYS BEACH CLEANUP

Since 1986, the Northeast Chapter of the American Littoral Society has coordinated New York's participation in the annual International Coastal Cleanup, which has the overarching sponsorship of the Ocean Conservancy in Washington, D.C. Last year, 5,954 volunteers cleaned and documented 57,604 pounds of debris along 173.25 miles of New York State's shorelines.

A well-organized beach cleanup is a prime activity for learning about the marine environment — its value to people and wildlife, threats to its productivity, and the actions people can take to improve it.

Visit nysbeachcleanup.org for an expanding site list that includes cleanups on **September 20** at Hempstead Lake State Park, Lido Beach, and Jones Beach (Jones Beach also has cleanups on the 13th and 27th). To organize a cleanup site not listed, call 718-474-0896 or send an email to Natalie Grant at alsbeach@nyc.rr.com. If you would like to join a cleanup, please contact its captain.

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#### \*\* 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 this November) 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:

Our new men	bers since the last skimmer are.
Baldwin	Doreen Gordon, Diane Krol
Bethpage	Marc Fick, Joan K. Graf, Marilyn L. Hourigan
Cameron, NC	Sarah Hillmer
East Meadow	Lillyan Gitnik, Selene Gochan, Joan Levy, Julia Salembier, Jamie Sepe
East Rockaway	Candice Morgenlander, Diana Muller, Martin Waldman
Elmont	Gerard Triano, Dolores A. Young
Farmingdale	Jo A. Bihary, George M. Donald, Aziza Najimi, Edward Sandt, Melissa Zimmerman
Floral Park	Veronica Barrera, Jeriann Landers, Elizabeth McDonald, Michael P. Swann

Franklin Square	Candace Spanopoulos	
Freeport	Harvey Friedman, Diana Gibson, Beatrice Jiles, Harold McGregor	
Garden City	Susan Briziarelli, Nick Healey, Doreen D. Miller, Patricia Trudden, April Wenk	
Clan Oaks	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Raino, Stanley Reid	
Hempstead	- 1918 11 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1	
	Scott Leventhal, Dorothee Shankman	
	Renee Arnett, Catherine Greenfield, Lisa	
	Neenan, Lisa Reinhardt	
Island Park		
Lawrence		
Levittown	Michael Barboni, Carolyn Barton, Gloria Grech,	
	Victoria Johnson, Ellen T. Leonhardt DVM,	
	Jacqueline Livoti, Aileen Manton, Paul Napol, Isabella Rosario	
Lido Beach	Lauren Breen, Alfred & Elizabeth Dimaio, Diane Ellis, Diane C. Goldstein	
Long Beach	Jeannie King, Lynn Liotta, Regina Scala-Dean, Jennifer Smith	
Lynbrook	Roberta Migdalof, Joseph Vaccarella, Elizabeth Watts	
Malvorno	Linda Borrino, Emma Drop, Chrisanne Hammill	
	John S. Dickey, Paul Epstein, Nestor F.	
	Hernandez, Mary-Ann Kasin	
	Frances Finan, Anne Sheskier	
	Suzanne Blakitis, Janet Kessin, Dennis Kotch, Jonathan Loew, R. Suehs	
Oceanside	Priscilla Braak, Sidney Friedman	
Old Bethpage	Dhaval Jhaveri Family	
Plainview	Carolyn Krupinski, Barbara Nelson, Minati Shah, Anita Stein	
Point Lookout	Dorothy Boodaghian, Kim Heneghan	
	Leon Applewhaite, Florence T. Egan, Doreen	
Seaford	Joseph Cerrella, Joan E. Porter, Katharine Tutchings	
Wantagh		
	Theresa Murphy, Louis Ross	
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	N MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201	
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#### **BACKYARD SURVEY DATA NEEDED!**

Joe Grupp

For over a decade, 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 email Birdstudyjoeg02@aol.com.



Joe Landesberg

All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains. Any questions? Call Joe at 467-9498. Directions and lists of what we've seen may be found at ssaudubon.org.

