# OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 47. NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2017

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Paul Stessel

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

**REASON**: Second Tuesday is Passover

**TIME**: 7:30 P.M.

DATE:

**PLACE:** Freeport Memorial Library

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

**SPEAKER**: Don Riepe

TOPIC: Birds and Planes: A History of Jamaica

Bay/JFK Airport Interactions

Bird strikes of aircraft is a major issue worldwide and specifically at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Due to its location along the Atlantic migratory bird flyway and adjacent to the National Park Service's Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, JFK Airport has had several serious collisions of aircraft with birds.

In 1975, a plane taking off struck a flock of Herring Gulls and the flight had to be aborted; there were no casualties but the plane burst into flames and was destroyed. In 1995, a Concorde making a landing struck a flock of Canada Geese and lost power in two engines; fortunately, the plane landed safely, but the damage cost several million dollars.

In 1985, the airport developed a task force that included our speaker, Don Riepe, representing the National Park Service. Don is still a member of the task force and will present an interesting history of actions, policies, issues, and events that have occurred over the last 35 years, along with photos of the many species of concern.

Don is the Director of the American Littoral Society's Northeast Chapter, which encompasses New York and New England. In 2003 he was named the Jamaica Bay Guardian by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; current projects include Jamaica Bay Clean Sweep, a project that includes annual beach cleanups and removal of derelict boats, wildlife surveys, annual Barn Owl and Osprey banding, marsh restoration planting, resource education programs and walks, and routine patrols of the bay. His past work included a 25-year career as a resource management specialist and manager of the

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. An avid photographer, his photographs and articles have been published in many magazines, including *National Wildlife, National Geographic, Smithsonian,* and *The Conservationist,* and in *The New York Times.* He is one of the main interviewees in the documentary "Saving Jamaica Bay," which was shown on Thirteen and WLIW21 in February.

**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 *Better Birding: Tips, Tools & Concepts for the Field* by George L. Armistead and Brian L. Sullivan.

**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 Bird Hot Spots - NOT

Betty Borowsky

Let's be perfectly clear. There is no such thing as a bird "hot spot." Birders use the term for relatively small geographic areas where birds tend to congregate. But developers use it differently; when they use it, they mean small geographic areas where birds permanently reside. Developers love the term because they can say "OK — we will not alter hot spots, only the surrounding areas. This will satisfy us, because we can expand into adjacent, currently undeveloped areas, and satisfy conservationists as well, because since the hot spots will be left alone the birds will not be harmed." The "hot spot" concept gives developers an excuse to destroy local habitat.

But even developers must know that their interpretation of the term is nonsense.

Birds flv!

Birds may come to roost or nest in a relatively small area, but they require much more territory to survive. Indeed, without that additional surrounding territory, they will either go elsewhere or perish.

For example, in our catchment area, at the Long Beach Road and Daly Boulevard intersection in Oceanside, you will see hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants (pictured) perched on the wires on the west side of the road — a "hot spot." But cormorants have to eat. During the day, they spread out through the estuary to fish. If they never moved from that "hot spot," they would starve to death.

In other words, to protect birds you must protect the surrounding territory. Not only must you preserve the surrounding territory, but you must make sure that territory's habitat provides the birds' needs. Let's say someone decided to convert the estuary near the cormorants into a temperate forest. One might think "So what's wrong with that? Temperate forests occur naturally on Long Island, right?" Yes they do, but a forest is not going to support those cormorants.

Which brings me to the point of this column. Once again, Hempstead Lake State Park is threatened by development. This time it's especially scary because there is so much pressure to do it, such a very short turn-around time during which it will have to happen, and there's a great deal of money to fund it.

This initiative is being directed by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR). Among other things, the GOSR is charged with providing relief to residents who suffered losses from Hurricane Sandy in 2012. It is also charged with trying to prevent a similar disaster, should there be another monstrous storm ("improving resilience"). One of the areas targeted for remediation is the Mill River Basin. The basin begins a bit north of the two northern ponds in Hempstead Lake State Park. Water then flows through the ponds, the lake, and the South Pond. Then the water flows through Rockville Centre's Smith Pond, through the Mill River, and out into the Hempstead Bay.

