

VOLUME 47, NUMBER 1 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2016

NEXT MEETING

Paul Stessel

DATE:	Tuesday, September 13, 2016
TIME:	7:30 р.м.
PLACE:	Freeport Memorial Library
	144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)
SPEAKER:	Joe Giunta
TOPIC:	Sparrows and Allies in the NYC Area

At our first monthly meeting after our summer break, our announcements and coffee break will be followed by a slide-enhanced presentation about many of the birds that are referred to as "LBJs" (little brown jobs). We all should leave with a better understanding and knowledge of sparrows and related birds that tend to be dismissed as too hard to identify.

A frequent guest speaker for SSAS, Joe Giunta has led bird walks for the Nature Conservancy, NYC Audubon, Brooklyn Bird Club, Road Scholars, and the South Fork Natural History Society. He has taught birding classes at Brooklyn Botanic Garden since 2001. He is the owner of Happy Warblers, a travel and education company, and has birded extensively in the U.S., Panama, Belize, and Costa Rica.

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 and Sy Schiff reviewed in the previous *Skimmer.* This meeting's book is *The Arm*-chair Birder: Discovering the Secret Lives of Familiar Birds by John Yow.

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.

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS. SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE The Pleasures (and Challenges!) of Fall Birding Betty Borowsky

Welcome to the 2016 fall birding season. Of course every season is good for birding, but the fall offers special opportunities in our area. At this time of the year, many species that have spent the summer north of us pass through on their way to their winter feeding grounds. With any luck we can observe them during their stay here.

While there is considerable overlap, and while anything can happen, in general the shorebirds (such as the sandpipers) tend to come earliest. Next come the songbirds (e.g., the warblers), and last the raptors (hawks, falcons). Migration of some birds can begin in July and end for others in December, but most migrants are in our area between August 15 and November 15.

Identifying birds in the fall is fun but can be very challenging. Some individuals are still juveniles with different plumage than the adults, and many adults have molted into their non-breeding plumage, which is far less distinctive than the breeding plumage we see in the spring. And some individuals are in-between, in transition from breeding to non-breeding plumage patterns! Songbirds are especially challenging, because the trees are still leafed and because most males are not singing. (Many species do have other calls, but these tend to be much less distinctive than their breeding songs.) So, identifying birds in the fall requires spotting and recognizing often-small differences among individuals. In fact, some guidebooks have several pages devoted to "confusing fall warblers." And sometimes one just has to say "I don't know what that bird is!"

But the main treat of the fall is the raptor migration. Here on the south shore, our geographic location affords us very special opportunities to view these birds, because the raptors' migration route passes right over us. Raptors on the Atlantic Flyway tend to follow the coastline as they head south, and we're right there.

The South Shore Audubon Society conducts bird walks almost every Sunday from mid August through mid June. These are free, open to all, and require no advance signups; you just show up at the site. Good opportunities to see and learn more about the raptors (including Peregrine Falcon, pictured) will come when we visit Jamaica Bay

Wildlife Refuge on October 16, Jones Beach on October 23, and Point Lookout/Lido Preserve on October 30. Also, you might enjoy a visit to the Theodore Roosevelt Nature Center, at Jones Beach, which has a boardwalk into the dunes that affords an unobstructed field of view, and a



handy set of life-sized silhouettes that can help you identify the birds as they fly overhead.

We also invite you to join us at our monthly general meetings. You will learn about important environmental conservation issues affecting our area, and enjoy our programs about birds and nature. Refreshments are served and there is plenty of time to socialize. All this is free as well.

So come on our bird walks and come to our meetings and enjoy birding with us!

SSAS THANKS ITS ANNUAL DINNER RAFFLE DONORS

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🖌 BIRD WALKS 🖌

Joe Landesberg

All walks start at **9** A.M.; no walk if it rains. Call me at 467-9498 in case of questionable conditions or for other info. Directions and lists of what we've seen are at ssaudubon.org.