Aug. 24	Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside	
Aug. 31	Labor Day Weekend - No Walk	
Sep. 7	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve	
Sep. 14	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
Sep. 21	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Sep. 28	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)	
Oct. 5	5 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
Oct. 12	Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner	
<b>\$\$\$\$\$</b> \$	>>>>>>>>>>>>	

## BLACK SKIMMER CONSERVATION PLAN DRAFTED

Editor's note: The species that inspired the name of our newsletter continues to be designated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as being of special concern. The following is excerpted from a July 16 DEC press release and an accompanying fact sheet that's at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/79513.html.

The public can review and comment on the draft Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) Conservation Management Plan through September 2, 2014.

The Black Skimmer is a medium-sized colonial beachnesting waterbird species that is related to the terns. It arrives in the spring to nest along New York's ocean coast and migrates back to its wintering grounds in the Caribbean and Gulf Coast. It is of special conservation concern because of the limited distribution in New York and due to threats to its habitat. In New York, Black Skimmers almost always form mixed species colonies with either Least or Common Terns. The annual number of Black Skimmer colonies is approximately ten. However, the majority of successfully nesting birds are located at only two sites. The annual population of Black Skimmers is highly variable, buttypically averages 490 adult pairs in New York. The two largest colonies in New York are located only 17 miles apart and are found in Breezy Point, Queens and on Nickerson Beach in Nassau County.

Black Skimmers are currently surveyed annually as part of the Long Island Colonial Waterbird and Piping Plover (LICWPP) survey. While this survey provides a reference for annual abundance and distribution, it does not provide any measure of breeding productivity.

Research needs are centered on understanding marsh loss occurring along New York's coast and the potential for providing alternate breeding locations such as rooftop nesting, which has been shown to be beneficial to terns in southern states.

DEC drafted the management plan to help guide conservation actions to ensure the long-term viability of this species in New York. The overarching goal is to maintain a self-sustaining population that is secure in perpetuity. DEC is endeavoring to do this by maintaining an average of ten colonies and an average population of 550 breeding pairs over a typical 5-year period of time.

Management Actions. Enhance existing habitat through proper beach maintenance such as raking, regrading, and cleaning practices. Restore historical nesting areas. Place wrack (dead vegetation) in both natural and artificial ways. Place sand and dredge spoil on beaches and salt marsh islands to counteract erosion and marsh island subsidence. Maintain the integrity of vegetative communities along coastal beaches and salt marsh islands. Attract Skimmers to enhanced or restored areas by using visual and auditory methods. Provide Best Management Practices for local managers to implement on a site-specific basis.

*Monitoring Actions.* Establish more-accurate survey methods using remote sensing technology.

Research Actions. Conduct banding surveys to assess how Black Skimmers move throughout the NY/NJ Bight. Examine contaminants and toxins in Black Skimmer food sources. Understand the distribution and abundance of food sources. Establish a pilot project to assess the viability of creating rooftop habitat.

Outreach Actions. Inform both residents and visitors how their actions can aid managers through local education efforts and distribution of Black Skimmer pamphlets. Promote stewardship though volunteer activities such as beach cleanup events.

Comments and questions can be addressed to: Jason C. Smith, NYSDEC 4th Floor, 47-40 21st Street, Long Island City, NY 11415, or alternatively can be sent via e-mail to: R2Marine@dec.ny.gov. Please enter "Black Skimmer" in the address line of e-mail.

# A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE

Editor's note: The following was sent by former SSAS president George Peters, for whom a get-well card was circulated at our annual dinner after he and his wife had to cancel their plans to join us.

Marianne and I were touched by the thoughtfulness expressed in your mega get-well greeting! It was a great morale booster and I'm happy to report that my recovery has been progressing smoothly, albeit a bit slowly.

Our special thanks to Nancy and Bill Youngfert who hatched (okay, bird pun intended!) these wishes and to Mike Sperling who agreed to print this thank you in the *Skimmer*, thereby saving me not only time but postage...

Yes, we love living in Vermont but we still miss SSAS and the camaraderie we so enjoyed with you.

We'll look forward to the SSAS dinner in June of 2015.

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#### CONSERVATION AWARD FOR MIKE FARINA

Jim Brown

*Editor's note:* Jim suggested that I include the remarks that he made at our annual dinner about our winner and the place that he manages; here they are.