Many Long Island residents were hurt badly by Hurricane Sandy, and we wish to do everything we can to make them whole again *and* to prevent similar devastation from future storms. We also applaud the federal and state governments for allocating a generous amount of money to do that.

Sadly, though, these goals do not seem to be the Mill River Basin planners' first priority. They have said that their first priority is to restructure Hempstead Lake State Park.

I wonder whyever they are starting with the state park. The sooner the southern portion of Mill River (where

people actually live) is remediated, the better — who knows when the next storm will come through?

Plans have been changed a few times since we first heard about this initiative, and some proposed park "improvements" seem to be only at the discussion stage now. But from what we've seen, not only are the priorities wrong, but much of what is planned for the park is entirely inappropriate to the stated purpose of those funds.

For example, the contractors have proposed that an educational center be built on a field near parking field 1. I fail to see how this will help with either remediation or with resilience. I also see no plans for sustainability. How exactly will that center be staffed? Our state parks are already severely short-handed, and it seems to me that the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation is perennially last in line for state funding.

Especially worrisome is that the plans are being developed based on the "hot spot" concept. Basically, the contractors have indicated that there should be no objection to developing the southern areas of the park because habitat in the northern part will be left "relatively" undisturbed.

We at South Shore Audubon Society treasure this park. It is a designated "Important Bird Area" and services exceptional species diversity; it is one of the very few places where Great Horned Owls nest on Long Island, and so far it is the only place where Bald Eagles can be found in Nassau County (let me point out here that last year the eagles roosted in the northern part but fed throughout the park). But especially noteworthy and, actually, pretty amazingly, over the years the park has somehow managed to become both an oasis for people to enjoy nature and a multiuse facility for all kinds of recreational activities, including fishing, boating, biking, hiking, horseback riding, barbecuing and picnicking, cross-country skiing, ice skating, and sledding; it has a carousel, tennis and basketball courts; and it has a playground. And it is only 737 acres in size! (In comparison, Connetquot River State Park Preserve is 3,473 acres.) How many more recreational opportunities can you pack into a park of this size?

Nevertheless, every year or so, some other major incursion is proposed for the park. I honestly do not understand why this modestly sized but extremely well-managed park is perennially the target of some new hare-brained idea to change it.

In my opinion, the elements of the Mill River Project that have been proposed so far for Hempstead Lake State Park represent the greatest threats to the park we've ever seen. Many more changes to the park than what have been mentioned here are proposed and, taken as a whole, if even a few of them are adopted, they will change the park forever.

### 

Joe Landesbero

All walks start at **9** A.M.; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Call me at 467-9498 in case of questionable conditions or for other info. Check www. facebook.com/SSAudubon (you don't need to have a Facebook account) for cancellations, changes, and lists from recent walks. Directions and lists of what we've seen over the years are at ssaudubon.org.

Mar. 26	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north	
	side of Merrick Rd.)	
Apr. 2	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve	
Apr. 9	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
Apr. 15 (Sat.)	Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside	
Apr. 23	Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern	
	State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)	
Apr. 30	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
May 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
<b>*******************************</b>		

#### ትት WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ትት

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., usually on the second Tuesday of the month, to hear what you can do to help preserve your local environment's health and viability, to hear about local issues that you can help to solve, and to see an interesting program.

Whether you are a beginning birder or someone with a large life list, you will enjoy our weekly Sunday bird walks. Check out the special events that are mentioned in this *Skimmer*. Attend them yourself, and bring your family and friends too.

You are warmly invited to be an active participant in this vibrant all-volunteer organization comprised of persons who, like you, care about the earth we live on, about our local environment, and about the creatures that live alongside us.

Our new members since the last Skimmer are:

East Meadow....... Nicole Pedersen
East Rockaway...... Sylvia Palumbo Tirella
Elmont....... Robert Towns
Garden City...... Emily F. Franchina
Merrick...... Carolyn Behrens, Meaghan

Callaghan
Rockville Centre .... Barbara Hayes

Seaford ...... Kathleen Kelly Valley Stream ...... Olivia Jerdan

#### **GARAGE SALE - HELPERS AND STUFF NEEDED!**

South Shore Audubon's first garage sale in nine years is scheduled for **Saturday**, **April 8**, with a rain date of the 15th. As an all-volunteer organization, we need your help to make this event a success.

