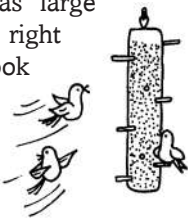


collisions. According to a study by S. R. Loss et al., the majority of collisions occur with the nation's many small buildings, with residences 1–3 stories accounting for 44% of fatalities, and buildings 4–11 stories accounting for 56%. In addition, the birds that fly into windows, seem to be only temporarily stunned, and then fly off, often die shortly thereafter from bruises, broken bones, and internal bleeding.

Why do birds collide with windows? During the day, birds see reflections of vegetation or see through glass to potted plants or vegetation on the other side. At night, nocturnal migrants (including most songbirds) fly into lighted windows. Some collisions are due to chance, but more often the birds are attracted to the lights for reasons not entirely understood. Lights divert nocturnal migrants from their original path, especially in foggy or cloudy conditions, and they will circle lighted structures, colliding with them and each other. Finally, birds may see their own reflection in a window and attack it, more often in spring when territoriality is high.

Regardless of cause, there are many simple measures we can take to safeguard our windows for birds. First, identify dangerous windows, such as large picture windows, paired windows at right angles, and windows near feeders. Look at windows from a bird's point of view for vegetation or sky reflected by, or visible through, the windows. Past recommendations about safe distances for feeders outside windows have been discredited; if you have windows near feeders, treat the windows.



The simplest measures are to close curtains and blinds when possible to break up the illusion of clear passage or reflected habitat, and to move house plants away from windows.

Other measures involve marking windows as follows. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, "To deter small birds, vertical markings on windows need to be spaced no more than 4 inches apart and horizontal markings no more than 2 inches apart across the entire window. (If hummingbirds are a problem, the spacing should be reduced to a 2-inch by 2-inch grid.) All marking techniques should be applied to the outside of the window." The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) further suggests that white stripes are more effective, as they are visible against more backgrounds.

There are various products for marking windows; the following are inexpensive, durable, and easy to apply or install:

- ✎ Tempera paint can be applied in a grid or another pattern, or in artwork.
- ✎ Decals, stickers, suncatchers, mylar strips, masking tape, or other objects can be spaced so that birds do not fly into the glass between them; a hawk silhouette alone does little to deter birds.

- ✎ ABC tape provides the correct spacing of dots across windows while its translucency allows light in.

- ✎ Acopian BirdSavers are closely spaced ropes known as "zen curtains" that hang down over windows.

- ✎ Screens are effective if installed on the outside of the window and they cover the entire surface.

- ✎ Small mesh can be mounted on a frame at least 3 inches from the glass and taut enough to bounce birds off before they hit.

- ✎ One-way transparent film, such as Collidescape and similar products, make windows opaque on the outside but allow people to see out; reducing light coming in can also reduce cooling costs.

Further information, including suggestions for remodeling and new construction, can be found on the Cornell Lab and ABC websites. The ABC provides a list of successfully tested homeowner and architectural products with links for ordering. (See <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/why-birds-hit-windows-and-how-you-can-help-prevent-it/> and <https://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass/#unique-identifier1>.)

Since birds can see ultraviolet light and humans cannot, emerging bird-deterrent technologies using UV light potentially provide a solution to the bird-collision conundrum. UV windows would be transparent to humans but alert birds to the potential danger. Decals, liquid, and specially coated glass that reflect UV light are available, but according to FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program), "the effectiveness of existing products is being challenged by field studies. A great deal of research still needs to be done before they can be rolled out as a bird conservation/window collision panacea."

If you find a bird dazed from a window collision with no external injury, and it can perch on a branch unassisted, leave it to recover on its own. If the bird has a noticeable injury, get it to a rehabilitator as quickly as possible. Broken bones need treatment within minutes or hours to heal properly without surgery. Follow the instructions on the Cornell Lab website given above, or contact Volunteers for Wildlife (516-674-0982) and follow the instructions on their website (www.volunteersforwildlife.org).