Our Conservation Award is named in honor of Elliott Kutner, one of the founders of our chapter in the early 1970s, who passed away in March of 2012. Elliott was a chapter president and longtime leader of our bird walks. He brought countless people to the joy of birding and to work for environmental conservation. Elliott charismatically inspired people to engage in birding and conservation; he was a great birder and wonderful teacher.

Tonight we are proud to honor another stellar Long Island conservationist — Mike Farina — Conservation Biologist at the Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area. Like Elliott, Mike is a great birder and wonderful teacher!

Mike is in charge of an important parcel of land in the Town of Hempstead. The Marine Nature Study Area is approximately 52 acres in size, principally salt marsh; the preserve lies within the larger IBA (Important Bird Area) known as West Hempstead Bay/Jones Beach West. Bird species at risk within this area include Brant (pictured), Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, Common and

Least Terns, and Black Skimmers. All of these species frequent the Study Area. Mike is indeed the steward of an important piece of habitat on the



South Shore of Long Island. The area is not only important habitat in itself, but important also because it is a *Study* Area, a living laboratory that enables the public to learn about the ecological importance and natural beauty of our salt marshes in particular, and the importance and beauty of nature in general.

Mike works diligently to not only preserve important species of birds and wildlife, and to conserve important habitat, but he is also a tireless educator, helping to enlighten us all and to create the environmentalists we will need in the future.

Mike has worked on a number of important surveys — of Clapper Rails, Seaside Sparrows, and winter Brant. He regularly surveys avian species in the Nature Study Area. He has provided ongoing access to the behavior of Peregrine Falcons and Ospreys in and near the preserve with the building of bird cams, which you can view online. And it is not only birds about which Mike is knowledgeable. A friend of his has said that "Mike is all about handson, about immersing oneself in the ecosystem. He seines and walks with us. One time, he had us bounce up and down in a corner of the marsh just to feel the pulse of the living earth. Whatever aquatic or terrestrial creature comes our way, Mike knows its name and its story."

Mike is an environmental educator who works with all levels of students, from primary grades through

college students and beyond. The Sea Janitors — future environmental leaders I am sure — are a case in point [referring to members of an Oceanside club for sixth graders, a few of whom were present — ed.]. A teacher from the Oceanside School District has said that "Mike is a constant" and "he'll always answer knocks on the door." A retired teacher from the Woodmere School District has said that Mike's "leadership enables our youth of tomorrow to not only love the salt marsh, but to become active stewards to protect it." An adjunct professor at Adelphi has the following to say about Mike: "Mike Farina has taken the Study Area to a new level. His presentations to groups and the general public, as well as his photography and artistry, are an immeasurable asset to the Town of Hempstead."

Mike's contributions to conservation and education are indeed deep and weighty. But Mike is also, I am told, a bit of a prankster. Our program chair, one of our best birders, was taken in by a plastic pink flamingo planted by Mike to fool unwary birders. I am told he has done these fake plantings more than once!

The fact that Mike Farina finds fun and an abiding interest in the salt marsh has benefitted all Long Islanders who love nature. The beauty of the Marine Nature Study Area has certainly been a joy to the South Shore Audubon Society for many years! It is an honor and a privilege to present this year's Elliott Kutner Conservation Award to Mike Farina!



ASSATEAGUE NATIONAL SEASHORE/CHINCOTEAGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE (September 18–21). Your cost (\$395) includes 3 nights lodging (double occupancy) at the Refuge Inn, breakfasts, guided hikes, evening programs, an "All-you-can-eat" seafood dinner, and a "Safari Bus Tour" of the backwash flats. \$495 if you want to go by van from Manhattan. \$150 extra for a single room. See eagles, wild ponies, raptors, shorebirds. Send check for full amount ASAP to NYC Audubon, 71 West 23rd Street (#1523), New York, NY 10010. Call (718) 474-0896 for more info. Leader: Don Riepe.

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP (Saturday, September 20). For info contact Natalie Grant (alsbeach@nyc.rr.com) or call (718) 474-0896.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET ECOLOGY CRUISE (Saturday, September 27, 3:00-6:00 p.m). Boat the "Golden Sunshine" leaves from Pier 4, Sheepshead Bay. Learn about the history, ecology, management, and wildlife of this 13,000-acre urban preserve and see many species of birds, including osprey, oystercatcher, egrets, herons, terns, and other migrating species. Cost (\$55/person) includes 3-hour narrated tour, wine & cheese, fruit, drink, snacks. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 474-0896, donriepe@gmail.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.littoralsociety.org.