We Need Tax-Deductible Donations. We're interested in anything that has a good chance of being sold. Items that are popular at garage sales on Long Island include the following:

**Books** 

Small pieces of furniture

Small appliances (please see next paragraph)

Craft supplies

House plants

Decorative items

Tools

Kitchen equipment

Seasonal and holiday items

Pet supplies (fish tanks, dog bowls, etc.)

Please note that we're not looking for encyclopedia sets, Reader's Digest condensed books, baby equipment, and non-working small appliances. If you have small appliances to donate, they should have the booklet (or a note about where it can be downloaded for free; you can check www.manualslib.com and www.manualsonline. com) and all other parts, and, of course, be clean. We will have an area set up where appliances can be tested before being sold.

**We Will Pick Donations Up.** If you won't be attending the sale and can't drop things off the previous night, we will pick them up ahead of time. Please call or e-mail Nancy (see below) to make arrangements.

We Need Volunteers Before, During, and Right After the Sale. You can help SSAS by doing pickups. You

can also help us on the night before the sale, early that morning, during the sale, and/or at the end (we will pack up unsold things for donation to other organizations or you can bring them home for yourself). To volunteer, please write to Nancy at nyoungfert@aol.com or call her at 516-352-8376. The Young-



NEEDED

ferts' address is 258 Roosevelt Avenue, Franklin Square, NY 11010. The sale will be from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.; setup will begin at 7:30 that morning.

SSAS Post Office Statement — South Shore Skimmer is published monthly from September through December and February through May by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31,

Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

## OUR SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CENTRAL PARK WALK

On **Saturday, May 6**, SSAS is planning to be in Central Park for our annual (weather permitting) early May bird walk. As usual, Chris Cooper (who was featured in HBO's 2012 documentary, "Birders: The Central Park Effect," and traces his birding roots to SSAS) has again agreed to lead us through the twisting, hilly maze of the Ramble and adjoining areas of the park.

In previous years, we've recorded from 31 to 70-plus species in under three hours. Last year, despite having an overcast day at the end of a migration-unfriendly soggy week, we had 49 species, 13 of which were warblers (and we missed the his-and-hers Blackburnian Warblers that we received tips about): Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blue-winged, Nash-ville, Palm, Prairie, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Northern Parula, Northern Waterthrush, and Ovenbird. The non-warblers included American Goldfinch, Baltimore Oriole, Blue-gray Gnat-catcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Chimney Swift (pictured),

at Crested Flycatcher, Hermit Thrush, igo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Rubywned Kinglet, Veery, Warbling Vireo, and lood Thrush.

The cost of the walk is \$5, which is a taxdeductible donation to SSAS (refundable if we rain out or you cancel in advance). Please and your check payable to South Shore Audu-Society, along with your phone number and address, to Joanne Del Prete, 20 Ceil Pl.,

Bethpage, NY 11714-4503 (jdelprete47@optonline.net, phone 433-0739).

A group of us will be aboard the local Babylon line train that is due in Penn Station at 8:09; you can look for Joanne on the platform in Massapequa, due to board there at 7:08. We aim 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. You can bring lunch, buy lunch in the park or elsewhere, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. Joanne's cell (476-3761) will be on that day only. Join us!

Staircase Alert: Our usual route to Belvedere Castle includes a 30-step climb from the 79th Street Transverse.

#### **SAVE THE DATE - TUESDAY, JUNE 13**

Please mark your calendars for SSAS's 46th Annual Dinner! Cocktail hour at Pompei Ristorante in West Hempstead will begin at 6:30, followed by our usual mix of raffle drawings, award presentations, and food and wine. Details and a registration form will be in the next *Skimmer*.