An ounce of prevention, however — a little common sense and a little creativity — can go a long way to protect our feathered friends from colliding with windows and to increase their chances of survival.



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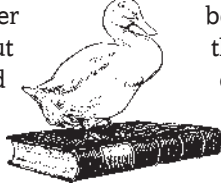
BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

Sy Schiff with R. U. Abyrdar II

Welcome back! Continuing our fascination (?) with falcons, this month's book is all about falcons. Sy will be doing the heavy lifting for the meat on this book, but I will have the pleasure of introducing it! It is called *Falcon* and the author is none other than Helen Macdonald.

It examines the diverse symbolism and roles attached to falcons throughout the centuries. It is an enjoyable opus for ornithologists, amateur bird-watchers, and nature lovers alike. While presenting the falcon as a creature superbly adapted to its surroundings, the author's scientific yet lyrical study also celebrates its mythical, cultural, and iconic significance.

Sy's turn: This book, written by an English writer in 2006 and reprinted in 2016, was reissued after the success of her acclaimed 2014 book, *H is for Hawk*. An affiliate at the Department of History and Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, she is well qualified to pursue subject matter that dates back to the beginnings of recorded civilization. Her book is not just about birds. It's about the natural history, mythology, and coexistence of falcons with humans. (R.U.'s comment: so that's one of the reasons for the recent change in bird taxonomy: falcons paired with parrots!). The natural history of the group starts with an excellent description of the features and wing shapes that make the group unique and adapted to the task of capturing prey. Then, early on, the author quickly passes by the 60-odd falcons in the world to concentrate on Peregrine Falcons.



For archaeology buffs, there is an extensive examination of falcons going back in excess of 3,000 years. Descriptions of the practices in ancient Egypt, Assyria, the Crusades, and into English times are covered. Of course falconry plays an important place in all this. This is not a primer on the subject, but the practice and philosophy associated are discussed and the draw of the sport is covered. From falconry (good) to a bad hawk to be shot on sight (bad), to predator at the top of the food chain helping the ecology (good), a chapter covers a lot of ground in few words. It has a discussion of DDT, the near loss of the species, and its return.

The use of Peregrines to clear military airfields of birds that might cause crashes is discussed, as is their use to take down Passenger Pigeons to disrupt communications during World War I. Then there is the more-recent attachment of Peregrines to urban cliffs and skyscrapers in Canada and New York City, and the interactions that have occurred as a result. There is a ton of stuff covered in this book. Ms. Macdonald manages much without wasting any words. Much of the recent events are in the United States, and they are covered in excellent fashion by an English author. You can read this a chapter at a time and

not necessarily in any order. Also, you don't need to be a birder to enjoy this book. Nothing seems to be missed or overlooked. You'll come away with a lot of knowledge on this fascinating subject.

R.U. again: Read it and enjoy!!



31ST ANNUAL NYS BEACH CLEANUP

See www.nysbeachcleanup.org for a list of cleanups scheduled for **Saturday, September 16** at Lido Beach, Jones Beach, Hempstead Lake State Park, etc. During the 2016 NYS Beach Cleanup, 6,645 volunteers in 24 counties removed 66,830.98 pounds of debris along 233.68 miles of shoreline while documenting what they found.



HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The recipients of our annual graduation ceremony scholarships, arranged by Joe Landesberg, were Thomas Buzzi from South Side H.S. in Rockville Centre, Yazmeen Quamina from Baldwin H.S., and Samuel Stetson from Freeport H.S. We congratulate all three and wish them success.



COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Betsy Gulotta

The winner of our annual Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarship, announced at our annual dinner in June, was Jessica Enzmann, a graduate student at Adelphi University. She is in a master's program for environmental science, and earned a B.S. degree in ecology and evolution from Stony Brook University a year ago. She works at Seatuck Environmental Association, and is currently working on the L.I. River Revival Project, collecting data on historic river herring spawning runs. She also does educational programs. We wish Jessica well in her career, and we thank Evelyn Bishop for her continuing support.