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

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# NEW GATEWAY NRA GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Editor's note: A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed by the National Park Service's Northeast Regional Director, Michael Caldwell, on June 11, following the recommendation of Gateway National Recreation Area Superintendent Jennifer T. Nersesian that a modified version of Alternative B ("Discovering Gateway") be adopted. Alternative C ("Experiencing Preserved Places") had been identified as the "environmentally preferable alternative based on the analysis of impacts." The public process for developing this new General Management Plan, including its Environmental Impact Statement, began in 2009. PDF files of various documents, including the 36-page ROD that is excerpted below, can be downloaded from http:// parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID= 16091. Of particular concern to SSAS is Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, whose manmade West Pond was often circled by us on Sunday morning bird walks before it was breached by Hurricane Sandy and is on our schedule for September 21; we are part of a coalition seeking to have the freshwater pond restored.

Jamaica Bay Unit. Under the selected alternative, Jamaica Bay will be a premier outdoor recreation destination. The parklands at Jamaica Bay will provide an unmatched variety of recreational, interpretive, and educational opportunities for New York residents and park visitors. New activities, programs, and enhanced facilities will attract users of all neighborhoods, backgrounds, and ages, drawing a diverse audience of local residents, national, and international visitors to enjoy all of the park's offerings. Areas within the Jamaica Bay Unit, including Floyd Bennett Field and the Rockaway Peninsula parks (Jacob Riis Park, Fort Tilden, and Breezy Point Tip), will emerge as destinations for daily use and multiple-day experiences.

The National Park Service (NPS) will continue cultivating and leveraging partnerships to accomplish natural resource objectives. Improving water quality within Jamaica Bay will be prioritized, along with restoring marine resources and degraded stretches of coastal habitats. Natural resource protection and restoration efforts in the Jamaica Bay Unit will focus on softening hardened coastal edges, restoring wetland and coastal habitats, and

creating additional freshwater wetlands. Increased use will be balanced with additional monitoring and management of wildlife and habitats. NPS will work closely with New York City and other landowners to build the resiliency of coastal habitat and to improve conditions along the entire Rockaway coastline. Conservation measures for threatened and endangered species, such as providing symbolic fencing with posts and signs around nesting birds, establishing buffer zones, and prohibiting certain recreational activities during breeding season, will continue, as needed.

Gateway has more than 300 bird species, 100 fish species, 30 mammal species, 25 reptile and amphibian

species (painted turtle is pictured), and over 500 invertebrates, including aquatic macro invertebrates, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, beetles, and other

insects. The grasslands at Floyd Bennett Field and Fort Tilden are particularly beneficial for wildlife, including ground-nesting birds and migrating raptors.

The selected alternative proposes increases in visitor-related facilities for activities such as camping and outdoor education, and will include the reuse of existing buildings. These changes would both directly impact wildlife species by removing habitat and indirectly affect them by increasing noise and human activity, and would have the potential for adverse localized impacts on wildlife. While there may be adverse impacts, these impacts would not result in impairment because the duration of these impacts would be short and the majority of wildlife in the park would be protected through restricted access and by directing visitor use to areas that do not threaten the most sensitive habitat. Measures such as buffers and closures during nesting would substantially mitigate these impacts.

Closures and restrictions on access where sensitive species nest and maintenance of large habitats would provide substantial benefits for many species of wildlife, particularly those that nest on saltmarsh and wooded islands in Jamaica Bay (closed to the public), listed shorebirds, and associated beach wildlife and grasslandnesting birds. Because freshwater wetlands were once an integral part of the ecosystem in the region but are now quite rare, holistic planning to create freshwater wetlands at several park sites, including West Pond, as well as the creation of built freshwater wetlands at Floyd Bennett Field as part of the wetlands center in the selected alternative could result in significant localized benefits for freshwater-dependent wildlife species. localized benefits from continuing to manage existing natural areas at Great Kills Park, northern Sandy Hook, and Breezy Point Tip and from the possible restoration of natural sand-transport processes at Rockaway Peninsula and Staten Island park sites are also anticipated in the selected alternative.

# **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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