VOLUME 48. NUMBER 3 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2017

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Paul Stessel & Bill Belford

DATE: Tuesday, November 21, 2017

REASON: Library Is Closed on Election Day; We're

Bumped to the Third Tuesday

TIME: 7:30 р.м.

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: Michael S. Scheibel

TOPIC: Bald Eagles Nesting on Long Island

For our next monthly meeting, we've rescheduled the program that was canceled in March, when expectations of a blizzard resulted in a closed library.

The return of the Bald Eagle as a nesting species in the Long Island region and throughout New York State is one of the most successful wildlife restoration stories of our time. Our guest speaker will discuss the Bald Eagle's biology and life history, abundance and distribution, decline and restoration in New York, and its current status on Long Island.

Mike Scheibel has been the Natural Resources Manager for The Nature Conservancy of Long Island at the Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island since 1996. He received his B.S. degree in wildlife sciences from Cornell University, and worked for nearly 20 years as a wildlife biologist for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, specializing in endangered species projects on Long Island, including serving as New York's representative on the federal Roseate Tern Recovery Team. Join us!

**Pre-Meeting Book Discussion.** Arrive a half-hour early to participate in a discussion led by R. U. Abyrdar II (aka Paul Stessel) of the book that he and Sy Schiff reviewed in the previous Skimmer. This meeting's book is Good Birders Still Don't Wear White, edited by Lisa A. White and Jeffrey A. Gordon; illustrated by Robert A. Braunfield.

**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!

#### THE GLORY BIRDS OF HEMPSTEAD LAKE STATE PARK - WOOD DUCKS

Belty Borowsky

We have an "Important Bird Area" (an IBA) in our own backyard: Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP). In the U.S., an IBA is a location recognized by the National Audubon Society as an area of special importance for bird conservation, based on global criteria established by BirdLife International. Although an IBA has no legal status, its designation highlights the need for special efforts to maintain it in its natural state. [Editor's interruption: There are currently 132 IBAs in New York, including one more in SSAS's territory, West Hempstead Bay/Jones Beach West, which unfortunately is being invaded by a two-mile drive-throughslowly-and-pollute "Magic of Lights" show at the West End this year; see www.audubon.org/important-birdareas/state/new-york.].

Hempstead Lake has pretty much all the morecommon species one might see in Nassau County, depending upon the season; but what makes it a very special IBA are the spectacular species — the "glory birds" — that can be seen there as well.

I consider the Wood Duck (Aix sponsa) a glory bird. It is absolutely my favorite bird. If you see a male in the sun, you can't believe it's real (look at: http://jengfeller. com/species/ducks/wood-duck/). Its iridescent colors will blow you away. In addition, its feather patterns are remarkable; the feathers on the male's head converge in a glowing green "helmet" at the back. Now, the female is not brightly colored, but that allows you to focus on how cute she is — with relatively large eyes surrounded by a white Cleopatra-like line, and a small compact body with relatively short, broad wings (https://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Wood duck).

So it's a pleasure to look at them. But it turns out they are special in other ways as well. For example, when they swim, they move their heads back and forth, much like a pigeon does when it walks, so they are easy to recognize even if you can see no color at all.

And they can perch in trees! I remember the first time I saw them (which was at Hempstead Lake State Park). The more-experienced birder I was with said "look in the tree." Look in the tree for a duck? But sure enough, that's where they were. But, of course, that's how they got their name.

Today, Wood Ducks range over most of the United States. In fact, the Wood Duck is one of the few happy conservation stories lately, because its range has not declined, but has expanded as areas with suitable habitat

are preserved. And in some places, such as in parts of Florida, they're actually common. In Nassau County, though, it's a good day when you see one. That's because they not only require a specific habitat, but they need a sufficient amount of it to breed.

Wood Ducks need quiet freshwater areas with lots of mature trees nearby. They feed on aquatic invertebrates, and they nest in tree holes. They do not create their own holes, but move into ones that are already there. The ducks will move into a suitable hole generally no lower than 5 feet above the ground, and they can use holes that are as high as 50 feet. The large bird boxes you might see in the middle of a pond or stream with large holes are designed for them.