Aug. 21*	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
Aug. 28	Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern
	State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
Sep. 4	Alley Pond Park (76th Ave. parking lot)
Sep. 11	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north
	side of Merrick Rd.)
Sep. 18	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Sep. 24 (Sat.)	Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside
Oct. 2	Hempstead Lake State Park (see above)
Oct. 9	Columbus Day Weekend — No Walk

*After the May–August *Skimmer* was printed, the Town of Hempstead, as a result of Town Supervisor Anthony J. Santino's "\$5 million cost-saving initiative" that "directed all Hempstead Town department heads to institute 20 percent across-the-board cuts in discretionary spending" (quoting from the June 2016 *Hempstead Town Government Works for You* newsletter that was mailed to every "postal customer"), the Marine Nature Study Area's staff was cut and its seasonal Sunday hours were eliminated. Consequently, we've had to change locations for August 21, have scheduled a Saturday walk at MNSA for September 24, and (as we reported on our Facebook page in May) are trying to get the Conservation and Waterways staff restored at MNSA and elsewhere.

WEBMASTER WANTED

Back in 1999, when noisy dial-up modems plugged into a phone jack were how nearly everyone went online, SSAS was ahead of most chapters in having any Web site at all. Four years later, our current electronic communications chairperson, Anne-Marie Conn, was recruited by her parents and has kept our site going ever since. She's willing to continue but is ready to step aside in favor of someone who has more time to post what SSAS's board submits and, perhaps, the skills needed to give the site a more modern look. If you're interested, please contact Mike Sperling (Web and newsletter editor) at mssperling@optonline.net.

STUFF NEEDED FOR OUR FLEA MARKET

SSAS is planning to have a flea market / garage sale this fall. We will need things to sell, of course, and what you donate can be claimed as a tax deduction. So, please keep us in mind if you have items that you no longer need. If you're unable to bring your donation to the sale, we'll make arrangements to get it from you beforehand. Look for details in next month's *Skimmer*.

RULE #5: GET YOURSELF A NEMESIS BIRD

Editor's note: Back in February, the National Audubon Society's Web site started accumulating entries written by Nicholas Lund, introducing the column as follows: "Interested in birds but not sure where to start? Birding doesn't have to be intimidating for beginners — look no further than The Birdist's Rules for Birding, a weekly feature at www.audubon.org/section/birdists-rules-birding that will serve as a guide for all those looking to get deeper into the hobby." Topics covered so far include "Think Up Some Excuses to Go Chase Birds," "Know What Birds Are Doing Each Month," "How to Dress for Birding," "Learn to Bird From a Car," "Figure Out What Kind of Chickadees You've Got," "Go Someplace Weird," "It's Okay to Hate Starlings," "How to Misidentify a Bird With Grace and Dignity," and "What's the Best Bird-Named Sports Team?" (which has graphics of team logos and the corresponding birds). Here's part of rule #5:

For me, a "nemesis bird" is pretty much any species I've attempted to find many times but have always come up short. It's the kind of bird that makes me use up a vacation day to drive all the way out to where it's supposed to be or where it's been seen most recently, but then doesn't show its dumb face to me. If that happens once, it's annoying. If it happens twice, it's a personal affront and I have a new nemesis.

Not that I pioneered this term or anything. Different birders have different qualifications for when a bird becomes their nemesis. It might have to do with miles traveled; it might have to do with how common the species is (for common ones, it's easier to make things personal). It gets even more frustrating when everyone else is constantly mentioning how they "just saw a whole flock of [insert evil bird]! It was right over there!"

The point is, if a birder acquires a nemesis bird, they should feel lucky to have one. Despite how annoying it is to miss species that everyone else is seeing, nemesis birds drive you to become a better birder.

When you become obsessed with finding a certain species, you start to think harder about why you might be dipping (a birding term for failure). To find my soughtafter Northern Goshawk, for example (pictured), I needed

to make sure I was able to identify it from the similar-looking Cooper's Hawk, so I studied the minute differences between the two species in flight. When I was searching for Cape May Warblers, I needed to know their



calls — which meant I had to learn all the warbler calls. Plus, it's fun. Birding without a target is just a gussied-

up walk in the woods; you need to have some sort of treasure.