#### FROM BLAND TO GRAND

Paul Stessel

Not long ago, I felt that our Hempstead Lake State Park bulletin board needed some "freshening up," some "pizzazz" if you will! Boy, was I right! Soon after this decision was made, I asked SSAS's Anne Mehlinger to come aboard to effect this "reboot." She was kind enough to agree — Anne to the rescue! In an instant (?), a revised bulletin board was born. Anne asked a friend to help us in this transformation; Jack Holly was kind enough to join our team. Jack, a longtime Audubon member, who has been an actor, art teacher, set designer, and prop wizard, went about the redesign with a vengeance. He suggested a foam backing material that would wear well under the park's environment in the outdoor display case. As Jack took measurements of the bulletin board and came up with a great background, this "Jack of all trades" went to work! He painted the foam board a sky blue and enhanced it with a swipe of a plastic bag to give it a beautiful shade as in a "birdie sky." It worked well!

When he was finished with his contribution, the three of us met at HLSP to finish this transformation. Anne went to work with completing the new look; she arranged the bird photos that our members (especially Bill Belford) took in the park, laminated the pictures as well as the text, and connected it all, tying it together in a completely new look! Finally, we all put it together. "Voilà!" — a brand new bulletin board was born. It looks great; check it out for yourselves! It has gone from "bland to grand!" Thanks to all who contributed! It's near McDonald Pond in the southern end of the park, very near the restrooms. Enjoy!

### SSAS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Betsy Gulotta

Thanks to the much-appreciated support of longtime member Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society is offering \$500 Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholar-

ships this spring for two college juniors, seniors, or graduate students who are continuing their studies toward a degree in an area of biological or environmental science, such as wildlife management, forestry, animal behavior, ecology, marine biology, oceanography,

mammalogy, or ornithology. Our annual college scholarship program began in 1994 and was named in memory of Jerry two years later. For information, call me at 546-8841 or send e-mail to betsy.gulotta@ncc.edu. Applications are due by **April 30**.

### SAVE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS – FIGHT THE CUTS!

Jim Brown

Key environmental programs are under direct assault from the current administration in Washington. Scott Pruitt has been confirmed as the new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mr. Pruitt, former attorney general of Oklahoma, known for often suing the agency he now heads, again recently denied the importance of human-induced climate change. Cuts in the EPA budget of up to 25% (between \$800 million and \$1.2 billion) are being suggested by the new administration and entire programs such as the greenhouse gas program may be eliminated. The enforcement division of the EPA is also on the cutting block.

The EPA, given the multitude of environmental issues we face, should be experiencing an increase in funding rather than a deep and severe slashing of its budget. The

EPA was established via executive order by Republican President Richard Nixon (pictured) — hardly an environmental radical — and it would be painful to witness in the coming years a retreat from necessary investments and support of basic environmental protection. Regulations are needed to insure environmental health — clean air,



clean water, habitat protection, toxic waste remediation, etc. The need for effective environmental regulations has been well known and appreciated even long before the EPA was established in 1970 (see https://archive.epa. gov/epa/aboutepa/reorganization-plan-no-3-1970.html for Nixon's executive order — ed.). It would be extremely harmful for our nation — and our planet — if this antienvironmental agenda of President Trump and Pruitt (the first cabinet nominee ever to be opposed by National Audubon Society — ed. again) were to succeed. These budget cuts must be strenuously opposed. Not only will the environment suffer directly from this consciously planned neglect; people's health will also suffer directly - people will, in fact, die from a weakening of regulations pertaining to our laws relating to clean water and clean air. We must oppose current attempts to "starve" agencies like the EPA by denying them proper funding.

Long Island Sound. Audubon New York has recently drawn attention, by means of a press release, to projected cuts in the EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) budgets directed toward protecting the water quality and general environmental health of Long Island Sound. South Shore Audubon Society and other local Audubon chapters have signed onto their letter. These cuts would be devastating to the health of Long Island Sound, an important though environmentally stressed estuary. The sound provides critical habitat for numerous species of birds, including threatened and

endangered species such as Piping Plovers, American Oystercatchers, and Least Terns. The letter urges opposition to "any cuts to estuary and coastal resiliency programming," further noting that "the viability of this estuary hangs in the balance."