You can see Wood Ducks throughout the year at HLSP. I am not sure whether we see the same ones year-round, because we know that some individuals migrate. But we know that some representatives can be seen any time of the year at the park.

Last year we were thrilled to see a female with nine ducklings following behind her in Smith's Pond (the pond with Lakeview Avenue on its southern edge, and Peninsula Boulevard on its eastern side). In fact, Wood Duck females are prodigious layers, with brood sizes between 10 and 15 eggs. This part is interesting too: the female lays one egg a day, but incubates none of them until the last one is laid. The result is that all of the eggs develop simultaneously, and all are ready to hatch at the same time. This is a neat adaptation; it allows the entire brood to leave the nest at once. Because once they leave the nest, they don't come back. They can't.

About a day after they hatch, the female calls them from outside the nest. Inside, the ducklings respond by climbing up to the opening of the hole (they are hatched with nails on their toes which permit them to climb) — and jump out! One after the other. Since they will not be able to fly for another 58 days or so, the nest hole better be situated in a place that will provide a soft landing: either into the water or on soft mulch. The ducklings are pretty helpless until they can fly, so there also better be

a sufficient amount of appropriate habitat to support the brood for the two more months they need to mature before they can leave the area if necessary.

Which brings me to the issue of appropriate habitat. For one reason or another, at this point in time HLSP offers abundant and diverse habitat that can support many bird species. I think it's fair to say that much of it was originally man-made, and that a good amount of vegetation is not native; but this is irrelevant to the current situation. However it came to be, and however it is currently comprised, HLSP offers unparalleled habitat diversity in an otherwise heavily populated suburban (and rapidly growing into an urban) area.

You should know that SSAS is doing its best to preserve this priceless area (our objections to NY's federally funded \$34.5 million plan are in last month's *Skimmer*). We hope you will lend your support to this effort, and help us retain the park as a place where so many visitors have so many recreational opportunities while at the same time it offers so many wildlife species a welcoming place to visit and even to breed.

## \*\*\* WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ₹\*

Atlantic Beach	Dolores Feldman
Bellmore	Dorothy Andrews, Kathleen Paolillo,
	Patricia Wojcieszak
East Rockaway	Fred R. Humes
Hicksville	Joanne Nilsson, Rita Sharkey
Long Beach	Anne Marie Dezio, Maryann Jozkowski
Lynbrook	Theresa Foran
Malverne	Eric Bjorneby
Massapequa	Christopher Meyn, Lisa Zuena
Plainview	Shelly Slatz
Point Lookout	Madeleine Balko
Rockville Centre	Jacqueline McNeil
Seaford	Rob Longiaru
Wantagh	Angela T. Bodizs

## BROOKSIDE PRESERVE FALL CLEANUP

On **Sunday, November 19**, starting at 1 P.M., SSAS will have its fall cleanup at Brookside Preserve, rain or shine. Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County that SSAS rescued from development and manages. PDF files of our trail guide and children's freshwater wetland guide can be downloaded from www.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 work gloves and spend an hour or two with

# TAKE ACTION – SAVE THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE'S PRECIOUS BIRD HABITAT FROM OIL DEVELOPMENT!

Jim Brown

The climate-change denying policies of the current national administration are continuing apace, uninterrupted by rationality. Three unusually strong and destructive hurricanes (Harvey, Irma, and Maria) have ravaged portions of the United States and the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands [and ten consecutive named tropical storms in the Atlantic basin have reached hurricane strength, which hadn't occurred since the 1800s - ed.]. Due to an extended drought in California, wildfires are killing people and incinerating homes in the northern part of the state. As I write these words, these fires are still raging there, not yet under control. Severe, prolonged drought in the western U.S. and the increased strength of tropical storms are two phenomena directly linked to human-induced global warming. Issues of climate change — its human causes, the science explaining the nature of its ongoing and future catastrophic impacts, and the need to quickly take effective collective action to halt global warming - are now known and appreciated by practically all climate scientists and many average citizens of the world. But climate change is not acknowledged, it is all too apparent, by the Trump administration.