Maybe you won't find it. Maybe you'll look in the exact same place as everyone else, but it just won't be there. Okay, try again. It's annoying, right? Good. Keep at it. Listen to the calls again. Study all the different plumages and make sure you're looking in the right habitat at the perfect time. Also, learn a cool little end-zone dance [this is linked to a YouTube football video — ed.]. You'll need to celebrate when you finally beat your nemesis.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The recipients of our annual graduation ceremony scholarships, arranged by Joe Landesberg, were Ryan Chelius from South Side H.S. in Rockville Centre, Takota Hager from Oceanside H.S., Lauren Johnson from Baldwin H.S., and Carly McBride from Freeport H.S. We congratulate all four and wish them success.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS Betsy Gulotta

Our winners of Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships this year both attended SSAS's annual dinner in June to accept their awards. We wish them well in their careers and thank Evelyn Bishop for her support.

Kaitlin R. Shahinian, from Farmingdale, graduated from Adelphi University in 2016 with a B.S. in Anthropology and Biology, and is continuing her graduate work there in Environmental Studies. She is interested in sustainability and is working to establish a community garden and composting program at Adelphi to help eliminate food waste.

Catherine Stolfi, from Medford, completed her undergraduate work at Stony Brook University and is also in the Environmental Studies graduate program at Adelphi. Between college and graduate school she has spent five years gaining professional experience, including an internship at the Town of Hempstead's Department of Conservation and Waterways. She would like to work in the public sector to address environmental problems.

SSAS Post Office Statement — South Shore

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NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PROPOSED FOR DUTCHESS COUNTY AND NEW ENGLAND

Editor's note: Last March, shortly before the comment deadline, we received an Action Alert signed by the executive directors of Audubon New York (Erin Crotty) and Audubon Connecticut (Stewart Hudson). Here it is, minus the action (which was to write letters of support). SSAS uses its Facebook page and Yahoo! Group to try to get the word out on things like this, but we encourage you to sign up for the actual alerts (sent via e-mail) at **http://ny.audubon.org/audubon-action-network**. Details on the proposal are at https://www.fws.gov/northeast/refuges/planning/lpp/greatthicketLPP.html.

Over the past century, many shrublands and young forests across the Northeast have been cleared for de-

velopment or have grown into mature forests. Our shrubland birds, such as Prairie Warblers, Ruffed Grouse (pictured), and American Woodcocks, have correspondingly declined at alarming rates in recent decades, and are one of the fastest declining groups of birds.



Now, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to create a new wildlife refuge, the Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge, which would conserve shrublands and young forest habitat across six northeastern states.

The Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge would protect vital habitat in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island, addressing an urgent need to permanently protect and manage land to restore wildlife populations. The refuge would be created over time, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working with willing landowners to permanently protect land through acquisition or conservation easements. The proposal would also help private landowners improve habitat on their own property.

★★ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS 秋 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 Memorial Library from 7:30–9:30 P.M., normally 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 <i>Skimmer</i> are:		
Atlantic Beach Anna Maria Testani		
Baldwin Sergio Cortez, Charles Fisher		
Bellmore Patricia Deyorra, Vivian & Steven Hill, Kenneth		
Phyllis Rothstein, Subscription Services of		
America		
Bethpage Jo-Ann Christodoulou 🖉		
Cedarhurst Stebbins Fund		
East Meadow Leon Campo, Donna Digiovanna, Mickey Parris		
Farmingdale Kevin Dwyer		
Floral Park Peter Koestenblatt		
Garden City Robert Anderson, Michael Dorkings, Kelly Fiore,		
Stephen R. Larocca, William Marshall, Walter		
Meyer, Jim Wallace, Linda Zamel		
Hewlett Karen Allison		
Levittown Beatrice Beisel, Diane Dorrego		
Long Beach Jo Ann Alvino, John Carson, Michael Harris,		
Kristine Van Well		
Lynbrook Kathleen Martingale, Kathleen Williamson		
Malverne Nancy Foasberg		
Massapequa Dora & Richard Summa		
Massapequa Park Alula Birding & Natural History Tours, Inc.; Andy		
Burke; Catherine Cosentino		
Merrick ? Agoglia, Judith Blatt-Dunn, Frank Lamonica		
Plainview Joan Isaac, Richard Kleiman, Mohinder Lamba,		
Rebecca Oyer		
Rockville Centre Kathryn Arning, Harriett Fargnoli, Elizabeth		
Murichi, Christie E. Powell		
Seaford Shirley Erland, Jennifer Johannesen		
Uniondale Jean M. Brendel		
Valley Stream Shamima Ams, Margaret A. Shields, Aimee		
Villacres, Janey Zukerman		
Wantagh Jan Collier; Holly Esposito; John Pfalzer, Jr.;		
Rosemarie Rufrano; Teresa Schiavone		

NAT'L AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (844) 428-3826		
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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.