You Can Help. All South Shore Audubon members and friends are urged to contact your members of Congress, urging them to oppose cuts in the budget targeting environmental protection, such as deep cuts in the EPA's budget that would negatively impact many programs, including those dealing with Long Island Sound. If only one call were to be made, it should be to Senator Chuck Schumer, the Minority (Democrat) Leader of the U.S. Senate. The number for his New York City office is 212-486-4430; the number for his Washington, D.C. office is 202-224-6542. Urge him to save environmental programs and fight the cuts!

### 

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.



ASSATEAGUE/CHINCOTEAGUE WEEKEND (April 27-30). Travel by car and/or van to this great wildlife area on Virginia/ Maryland coast. See wild ponies & young, nesting Osprey and Bald Eagle, dolphins, Sika deer, migrating warblers, shorebirds, raptors, and waders. Cost: \$395/person incl. 3 nights at Refuge Inn; breakfasts; a seafood dinner; boat tour of marshes; safari bus tour of backwater dunes; guided hikes along beach, woods & marshes; and two evening programs. (Single room \$150 extra.) Transportation not incl. Van approx. \$95. JAMAICA BAY SUNSET ECOLOGY CRUISE (Sunday, May 28 (5-8 P.M.). Join us aboard the 100 ft. boat "Golden Sunshine" out of Pier 8, Sheepshead Bay for a 3-hour cruise into the backwater marshes of Jamaica Bay. Learn about the history, ecology and wildlife of this 13,000 acre preserve & see nesting Osprey, terns, egrets, herons, oystercatchers & more. Cost: \$55 incl. narrated tour plus wine & cheese, drink, fruit, snacks. Leader: Don. With NYC Audubon and Gateway NRA. MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND (June 2-4). Visit during peak heather and orchid bloom, and hike the bluffs, dunes, woods and beaches. Trip fee of \$395 incl. 2 nights at luxurious Manor House (double occ.), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs & star watch plus free pickup at LIRR station.

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.

#### **BROOKSIDE PRESERVE SPRING CLEANUP**

On **Sunday, April 30**, starting at 1 P.M., SSAS will have its spring cleanup at Brookside Preserve, rain or shine.



Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County that was rescued from oblivion and is managed by SSAS. PDF files of the trail guide and freshwater wetland guide for children that we published can be downloaded from ssaudubon.org.

The Preserve is located on the Freeport–Baldwin border, along Milburn Creek; park at the main entrance on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway (turn north at the traffic light that's just east of Freeport High School). Please bring gloves, grabbers, rakes, or clippers if possible, and friends of all ages.

### 

Editor's note: In the February 2016 Skimmer, our "Books for Birders" column had a review of Why Do Bluebirds Hate Me? by Mike O'Connor, the owner of the Bird Watcher's General Store in Orleans, Massachusetts. After reading the review, SSAS member Christine Marzigliano alerted your editor to the collection of Mr. O'Connor's weekly "Ask the Bird Folks" newspaper articles in The Cape Codder (from 2000 until now) that is maintained at http://birdwatchersgeneralstore.com/articles.htm. She recommended a few that were published around April 1. With permission from Mike O'Connor, here's the 3/27/09 column, with artwork by Catherine E. Clark, which I had intended to put in last April's Skimmer.

Dear Bird Folks,

I just came back from fishing on Scargo Lake in Dennis (MA), where my favorite area was posted: "Caution: Nautilus Duck nesting area." First of all, what is a Nautilus Duck? And most importantly, is this bird going to keep me away from my favorite pond like the Piping Plovers keep people from driving on the beach?

Ron, Dennis, MA

Relax, Ron.

Don't start any rumors about more beach closures. Do you want a riot to break out? What is it with people and their beach obsession? You could take some people's children away and they would say: "Okay, but the beach will still be open, right?" Yes, your beach will still be open. Well, most of the time it will be open. A small area on Scargo Lake will be closed to some public access when the Nautilus ducklings are hatching out. I believe Scargo Lake has five Nautilus Duck nests, so there'll be a lot of action. But unlike plovers, which seem to milk the nesting process, these birds are up and done in one day. Plus, a Nautilus Duck's hatching is such a spectacle that anyone lucky enough to witness it won't mind if the area is closed for a few hours.