In the past ten months, the administration has initiated a number of alarming policies. Included in this category of climate-change denying actions are the opening of the Dakota Access Pipeline, renewed support for coal mining, a refusal to require that infrastructure investments take climate change into account, orders that the phrase "climate change" not be used by governmental agencies, and declaring that the U.S. would abandon its commitment to participate in the Paris climate agreement. Abandoning the agreement is pointedly showing to the rest of the world that the U.S. government does not see climate change as a threat to planetary stability. The agreement, signed on Earth Day in 2016, is not even a strong compact, depending as it does on purely voluntary actions by nation states to curb carbon emissions. Formal withdrawal from this agreement, which could occur as early as 2019, would be a significant step backward in the fight against climate change.

A new threat to effectively combating global warming has recently arisen — the White House has called for the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drill-

ing. So far the House of Representatives has voted to support this initiative and a battle looms in the Senate. Halting climate change

requires that fossil fuels be left in the ground. Investments are urgently needed in renewable energy such as wind and solar, not more oil drilling. In addition, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge — which has been targeted

unsuccessfully in the past for drilling — is a fragile 1.5-million acre wilderness located along the North Slope of Alaska. It is home to nesting Tundra Swans, Northern Pintails, American Golden-Plovers, and other bird species. National Audubon has described the refuge as "one of the most prolific bird nurseries on the planet." This important habitat should be protected, not exploited for a resource that will only make the ravages of climate change worse. Take action by either sending a letter to your U.S. Senators at www.audubon.org/takeaction or place a call to them. Senator Charles Schumer's Washington number is (202) 224-6542; Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's is (202) 224-4451.

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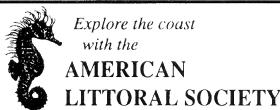
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WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP (Sat., Nov. 18, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Join naturalist Don Riepe for a digital slide program on the many species of waterfowl in NYC during winter. Hike around the refuge ponds to see ducks, geese and other wintering birds. For information and reservation call Don, (917) 371-8577; e-mail: don@littoralsociety.org, This is a partner-ship program with NYC Audubon and Gateway NRA. Free.

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY** (Sat., Dec. 16, 5 to 9 p.m.). Join us for our informal and fun party in Broad Channel at the American Legion Hall. Cost: \$55 includes buffet dinner, wine & cheese, a raffle and "Ugly Auction" plus entertainment (Flamenco Dancers). The event is preceded by a walk at the nearby wildlife refuge at 3 p.m.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACHWALK** (Mon., Jan. 1, 11 A.M.). Celebrate the new year with a brisk walk along the beach, dunes and woodlands of Fort Tilden, Queens. Afterward, enjoy champagne, cake, coffee and cookies at the Rockaway Artists Bldg. in the fort. Free.

**MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND** (Jan. 12–14): Seals, Seabirds & Seashores. Cost: \$395/person, 2 nights lodging at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 field trips.

For information about and reservations for above trips, call the American Littoral Society at (718) 474-0896; e-mail: donriepe@gmail.com

#### AUDUBON SHOREBIRD OUTREACH, STEWARDSHIP, AND MONITORING

Amanda Pachomski & Laura McCarthu

Editor's note: Amanda and Laura are Audubon New York's Long Island Bird Conservation Manager and Manager of Conservation Engagement, respectively.

Thanks to the hard work of our seasonal staff, volunteers, and partners, Audubon New York's Long Island Bird Conservation Program had a successful 2017 field season. Along with several chapters, we expanded the "Be a Good Egg" outreach program.

The goal of the "Be a Good Egg" outreach initiative is to reduce human disturbance to beach-nesting bird species like the Piping Plover by encouraging beachgoers to share the shore. During our "on the beach" outreach events, we table at the entrances of priority Long Island beaches and educate beachgoers about our local birds. We ask beachgoers to sign our "Be a Good Egg" pledge to stay out of fenced-off nesting areas, keep trash off the beach, and keep dogs off of nesting beaches.