NOT THE SECOND TUESDAY

This year, Yom Kippur and Election Day conflict with our tradition of holding general meetings on the second Tuesday night of each month. Consequently, we have scheduled them for **Tuesday, October 4** and **Tuesday, November 15**. Also, if you're already filling in next year's calendar, please note that Passover has resulted in another change; we've scheduled the April meeting for Tuesday the 18th.

BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

Sy Schiff with R. U. Abyrdar II

Welcome back! We hope your summer hasn't been too hot and humid to be able to enjoy most of it. Many of the



birds seemed to be hiding from view. Maybe they were hiding in trees with AC! It's why we call the bird-watching that takes place at this time the "birding doldrums."

Well then, our first book of the fall season is entitled *Falcons Return: Restoring an Endangered Species* by John Kaufmann and Heinz Meng.

The Peregrine Falcon was close to disappearing from the Atlantic Flyway when two men tried to bring it back from the brink of extinction. They were willing to try a "captive breeding" program centered on SUNY New Paltz with help from Cornell's Lab of Ornithology. The Peregrine Falcon, along with other birds near the top of the food chain, were slowly disappearing as a result of DDT and other pesticide use. At the time the authors set out, there appeared to be little knowledge as to how to breed these birds in captivity in order to replace those that were being lost in the wild.

This brief opus was published in 1975 and covers facts about these falcons, their use in falconry, and the efforts to breed them in captivity, eventually to be returned to the wild — hopefully, of course. This book offers a wonderful overview of what it takes in order to bring wild raptors back from the precipice of extinction.

Chapter One discusses the life cycle of the Peregrine, its disappearance from the wild, and the belated discovery of DDT's effect on eggshells. What was quite interesting here is the universal attention given to this problem. The discovery of the thinning eggshell problem was made in England, where there is extensive falconry practiced, as well as large egg collections from which to draw specimens for comparison. Their discovery of the end result of pesticide poisoning almost came too late! By this time, Peregrines were already gone from the East and virtually gone from the West. In the East, birds in northern Canada (in areas beyond the reach of pesticides) continued to migrate along the coast but in smaller numbers. These northern migrations, for a long time, masked what was really happening further south. The birders were along the coast and few, if any, were going into the mountains looking for nesting, breeding peregrines.

By the second chapter, the narrative shifts to a discussion of falconry's role in this impending tragedy — which ages and sexes of falcons were used, how they were captured, and an extensive description of how these birds were trained. While this section is comprehensive as well as extremely informative, it is by no means about how to become a falconer. Besides, today there are a lot of legal restrictions and requirements needed in order to become one. Mentioned, briefly, is how fall migrating Peregrines were captured by falconers on Assateague Island on the Maryland coast using pigeons (creative use of the sky rats!) as a lure during the 1940s. Sy explained that about that time, a raptor bander working there told him that one pigeon lasted for about three banding attempts! Sometimes the raptor finished off the "sky rat" before the bander could save it for the next time.

As the captive breeding program got underway, the motto became "sometimes it's OK to fool Mother Nature." To be more specific: Pesticides, habitat destruction, falconers seeking young birds, as well as even sonic booms from jet airliners (the loud sound was said to be able to crack eggs) all combined to put Peregrine Falcons (aka duck hawks) on the endangered list. The final chapter documents the trial-and-error methods that were in wide use and resulted, finally, in successfully rearing and releasing a pair of Peregrines, bred in captivity, back into the wild. Based on this positive step, the effort moved forward! There was a repository of birds in the hands of falconers and they supplied some of their birds to Cornell University's program for breeding large numbers of birds to eventually be restored to the wild. Here the story ends. The authors then point to a future which has since become reality!! Success! A wonderful, uplifting tale of problem, experimentation, and finally a biological avian success story. Hooray! Read it . . . and enjoy!