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PSEG LONG ISLAND / LIPA HEARINGS ON WIND POWER AND SOLAR ENERGY

Jim Brown

The Public Service Commission of New York State held public hearings at two locations on Long Island in June, in Smithtown on June 21 and in Mineola on the following day. The hearings dealt with the recently released Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) prepared by the utility company PSEG Long Island and the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA). PSEG LI and LIPA presented the elements of the IRP, and then members of the public, including representatives of several environmental organizations, offered comments.

The American Public Power Association has described the 2017 IRP as “the public power utility’s roadmap for the next 20 years. Instead of building traditional baseload power plants, LIPA plans to meet the needs of its 1.1 million customers on Long Island over the next two decades largely by investing in more energy efficiency, renewable energy, and distributed, flexible resources.” LIPA’s plans are designed to be in conformity to New York’s Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) plan and the state’s Clean Energy Standard. It is intended that Long Island will add 800 megawatts (enough to power 350,000 homes) of new renewable energy generation by 2030. The state, and LIPA on Long Island, are hoping to create more renewable energy sources in the future in the battle against climate change.

Development of renewable energy is important for Long Island’s future energy use, and is critical for the future health of the planet — its people, its habitat, and its wildlife. At the June 22 hearing I offered the following comments (edited slightly for clarity) on behalf of SSAS:

South Shore Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and we represent approximately 1,300 households on Long Island. I want to speak to a few things that should be borne in mind as we move towards clean energy, which is a laudable goal and something that should be done as quickly as we can.

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 “Birds and Climate Change Report” [see climate.audubon.org — ed.], over half of the bird species in North America are climate endangered or climate threatened. That is, 126 endangered species are likely to lose more than 50 percent of their current ranges by 2050, and 188 threatened species are likely to lose half of their current ranges by 2080. For example, the Common Loon, which is the state bird of

Minnesota, is likely to disappear from that state. The Ruffed Grouse (pictured), which is the state bird of Pennsylvania, is likely to disappear from the whole northeastern United States. So climate change is transforming our whole earth, the physical environment, wildlife, ecological balances, and even social relationships among people.



Bird conservation organizations agree that global climate change due to human-induced global warming is an increasing threat to birds. If not addressed, it will certainly cause the extinction of many bird species and other wildlife species as well. So the production of energy from fossil fuels needs to be replaced by sustainable alternative energy sources such as wind and solar.

The continental shelf of the United States is ideal for wind energy production. The Atlantic Seaboard, the Atlantic Flyway, hosts 500 different bird species and most of these birds are flying over very close to the shore. Without mindful siting based on scientific studies, offshore wind energy can be deadly for migratory birds in the Atlantic Flyway.

The South Shore Audubon Society is hoping and asking that offshore wind energy be correctly sited to protect birds. South Shore Audubon is seeking rigorous, extensive studies that will be completed over the next several years, ensuring that the planned wind farms will be well sited far from sensitive areas for birds — including key migratory routes, stopover sites, breeding and nesting sites, and areas where large numbers of birds congregate for feeding or in sensitive habitats such as wetlands.

For wind farm development — the whole process as it goes forward — we want it to be in conformity with all state and federal wildlife protection laws, including the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

We are urging that clean energy be developed as quickly as possible. We are not opposed to wind power — we want it to be correctly sited. We are looking forward to seeing this done.

Regarding solar energy: We also urge strong investments in solar energy. But we oppose, however, a lot of these green-for-green deals that have been proposed, including some of those proposed on the eastern part of Long Island. We particularly applaud the New York State Legislature’s recent action in halting two of these projects, at the same time adding large amounts of open space to the Pine Barrens.


The South Shore Audubon Society, as we have done for years, is carefully following offshore wind issues as they develop. Commenting on the IRP of LIPA and PSEG LI is an example. NYSERDA — the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency, the lead state agency coordinating offshore wind initiatives — is also issuing

reports on various aspects of offshore wind development off the coast of Long Island. We will comment on these reports when we feel it is necessary. We will advocate for renewable energy and birds! The agency is scheduled to issue its "Offshore Wind Master Plan" for New York State by the end of 2017. Further information on NYSEDA and wind power can be found at <https://www.nyserda.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Offshore-Wind>.