This year, several chapters and Audubon New York staff led 15 on-the-beach outreach events. We also engaged over 250 elementary students, who participated in a shorebird lesson and submitted designs for Share the Shore signs installed at Sunken Meadow State Park and Town of Hempstead beaches. As of the end of September, 2,857 people had signed the pledge in 2017. That means we just need 143 more signatures to reach our goal of 3,000 new pledges! So, if you haven't yet taken the pledge to Be a Good Egg, please head over to ny.audubon.org/BGE to sign the pledge online. Thank you so much to all of the Good Egg partners and volunteers, including 20 new and 13 veteran volunteers, for making this program possible.

Each year, Audubon staff and volunteers steward and monitor breeding Piping Plovers, Least Terns, and American Oystercatchers at nine sites across Long Island. Unfortunately, this year our sites faced high predation pressure and numerous flooding events, so our average Piping Plover productivity (number of chicks fledged per pair) was 1.0 (down from 2.33 last year). On the positive side, our total number of breeding plover pairs increased from 14 pairs in 2016 to 17 this year. NYS DEC staff are still gathering data from all of the plover monitors (including agency staff and other conservation partners), but the preliminary pair count for all of Long Island also increased, to nearly 400 pairs. Audubon monitored Least Terns at three sites, where over 100 pairs produced at least 25 fledges. This species nested at Prospect Point [in Sands Point – ed.] for the first time since 2012, but sadly that colony wasn't successful. We also monitored American Oystercatchers at four sites, where 69 pairs had an average 0.72 productivity.

Thank you to SSAS and other chapters on Long Island who participate in Audubon's shorebird conservation

work! Partial program support comes from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) and PSEG Long Island.



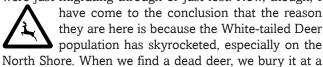
## YES IT'S A BIRD, NOT A PLANE, AND IT'S DEFINITELY NOT SUPERMAN

Jonathan Staller

Look, up in the sky. There, flying above the Long Island Expressway. It's huge, larger than a Red-tailed Hawk. It's soaring with its wings raised in a "V" position and making wobbling circles. Wait, there's another one! Lower this time, about 50 feet above the tree line, near exit 39, Glen Cove Rd. Blackish in color with whitish under its wings — Turkey Vultures; but why here on Long Island?

I expect to see them when I go to upstate NY or New Jersey. There they get their lift from thermals which keep them adrift; soaring gracefully, not flapping their wings. I usually see Turkey Vultures once a week either by exit 39 and exit 43, but now I'm seeing them almost daily by exit 46, Sunnyside Blvd. This is where I work. My job is with the New York State Department of Transportation.

I've done research for several years on these birds making their homes on Long Island. At first I thought that they were just migrating through or just lost. Now, though, I



state yard. There are state yards at all three exits.

I've seen these majestic birds perched in the trees above our deer pits (graveyards). This is the first time that I've ever seen this (I did see Black Vultures in trees and also on the ground in Florida). Seeing a bird perched that is 3 feet tall and another with its wings spread out almost 7 feet across from the tip of its outmost flight feather to the other is impressive. Both were looking down towards

Turkey Vultures have a keen sense of smell, which they use to find fresh carcasses. They are scavengers; they only eat dead animals. They have no feathers on their heads, making them look bald.

So the next time you see a large bird flying above, remember that we have Turkey Vultures. Then you, like me, can add them on your New York State checklist.

#### **BOOKS FOR BIRDERS**

R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff

So you're wondering about this month's book and you're also fascinated by raptors? Well, you've come to the right place! This month we've decided to review a timely book that will answer ALL your questions about everything you ever wanted to know about raptors but were afraid to ask. Our book is *Birds of Prey* by Pete Dunne with Kevin T. Karlson (who handles the photography in this wonderful book).