31ST 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. Last year, 7,723 volunteers removed and collected data on 125,554 pounds of debris along 250.21 miles of shore-lines across NY.

Dirty Dozen. The #1 type of debris was cigarette butts (54,226 butts), followed by plastic pieces, plastic bottle



caps, food wrappers (candy, chips, etc.), glass pieces, foam pieces, straws and stirrers, plastic beverage bottles, metal bottle caps, plastic grocery bags, other plastic bags, and beverage cans (8,715 cans).

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 www.nysbeachcleanup.org for an expanding site list that includes cleanups on **September 17** at Hempstead Lake State Park, Lido Beach, and Jones Beach, and to register your own cleanup (on the 17th or otherwise). For more information, send e-mail to nysbc@ littoralsociety.org.

SSAS AND NYC AUDUBON'S COMMENTS ON PROPOSED OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Jim Brown & Susan Elbin, Ph.D.

On June 2, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced the proposed lease sale and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the New York Wind Energy Area, an area of more than 81,000 acres off the shores of Long Island and New York City where a major wind farm is planned. BOEM held hearings at several locations throughout the Northeast to present the findings of the EA. Members of SSAS attended the June 21 hearing at Hofstra University. Following a study of the EA document, SSAS, together with New York City Audubon, submitted comments elaborating our views and suggestions regarding the EA, which lays out how the offshore Wind Energy Area will be studied for the next several years.

The Offshore Wind Energy Development (OWED) under consideration for the New York Bight has now concretely entered an important planning stage. The current EA addresses how studies will be undertaken preliminary to building any wind farm, if the facility is in fact to be approved and built. After the current EA is updated and approved, and the actual developer picked, study of the Wind Energy Area will begin. The study of a wide range of variables, resources, and impacts on many types of wildlife, including birds, will take several years to complete.

Below are the official comments submitted by our two Audubon chapters on July 12 for consideration by BOEM, as it considers its Environmental Assessment of its study of offshore wind development in the Atlantic Ocean south of Long Island and New York City [your editor has omitted the lists of referenced publications].

On behalf of New York City and South Shore Audubon, representing more than 10,000 members living along the New York Bight, we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the recent Environmental Assessment document published by BOEM on the commercial wind lease issuance and site-assessment activities on the Atlantic outer continental shelf offshore New York. Audubon's mission is to integrate science, conservation, policy, and education, to protect wild birds and their habitat.

Energy from nonrenewable sources, such as fossil fuels, is associated with several major negative environmental impacts, including habitat loss, habitat degradation, and global climate change. Audubon supports development of properly sited wind farms as a renewable energy source that helps reduce the threats posed to birds and people by climate change. We advocate, however, that wind power facilities must be planned, sited, and operated in ways that minimize harm to birds and other wildlife. In addition, wildlife agencies should ensure strong enforcement of the laws that protect birds and other wildlife.

Scientists at universities and conservation organizations like the National Audubon Society are studying the likely impacts of global climate change on different species of birds. As cited in National Audubon's recent Birds and Climate Report, over half of the avian species in North America are "climate endangered" or "climate threatened." One hundred twenty-six endangered species are projected to lose more than 50% of their current range by 2050; 188 threatened species will lose more than half of their current range by 2080. The Common Loon (pictured), the state bird of Minnesota, may in fact

disappear from that state as its summer range moves north. It is possible that Baird's Sparrow may become extinct due to climate change. The Ruffed Grouse, Pennsylvania's official state bird, as both



its summer and winter ranges migrate north, may disappear from the northeastern U.S. entirely. Climate change is transforming our entire earth — the physical environment, wildlife, ecological balances, and social relationships among people. Bird conservation organizations agree that global climate change (due to human-induced global warming) is an increasing threat to birds and, if not addressed, will certainly cause the extinction of many bird and other wildlife species. The production of energy from fossil fuels needs to be replaced by sustainable alternative energy sources, such as wind power. The continental shelf of the United States, including the waters of the New York Bight, offer ideal conditions for wind energy production. But wind energy is not a "silver bullet." The Atlantic seaboard is a major migratory flyway for about 500 bird species. Most of the birds are flying over or very close to water. Without mindful siting based on scientific studies, offshore wind energy farms can be deadly for migratory birds in the Atlantic Flyway.