The adult Nautilus Duck is nothing special to look at. Both the male and female birds are a generic, boring brown. They look like a cross between a female Mallard and a lunch bag. I'm sure most people have seen Nautilus Ducks before but probably didn't pay much attention to them. However dull they may be, their nesting habits make Nautilus Ducks stand out from any bird you've read about or have ever seen on TV.

Most of the year, Nautilus Ducks act like any other puddle duck, quietly feeding in area bogs and marshes. But when the breeding season arrives they become more like creatures found on the Sci-Fi Channel. Instead of building a nice cozy nest of dried grass and downy feathers, these nutty birds lay their eggs underwater. Working mostly at night, the female dives to the bottom of the pond and deposits an egg on the branches of an aquatic vine. Her eggs aren't hard-shelled like a chicken's eggs would be; they are soft and gelatinous, somewhat like frogs' eggs. Over the next two weeks, twelve to fourteen eggs are laid on the same vine.

The female Nautilus Duck can't sit and incubate her eggs because she can't remain underwater longer than a minute or two. Instead, she gets help from an unlikely source. The surfaces of her eggs are coated with a tacky enzyme called "clingbryo" that not only holds the eggs securely to the plant, but also allows the eggs to draw oxygen and nutrients from the plant itself. The Nautilus Duck's "nest" looks like an underwater pumpkin patch. With nutrition provided by the host plant, the chicks grow rapidly. After twenty-seven days the little birds are ready to hatch. This is when things really get crazy.

The hatching process for most birds is slow and drawn out. It typically takes hours for a chick to crawl out of its egg. This can't be the case for baby Nautilus Ducks because they'd drown, so nature has developed a way to bring the little birds to the surface in less than a second. A chemical reaction causes all the eggs to split open at the same time. The pressure from the surrounding water collapses the eggs and blasts the chicks towards the surface. This process is like when we bite into a cherry tomato and the gooey insides squirt onto the person sitting next to us. The birds shoot towards the surface with such force they actually become airborne, often rocketing twenty feet above the pond. The tiny chicks, which seconds earlier were snug inside their little shells, are now hurtling through the air. No worries, though; the ducklings simply open up their stubby wings and glide safely back down to earth. Well, they'll glide safely if the wind isn't blowing. If the day happens to be windy, some of the helpless chicks may end up in the surrounding trees and bushes, and will need our help.

As I mentioned earlier, there are at least five known Nautilus Ducks breeding in Scargo Lake. Because the egg hatchings are triggered by chemical changes in the water, every egg that is laid this spring will burst open at the same time, creating an instant spectacle. With

nearly seventy ducklings blasting into the air at once, this is a natural phenomenon that should not be missed. (Although Nautilus Ducks nest in several other Cape Cod ponds, Scargo Lake in Dennis is the only site that is easily accessible to the public.) By studying water samples, re-



searchers are able to pinpoint, within an hour or two, when this hatching will take place. The Scargo Lake birds are expected to hatch around 11:00 A.M. this coming Wednesday. If you've never seen this show before, you definitely should get down there. Plan to arrive

early because this event always draws a crowd. (Look for a small Scargo Lake sign on the south side of Rt. 6A in Dennis.) Also, if you have a small butterfly or fishing net, you should take it along. You may be asked to help pluck a duckling or two out of a bush. Remember, it's this coming Wednesday, April 1st.

Your editor again: There really is a Scargo Lake, and April Fools' Day was indeed on a Wednesday when this article appeared eight years ago.

### 

R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff

Let's get serious for a change! This month's book is perhaps the most serious book we've ever reviewed — the most important volume to come out since Rachel Carson's Silent Spring! Our book is Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change by Elizabeth Kolbert. The author sends a powerful wake-up call to all of us concerned about birds, conservation, and our environment — more so in this age of "darkness"! Ms. Kolbert's narrative is part of a clarion call to action for all of us! It offers a clear view of the greatest dangers that humans have faced in a long, long time. This is very serious stuff, y'all!