The species accounts that are such a large part of this book summarize the biological elements that distinguish and define the 33 species called "the diurnal birds of prey." Pete informs us that he has assembled a species-by-species compilation of his (and others') personal observations and ornithological insights that are the result of thousands of hours of field time amassed by hundreds of raptor biologists, whose fascination (like our own) with, and dedication to, these birds of prey are recalled therein). Indeed, included is a tribute to all their efforts!

Now Sy states his case: "While a bountiful amount of information is imparted, this is a different kind of book. All the raptor basics are covered extremely well, but in a way that is a bit unusual, at least for me. The data is gathered



from many sources (an extensive compilation of footnotes are saved for the back of the book. Much of the text extracted is of personal experiences of the individual authors and extensively quoted. So the authors invite us to spend time, not so much reading but, rather, listening

to a personal conversation with a group of experts in the field. "A goofy looking, bulbous-billed tree snail specialist" is how the profile of the Hook-billed Kite begins. It's all there, but in a very personal style. You're not reading a book on raptors, you're listening to Pete Dunne talking about his favorite bird group. The book is filled with Pete's observations and personal style, and this makes the book not so much a bird book but a visit with him! What a treat!

Taxonomy is a moving target and what originally consisted of birds of prey included falcons and vultures (no longer, but not to worry). The explanation of why these former groups are included is explained, as well as why owls are not.

After a chapter of acknowledgements and then personal observations, the subject matter commences. Each species has a section that covers the following: Etymology (scientific and common names), Profile (an introductory paragraph), Description (sometimes with measurements), Systematics/Subspecies, Vocalizations, Distribution, Migration, Habitat, Breeding, Behavior/Hunting, Prey, and, finally, Status. It's a lot and the subject matter is more than just "covered."

The manuscript had been given to Kevin Karlson to comment on and he indicated that pictures were needed.

As a result, each species is accompanied by a set of excellent to outstanding photographs. Each photo comes with a description that enhances the text and lists the photographer.

Each species account is self-contained. After reviewing the first two species, I found I could move on to check up on some others without losing continuity before moving on to others and back to the beginning. I've enjoyed Pete Dunne's books in the past and even own some of them! This is a worthy addition to his enormous contribution to the improvement of the birding genre."

Read this informative and engaging book!! Enjoy! You'll also learn a lot.

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#### JOINT FIELD TRIPS WITH FOUR HARBORS

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Joanne Del Prete

On **Saturday, November 11**, SSAS will be joining Four Harbors Audubon Society for two separate walks in their area as follows:

① **Avalon Park & Preserve** (200 Harbor Road, Stony Brook) at 9 A.M. We will meet at the Stony Brook Grist Mill next to Stony Brook Pond. The walk will last 1 to 2 hours. Avalon Preserve is 76 acres, comprised of sloped fields and forests, with a network of hiking trails that connects to the Nature Conservancy's East Farm Preserve. Altogether there are approximately 140 acres of wildlife habitat. For more information, visit www.avalonparkand-preserve.org.

Directions: From the Long Island Expressway, take exit 62 (C.R. 97 or Nicolls Rd.) north until it ends at route 25A in Stony Brook. Turn left onto 25A and proceed approximately 1.5 miles to Main Street. Immediately before the traffic light, bear right onto Main St. One block ahead on the left is Harbor Rd. Parking is available along Main St., on Harbor Rd., and in the Stony Brook Village Center just past the park on Main St. The park's boardwalk entrance is on Harbor Rd., across the street from the Grist Mill.

© Frank Melville Memorial Park/Mill Pond at 11 A.M. Meet at the Setauket Post Office located at 101 Main St. (Setauket village green). The park, dedicated in 1937, has a collection of historic buildings on its 26 acres. For more information, visit www.frankmelvillepark.org. Directions from Avalon will be provided.

Rain, snow, and/or cold weather cancels. Contact me at 433-0739 (home) or 476-3761 (cell) for questions. Registration is not required.

#### **OCEAN FRONTIERS III FILM + PANEL**

New York's ocean use is growing rapidly, with massive new ships, soaring demand for offshore sand mining, and proposed wind energy development offshore. Our busy waters are also home to endangered whales and sea turtles, and support thriving fishing and recreation industries. It's more important than ever that we plan ahead for responsible ocean growth.