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*Explore the coast
with the*
**AMERICAN
LITTORAL SOCIETY**

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET ECOLOGY CRUISE (Sat., Sept. 23, 4 to 7 P.M.). Join us for a special 3-hour narrated tour aboard the 100 ft. "Golden Sunshine" out of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, Pier 8. Learn about the history, management issues and ecology of the bay and see migrating hawks, falcons, Osprey, herons, egrets, ibis, shorebirds, waterfowl, and maybe a Bald Eagle. Cost: \$55 (\$25 for kids under 16) includes narrated tour, wine & cheese, fruit, snacks, and drinks. With Gateway NRA & NYC Audubon. Contact Don for reservations.

FORT TILDEN HAWK WATCH (Sat., Oct. 7, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Meet at little church for hike along beach, dunes & woodland. Visit hawk watch platform to look for Kestrel, Merlin, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Osprey & Northern Harrier during peak migration time. Contact Don. Free.

CHINCOTEAGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE / ASSATEAGUE NATIONAL SEASHORE (Nov. 9-12). A great natural history weekend on the Virginia coast. See wild ponies, Snow Geese, Bald Eagles, migrating hawks, waterfowl, shorebirds & lots more. Cost: \$395/person (double occ.) includes 3 nights lodging at luxurious Refuge Inn, breakfast, Safari bus tour of back dunes areas, 5 guided hikes, evening programs plus an oyster & seafood dinner. With NYC Audubon.

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

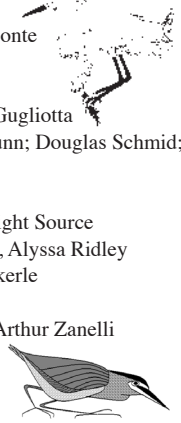
You are automatically a valued member of this active and friendly chapter, so please come out to the next meeting at the Freeport Memorial Library from 7:30-9:30 P.M., usually on the second Tuesday of the month (third Tuesday this November), to hear what you can do to help preserve your local environment's 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:

- Baldwin Madelon A. Knoerzer, Barbara Vonderahe
- Bellmore Margarita Fernandez
- Bethpage Michael Fitzpatrick
- East Meadow Anne M. Annese, Magda Labonte
- Farmingdale Delphine C. Tseng
- Floral Park Eileen Brosnan
- Freeport Denise Genduso, Audrey L. Gugliotta
- Garden City J. Peter Coll, Jr.; Matthew Dunn; Douglas Schmid; Sandra Shi; April Wenk
- Hicksville Ruth Dastin, Lisa Rice
- Levittown Ann Choi, Denise Mahlan, Light Source
- Long Beach Jeannie Larson, Sean Murray, Alyssa Ridley
- Massapequa Noelle Detweiler, Carol Weckerle
- Massapequa Park Arda Victor
- Merrick Lisa Ferrandino, Bud Nyby, Arthur Zanelli
- Oceanside Minna Barrett
- Plainview Robert Weick, Claire Werner
- Rockville Centre Dana Bosrok, Steven Gruner
- Seaford Brian Boden, Robert Montevago, Nancy Werner
- Wantagh Vincent Dease, Roselie Serrone
- West Hempstead Elizabeth Bartle, Kim Huynh
- Woodmere Doris Dlugacz



PROTECTING THE AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS OF LONG BEACH, PART 2

Brien Weiner

In the March 2017 *Skimmer*, I wrote about the threats facing American Oystercatchers nesting in the summer on the beaches of the City of Long Beach. I also wrote about the meeting in which Jim Brown, Lee Winters, and I negotiated with John Mirando, the Commissioner of Public Works, for the placement of string fences, signage, and protective boxes during the crucial period of nesting through fledging. Unfortunately, Long Beach only partially fulfilled their agreement, providing a smaller area for a shorter period of time, and not providing protective boxes at all. Of two nests, one was successful. The fate of the other, which may or may not have been prevented by protective measures, is eloquently documented in an entry in Lee's blog, which is excerpted below and appears in full with photos and video at <https://leebythesea.me/2017/06/12/life-on-a-grain-of-sand/>. All Lee's blog reports are well worth exploring, not only for his unique perspective on all things Long Beach, but for inspiring profiles and universal life lessons.



