

# SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 48, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2018

## NEXT MEETING

*Paul Stessel & Bill Belford*

**DATE:** Tuesday, April 10, 2018  
**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Freeport Memorial Library  
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)  
**SPEAKER:** Joyann Cirigliano  
**TOPIC:** My Yard Is for the Birds: The Things That Birds Look for in a Suburban Yard

After gardening, bird-watching is America’s favorite pastime. Many gardeners are also bird-watchers, and vice versa. Sadly, because of habitat loss, climate change, and other issues, many species of birds are in decline. By using our yards, we can help our avian neighbors increase their numbers. Find out what our feathered friends (and other wildlife) look for in our yards and what we need to put there. Becoming good stewards and ecoscaping our yards can help restore balance and create safe harbors for wildlife in otherwise sterile environments. By blending aesthetics and ecology, landscapes that are both very attractive and highly functional can be created. Please bring questions, curiosity, and an open mind.

Our speaker this month is the president of Smithtown-based Four Harbors Audubon Society, an officer of the NYS Audubon Council, and a Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional. She is also certified as a National Wildlife Federation Wildlife Habitat Landscape Professional and is the proprietor of Joy’s Forever Endeavor, which specializes in native plant and wildlife habitats, ecoscaping, sustainability, invasive plant species, and other gardening and environmental issues. She also works at Atlantic Wholesale Nurseries in Dix Hills, an ethical grower and re-wholesaler that provides quality plant material to the horticultural industry, arboretums, and parks. She has designed and installed nine native plant habitat display gardens on Long Island to date. 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

*Bird Droppings* by Pete Dunne.

**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.

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•  IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE •  
• BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS. •  
• **SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!** •  
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## SSAS NATIVE PLANTS INITIATIVE

*Betty Barowsky*

Although SSAS has always understood how important native species are for providing food and shelter to our local birds, we have not always focused as much as we should on promoting their use. Recognizing that encouraging the use of native plants is an essential extension of our educational efforts, we recently applied for and were awarded two \$1,000 grants to provide education on this extremely important aspect of bird conservation. Support from the two grants will allow us to plant native species in two local parks, and to promote planting native species in local homes and gardens.

The first grant is a National Audubon Society “Chapter Collaborative Funding” grant. Marilyn Hametz submitted an application for a garden of native plants to be located in front of Tackapausha Museum in Seaford. Plants will be selected to attract the greatest diversity of birds and other wildlife possible. We thank Marilyn as well as Anne Mehlinger for her hard work in selecting just the right plants for the garden’s specific soil profile and exposure, and, as always, we deeply appreciate Dennis Fleury and Isabel Fernandes’s tireless efforts and dedication to Tackapausha Museum and Preserve. We expect that the garden will be in place by late spring, and the signage and accompanying descriptive brochure will be done by fall.







**BOOKS FOR BIRDERS**  
**One More Warbler**

R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff

For those of us just dreaming of birding in far-off, exotic places, this book is written for you! Authored by none other than Victor Emanuel, dean of the ecotourism genre, with the help of S. Kirk Walsh, *One More Warbler: A Life with Birds* is a wonderful read for all of us, bundled-up in our winter gear, and mentally planning that future “bucket-list” trip to some faraway place! Mr. Emanuel has observed more than 6,000 species of birds during travels/adventures that have taken him to every continent. He founded the largest company in the world specializing in birding tours and one that has gained the most respect in the world of ecotourism. Victor Emanuel Nature Tours are in a class all by themselves. (Sy is tapping me on the shoulder, anxious to get his side of the story in, so here’s Sy!)

Founder of VENT (Victor Emanuel Nature Tours), Victor Emanuel started birding at an early age and with a passion for the hobby devoted himself to making it a business where none had existed before. People want to go to exotic places to see “rare” and exotic birds. You can join a trip, but when he started there were *no* trips to join!

Emanuel managed by personality, personal skills, and mentoring to amass a coterie of skilled birders from around the world. And, at the same time, he employed them to good use as friends and tour leaders for his expanding business. He knew them all. The essays are filled with name dropping of magnificent proportions!

The book starts with some biographical information and proceeds to a series of trip reports of both tours and scouting expeditions for tours. This book describes trips with legendary birders, all of whom were his friends. So you can read what it was like to bird with Roger Tory Peterson, Peter Matthiessen, and George Plimpton, among hosts of others. Go with him birding with a President and then getting invited to the White House.

The book is autobiographical and consists of trip reports of places he went, some as a tour leader and some to just bird. Ordinary places — like the Andes, Mexican mountains, India, Antarctica, and Attu.

Since there are trip reports to “out of the way” places, lists of birds seen include many rare, one of a kind, and lifers for a birder who birded everywhere. While the bird names may have no meaning to a bird-watcher, a description of brilliant plumage of some livens up what otherwise becomes a dull listing of unattainable birds for the rest of us!