Join us for a special screening of *Ocean Frontiers III*. This hopeful film explores the challenges at the heart of ocean conservation and development, presenting solutions from a range of people who are leading the way to a healthy and sustainable ocean future. Participate in the post-film conversation and learn how you can get involved.

When: **Wednesday, November 8**. Reception 6:30 P.M. \* Film 7:00 P.M. \* Panel/Q&A 8:00 P.M.

*Where:* Farmingdale State College, Little Theater at Roosevelt Hall, 2350 Broadhollow Rd., Farmingdale, NY 11735

*Free admission* & refreshments. *RSVP* to save your seat: <a href="http://bit.ly/OF3-Farmingdale">http://bit.ly/OF3-Farmingdale</a>.

Join us for the post-film conversation with our expert panelists: *Karen Chytalo* – Assistant Director of the Division of Marine Resources, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation & Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Member; *Clint Plummer* – Vice President of Development, Deepwater Wind; *Carl LoBue* – NY Oceans Program Director, The Nature Conservancy on Long Island; *John McMurray* – owner/operator of One More Cast Charters, conservation writer, prior Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council member, and current Legislative Commissioner on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission; and *Adrienne Esposito* – Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment (moderator).

This event is hosted by the Renewable Energy and Sustainability Center at Farmingdale State College, Long Island Sierra Club, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, The Nature Conservancy on Long Island, New York State Marine Education Association, SUNY Maritime College, The Safina Center, New York Sea Grant, Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, **South Shore Audubon Society** (look for our table),

Surfrider Foundation — Central Long Island Chapter, Save the Great South Bay, Renewable Energy Long Island, Wildlife Conservation Society's New



York Aquarium, New York Offshore Wind Alliance, Gotham Whale, All Our Energy, American Littoral Society, Deepwater Wind, North American Marine Environment Protection Association, New York League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Green Fire Productions.

Film trailer: http://ocean-frontiers.org/of3-trailer

Event contact: Eva Barnett, films@greenfireproductions.org

## MEMBER PHOTO DISPLAY AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Anne Mehlinger

Photographers, please bring a great bird photo or two to the meetings and we'll hang them on the wall for our members to view. Label your photo with the bird's name, the location where the photo was taken, and your name (we'll have Post-its if you need one). Take your photo home after the meeting.

P.S. Start thinking about the photos you will use for Members' Night in January, when you can display a collection of your best work for all to see.

### TACKAPAUSHA HOLIDAY PARTY

Marilyn Hametz

The South Shore Audubon Annual Holiday Party for Children with the Tackapausha Museum is scheduled for **Saturday, December 9**. At the party, from 1 to 4 P.M., we will be providing light refreshments and will have tables for nature crafts. Wildlife demonstrations are featured at the party.

If you would like to enjoy the event as a South Shore Audubon volunteer, please contact me at 799-7189 or mwhametz@optimum.net.

This special event is also a great time to visit the museum with your children or grandchildren. Admission is \$5 per person (adults & children; free for our volunteers).

Tackapausha Museum and Preserve is located at 2255 Washington Avenue (between Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway) in Seaford; telephone 571-7443.

#### 

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 www.ssaudubon.org.

Oct. 29	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north side of Merrick Rd.)
Nov. 5	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Nov. 12	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Nov. 19	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Nov. 26	Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and
	Lido Preserve afterwards)
Dec. 3	Alley Pond Park (76th Ave. parking lot)

#### **WASTE DEEP IN THE BIG MUDDY**

Brien Weiner

Decades of environmental advocacy are being undone at a dizzying pace by the Trump administration. The second week of October alone saw efforts to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration (see Jim Brown's article), and to repeal the Clean Power Plan. Since the advent of the administration, 52 environmental regulations have either been rolled back, are in the process of being rolled back, or are in legal limbo (and by the time you read this, there may be more).