While climate change is complex in its solution, she treats it with deft clarity. Her book is both gripping and well-paced. It is a wake-up call to us all; Washington, do you hear us? This book will become required reading for all of us deeply concerned with the future of our planet. It keeps a global perspective and, besides, is an extraordinary piece of environmental reporting. She offers us a journey around the world, giving us glimpses of what climate change is doing to our planet. These are the hard, cold facts about global warming and its effects on our future! Our environment is crucial to our very existence and that of all species near and dear to us.

Sy continues... This book outlines in vivid detail the changes that are undergoing at various places in the world by reporting on the actual events and interviewing the people in those places. One can argue the causes

but, with the evidence presented, cannot refute the fact that something ominous is taking place... and has been and is continuing! The shrinking glaciers and melting ice pack get a full review from numerous locations on the ground! Another chapter covers the CO<sub>2</sub> changes that are occurring all around us. Changing patterns in a butterfly's behavior started experiments on how increasing global warming was influencing the butterflies' evolution in order to accommodate these changes, referencing Darwin's work.

This is a wide-ranging exposition on the devastating effects of global warming. Weather changes have been around for a long time but this is different! The author brings up the demise of ancient civilizations, thought to be the result of changes in precipitation — prolonged drought. So, not all weather-related events in the past have been man-made. Nevertheless, their effects have been dire. All the topics covered are wide-ranging. The recent history of global treaties and politics in an effort to reduce carbon emissions is amply covered. Wind energy and other means of reducing the carbon footprint are enumerated. The section on tar sands is obviously part of the updating of the original book; this new section gives an excellent look at what it's all about from the viewpoint of consequences for not fixing the CO<sub>2</sub> problem.

To sum up, we're in deep trouble and there doesn't seem to be any effort to correct this problem! In conclusion, anyone interested in global warming and its consequences needs to read this book! It is an offering that gives an exceptionally clear picture of how deeply we've become emerged in this muck! This is only the beginning; if we don't act NOW, it will continue! What disasters are yet to come? Read it... be forewarned! Act NOW!!!

**\*** 

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

### LEONARD G. KONSKER CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

Konsker and Company, LTD 550 W. Old Country Rd., Suite 101 Hicksville, New York 11801

### SSAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Michael Sperling

In accordance with our bylaws, any member in good standing may suggest candidates for officers and directors for the fiscal year that will begin on July 1, who will be elected during our meeting in May. If you have suggestions (including yourself!), please contact me at mssperling@optonline.net or 221-3921 (evenings), or contact fellow committee members Marilyn Hametz or Wendy Murbach (see back page).

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation





U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 1181
NONPROFIT
Freeport, NY

### 2016–2017 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Betty Borowsky, President & Education	6
Michael Sperling, Vice President & Skimmer Editor 221-392	1
Joe Landesberg, Treasurer & Field Trips 536-4808	3
Arlene Rawls, Recording Secretary	4
Therese Lucas, Corresponding Secretary 221-392	1
Bill Belford, Director (6/19)	9
Brien Weiner, Dir. (6/19) & Conservation Co-Chair 220-712	1
Mary Colway, Director (6/18) & Annual Dinner 887-015	3
Stacy & Kurt Meyerheinrich, Directors (6/17)796-741	1
Gail Brown, Hospitality	6
Jim Brown, Conservation Co-Chairperson 608-1446	6
Anne-Marie Conn, Electronic Communications 671-768	5
Joanne Del Prete, Trip Leader	
Betsy Gulotta, College Scholarships546-884	1
Marilyn Hametz, Publicity	9
Richard Kopsco, Brookside Preserve 825-6792	2
Wendy Murbach, Membership 546-6303	3
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming	4
Paul Stessel, Programs & NAS Liaison	4

### 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 these 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.

** ** * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	
☐ Donations to SSAS are always welcome! \$	
Yes, I'd like to join: $\square$ SSAS only $\square$ National Audu	ıbon too
NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
	(Zip+4)
PHONE NO.:	
E-MAIL:	
Chapter Code R15 (South Shore Audubon Society)	