Life, on a Grain of Sand

“To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour.” — William Blake

Sometimes when I walk the beach, I think that each moment is like the individual grains of sand beneath my feet. Together the grains are an apron of white spread out before the sea. But they are in fact individual parts of the whole white span, as are my moments in my whole life. None of the moments before me are really ordinary. Because when I experience them fully they are all quite... EXTRAordinary. I try to remember that every day, with every step, on our Long Beach shore.

If wildlife would stay in the wild, we wouldn't, for the most part, know of the drama that unfolds. But it doesn't...so we do.

Anyone who follows my blog, even a bit, knows about the annual nesting of oystercatchers right smack in the middle of our Great White Theater by the Sea.

Our boardwalk balcony provides viewers with a front-row seat at the first days of “chicklet” life on our fickle planet.

Now, I marvel at Ospreys and their spectacular eyesight, their ability to spot prey beneath the sea's surface from the highest thermals, then dive to claw and capture living protein.

But I dread to see gulls invade an oystercatcher's nest area, to see them dive in an attempt to snatch a fuzzy ball of protein from a feathered family.

We see such events often on our Long Beach shores. The prey of the Ospreys, often bunker, sometimes escape

the thrusting talons. So too do oystercatchers deftly fight gull intruders off. But not always: One recent attempt resulted in a bloody air battle between gull and oystercatcher. Talons tore, beaks ripped... bones broke. The oystercatcher was seriously wounded. Its wing hung limp and bleeding, never again to fly our shore. But the three chicks which the guardian courageously protected were safe.

As previously reported here, rescuers Cathy and Bobby Horvath took the wounded oystercatcher and two of the chicks under their own wings. The lone parent was left with one chick on the beach. Neither has been seen for some time. But once again I must take this opportunity to laud the work of WINORR (Wildlife In Need Of Rescue and Rehabilitation). Dedication such as theirs is cherished by lovers of wildlife.

The damage to the oystercatcher was severe. Bones indeed were snapped. The bird was professionally attended and it survived the surgery. But Cathy told me over the course of the post-op period that she was concerned about the stress exhibited by the oystercatcher. She said, “Sometimes stress is a killer. The babies are found well. Eating fine. I might try and re-home them with another family.”

Her concerns were born out; the oystercatcher did not recover. But it did its job, it protected its mate and family successfully... at the cost of its own life. As so many protectors, of so many kinds, have done.

Yes, the chicks survived. In their brief respite they ate well, hopped around the cage and were eager to begin shore life again. Eager to be amidst the sea, the sand, the struggle, the being of life.

The chicks were recently returned to our Long Beach shore. Cathy found a prospective oystercatcher family at the far end of Long Beach, well beyond the boardwalk's eastern edge. The oystercatcher family that she located had just one chick, so she freed the two survivors to that family. Sometimes parents will attack new chicks if they get close to their own newborn. But this was not the case. This adoptive family was very accepting, Cathy said. She watched as the drama unfolded.

Cathy reported: “I was there for hours!!! This is my life. I re-home many different types of birds. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. They were calling out and the adults became protective of them. It worked out; awesome!!!” Awesome, indeed. Life's beauty survived its brutality...for these chicks... at this time. Such a tiny moment on a tiny planet on America's eastern shore.

Sometimes wildlife teaches me. Sometimes I see the vivid essence of life in it; brutal, yes, but mostly beautiful. Sometimes the essence of life is before me in a single moment, the “world in a grain of sand.” Let me share with you, once again, a magic moment. It's of the oystercatcher pair air-dancing, synced... about to start their spring nest. [You'll need to go to Lee's blog for this — ed.]

Be well, Leebythesea