President Trump has announced that he is pulling the United States out of the Paris climate agreement, which not only destroys our credibility and isolates us from the rest of the world, but also ignores the urgency of addressing climate change: this has been manifested by intensifying hurricanes and flooding on the Atlantic side of the country and wildfires on the Pacific side, and the devastation left in their wake (which he is going to rebuild by cutting taxes?).

The rules addressing climate change are being rolled back by Trump, Scott Pruitt (the EPA Director who made a career out of suing the EPA and was the only cabinet nominee ever to be opposed by the National Audubon Society), and Ryan Zinke (the Interior Secretary who claims to emulate Theodore Roosevelt, the president who set aside 230 million acres of wilderness for protection, and proposes reducing protection for ten national monuments). These rules include: rules to increase the fuel efficiency of cars and trucks; rules to eliminate methane emissions from oil and gas wells (methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide); rules to increase the energy efficiency of appliances (air conditioning is the biggest single contributor to global warming, which in a vicious cycle begets more air conditioning); and now the Clean Power Plan. The Clean Power Plan was created in 2015 to reduce emissions from coalburning power plants 32% by 2030 in order to slow the pace of climate change, reduce air pollution such as smog, expand renewable energy, and increase energy efficiency. The goals set by the Paris climate accord and Clean Power Plan were modest and not enough to stop or reverse climate change, but even those goals were too much for our science-averse administration.

Other environmental protections on the chopping block include: flood building standards, a proposed ban on a potentially harmful pesticide (chlorpyrifos), a freeze on new coal leases on public lands, an anti-dumping rule for coal companies, decisions to suspend the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines, offshore drilling bans in the Atlantic and Arctic, the grizzly bear's protection under the Endangered Species Act, protection of whales and sea turtles, environmental mitigation for federal projects, wetland and tributary protections, the status of 12

marine areas, limits on toxic discharges from power plants, Sage Grouse habitat protection, fracking regulations on public lands, and many other rules requiring reporting of emissions, regulating the fossil fuel and chemical industries, regulating hunting, and so on.

The only good news is that many of the rollbacks are being challenged by states and environmental groups in court, and that economics are making fossil fuels unprofitable — the irony being, however, that our land will be destroyed and there will be no economic or strategic gain. The Trump administration is being enabled by Congress, as in the case of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where Congress is attempting to use the budget reconciliation process to pay for tax cuts through Arctic drilling — a cynical ploy that would force the legislation through without typical debate, and allow the Senate to pass the bill with a simple majority vote.

As Pete Seeger so poignantly wrote and sang: "Well, I'm not going to point any moral; I'll leave that for yourself.

Maybe you're still walking, you're still talking You'd like to keep your health.

But every time I read the papers

That old feeling comes on;

We're — waist deep in the Big Muddy

And the big fool says to push on."

"Soon even a tall man'll be over his head."

To keep up to date and join the chorus trying to stop the carnage, subscribe to the Audubon Action Network at **www.audubon.org/takeaction**. Call or write your Senators and Representatives in Congress. And above all, use the power of your vote to elect officials at all levels of government who support a robust program of environmental conservation.

### DISCOUNTED AUDUBON CALENDARS FROM SSAS

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At our walks and meetings, we're selling Audubon calendars at a bargain price of \$10 apiece (list price \$14.99). The 12-inch by 28-inch (when opened) "Songbirds & Other Backyard Birds" Picture-a-Day Wall Calendar features a photograph and related text at the top, plus smaller images throughout the unusually tall grid. Sample pages are at http://www.pageaday.com/store/audubon.

#### **30TH ANNUAL WATERFOWL SURVEY**

The dates for our 2017–2018 Waterfowl Survey are as follows, rain or shine: **Saturdays, December 9, January 6, February 3, February 24,** and **March 24**. Members are welcome to participate in the surveys. If you are interested in spending a full or half day visiting up to 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park, call SSAS's Bill Belford at 385-1759.

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation





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#### **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.
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$\square$ Donations to SSAS are always welcome! \$
Yes, I'd like to join: $\square$ SSAS only $\square$ National Audubon too
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