There’s some high adventure in some of his essays, and bold experiences, like renting a luxury train to travel through India and chartering an entire ship to explore Antarctic waters. As expected, none of these trips come cheap! So this is a chance to read about them, in front of that fireplace.



Then there is birding in the Ramble of Central Park (don’t forget May 5!, I interject). Here, it’s all about spring warblers. And finally, birding the Texas coast where he lives. This is the ultimate travel book for an armchair birder!

Now, R. U. returns to create the finale: Read it and... ENJOY!

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**SSAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

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 might be interested in helping to lead SSAS, please contact committee chairperson Jim Brown at 608-1446. Our board meets monthly in Freeport, normally on a Tuesday night. If you’re good at taking minutes, we need you! Other slots need to be filled too.

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**SSAS Mission Statement** — *The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education; conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat; and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.*

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**SAVE THESE DATES – DETAILS NEXT MONTH**

**Saturday, May 5 — Annual Morning in Central Park.** As usual, Chris Cooper (who was featured in HBO’s documentary, “Birders: The Central Park Effect,” and traces his birding roots to SSAS) has agreed to lead us through the Ramble during peak warbler season. Many of us will meet in Penn Station for an 8:30 A.M. subway trip.

**Wednesday, June 13 — Annual Dinner.** Join us at Pompei in West Hempstead for raffles, awards, etc.

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**THE BOOKCASE**  
**Fastest Things on Wings**

Frank Scoblete

Hummingbirds are indeed the “fastest things on wings” and although the Peregrine Falcon can descend to earth at 200 miles an hour, a hummingbird can fly its body length over and over again far faster than can the Peregrine. A hummingbird’s wings can beat at 60 to 80 times a second, and some hummingbirds in South America can beat up to 120 times per second.

Still, hummingbirds living in cities and suburban enclaves, though they are accustomed to human beings, with individuals so friendly they can be fed by hand — these tiny birds, some almost as small as a large bee, some somewhat larger than that — face extraordinary dangers. Among such perils are hitting skyscraper windows; blasting into cars, buses, and trucks; getting stuck in air conditioning systems and on fire trucks; hitting objects, products, and mannequins in stores; falling to earth in exhaustion (sexual torpor) after mating; and even in one case getting hit by a golf ball in midair.

“Everybody cries about hummingbirds,” states hummingbird rehabber Terry Masear, author of the fascinating book *Fastest Things on Wings*. In her experience, bikers, goths, salespeople, laborers, CEOs, groundskeepers, tree cutters, professional and amateur athletes, along with some ludicrously rich Hollywood actors, directors and producers, all tremble in the light of a hummingbird’s approaching demise. They seek Terry out at all hours of the day and night to get the necessary help for the little bird they wish saved. In a single year she will get close to 5,000 calls!

Terry Masear cares for injured hummingbirds in Los Angeles. During the hummingbird season, late April through the summer months, she will save over a thousand birds with her step-by-step rehabilitation techniques. Sadly some will die. These are not casual deaths, as Terry, despite her attempts at being “cold-blooded,” often mourns them. Life is precious, even the tiny life of a hummingbird. A tiny life is still big.

As we are learning now, individual birds within a species are not all alike; just as we humans differ from one another, each hummingbird has his or her own personality. Terry recounts instances where hummingbirds react in radically different ways to her rehabilitation techniques. Some are docile, some inquisitive, and some look to mate — even in rehabilitation. Terry states that male hummingbirds are quite horny. I guess that’s the way of the world when it comes to males.

A small percentage of hummingbirds, again predominantly males, are nasty. She recounts one such monster that attacked almost every bird in her aviary. This beast would nail the other birds with his bill, trample them when they were feeding on the ground, and bully them almost



nonstop even in the early evenings when hummingbirds typically grow quiescent. In fact, one of Terry’s rehab friends said that such intensely aggressive hummingbirds — were they human — should be shot! Terry does not waste much of her time with such cruel beasts; she lets them meet their fate rather than risk the lives of the other birds.

The book is fascinating, well written, and hard to put down. Masear has done a wonderful job!

*Editor’s note:* Frank, the author of 35 books and an expanding collection of “Bird Scobe” articles, invites you to check out [www.franksoblete.com](http://www.franksoblete.com).



**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, 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 ..... Julie Bloom
- Floral Park ..... Joan Andren
- Franklin Square ..... Karen Strauss
- Garden City ..... Darlene B. Daly
- Levittown ..... Amanda Pachomski
- Lynbrook ..... Diane Horr
- Malverne ..... Eileen Armstrong Larney, Richard H. Funk
- Massapequa ..... Louise Catalano
- Merrick ..... Patrick Stapleton
- Oceanside ..... Joanna Corio-Tobin, Doris Fins, Carol Martin
- Plainview ..... Nina David
- Rockville Centre ..... Donald Donohue
- Seaford ..... Mohammad Bhatti
- Wantagh ..... Katherine Bose, Pam Olsen, Gloria A. Simmons



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