We hope that the proposed plan will guide the process of offshore wind farm development in a way that protects wildlife from direct and immediate impacts of the machinery as it helps create significant long-term solutions to combat climate change.

South Shore Audubon Society and New York City Audubon expect rigorous and extensive studies that will be completed over the next several years, ensuring that the planned wind farm will be well-sited – far from sensitive areas for birds, including key migratory routes; stopover sites; breeding and nesting sites; areas where large numbers of birds congregate for feeding; or in sensitive habitats, such as wetlands.

The wind farm development process needs to include a way of assessing effects, including cumula-

tive impacts, during all stages of the project. All state and federal wildlife protection laws must be enforced [Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Bald and Golden Eagle [the latter is pictured] Protection Act (BGEPA), and National Environmental Policy Act].

Specific Comments on the EA

① Regarding the construction of a meteorological tower, we believe it is desirable to have one installed, as it is likely to provide the maximum amount of data during the course of the site assessment studies. A tower, as opposed to a buoy, would be necessary for mounting certain necessary radar equipment. This equipment would provide important information that would be useful to the study of birds in the area of the OWED.

⁽²⁾ Tower lighting must comply with Manville's 2013 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Revised Voluntary Guidelines for Communication Tower Design, Siting, Construction, Operation, Retrofitting, and Decommissioning.

⁽³⁾ Regarding Table 3-5 (p. 47), Biological Survey Types and Methods, we recommend that all avian surveys be undertaken for at least 3 years. Bird movement and migration can be greatly influenced by local weather conditions. A 3-year sample period will be a more-powerful indicator of habitat use.

⁽⁴⁾ Regarding Section 4-21 (p. 91) and discussion of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), we urge that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service be consulted and given a prominent role in researching and providing data regarding the impacts of the site assessment activities — and later possible OWED construction — on migrating birds. Bird numbers and behavior during both spring and autumn migrations should be monitored and studied throughout this entire process. Baseline data at this point is particularly important, as migrant bird species do pass through areas in the proposed OWED.

© Survey data for nearshore and offshore movement of Roseate Terns to foraging areas are sorely lacking for the planning area. If the current EA is relying on composite maps, these are definitely inadequate for Roseate Terns. There are two main problems with this: (1) Most Roseates at sea have been recorded as "UNTE" (unidentified tern species), with a comment that says "flock with 20% Roseates." Most models used to create the species maps ignore the comment column. (2) There are few survey data from inshore near Great Gull Island, Jones Inlet, Rockaway Beach, and other tern colonies on the south shore of Long Island. Foraging sites and post-breeding aggregations (15 July – 15 September) need to be mapped for this species.

© Attention to nocturnal migration of passerines is not addressed. The technology exists to use radar to survey nocturnal migration in the area. There is some baseline information about density, direction, and speed of migration over the northeastern U.S. as a starting point (see references), but mapping movement across the NY Bight still needs to be done. The general data show us that the majority of birds are moving over land, but there are significantly distinct periods where overwater flights occur. It is not known what causes this, whether it is strong wind conditions pushing large numbers of migrating land birds offshore or if birds are flying over the water to go from Massachusetts or New York to the Delmarva Peninsula.

The four articles [that pre-*Skimmer* were] referenced below illustrate how these data can be collected. The Farnsworth et al. (2016) and La Sorte et al. (2015) use NEUS radar data set to characterize nocturnal migration across the region and highlight the changes in phenology across the season and the night, and study altitudinal changes and their relationship to wind and seasonality (species composition). These studies highlight the potential power of radar to identify patterns of nocturnal bird (and bat and insect potentially) migration.

Van Doren et al. (2016) and Horton et al. (2016) use the newest types of dual pole radar to study bird behavior in crosswinds in the region, and specifically include references to offshore flights and birds flying over the Atlantic or getting drifted off the coast. These studies highlight similar power of radar, but toward a quite different end of actually understanding how birds are moving in winds.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely, Jim Brown, Conservation Chair, South Shore Audubon Society; and Susan Elbin, Ph.D., Director of Conservation and Science, New York City Audubon

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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