OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 50. NUMBER 4 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

DEC. 2019 & JAN. 2020

NEXT MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2019

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

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

SPEAKER: Stéphane Perreault

TOPIC: The American Redstart: A Birder's View

For our December meeting, guest speaker Stéphane Perreault will do a PowerPoint presentation (with sound) that focuses on the American Redstart features that will allow us to further appreciate these marvelous birds. The sexual dimorphism, delayed-plumage variation, individual plumage patterns, and songs that can be recognized to the individual bird can provide any of us with more meaningful encounters with this warbler species. All of these will be discussed in the context of the fascinating breeding biology of the American Redstart.

Stéphane studied the American Redstart for 6 years at McGill University, including a Research Masters for which he performed a DNA parentage study. He coauthored scientific papers on the breeding biology of American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, and Eastern and Western Meadowlarks. He has since pursued a career in laboratory testing, but has also been conducting field work and bird surveys for the Islip-based Seatuck Environmental Association since 2016. Stéphane has been an avid birder for 40 years. 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(s) that he and Sy Schiff reviewed in the previous *Skimmer*. This meeting's book is *Bird Migration: The Incredible Journeys of North American Birds* by Stan Tekiela.



NEXT MEETING AFTER NEXT MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, January 14, 2020

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

SPEAKER: Don Riepe

TOPIC: Barn Owls of Jamaica Bay

Located along the Atlantic migratory flyway, Long Island's beaches, estuaries, uplands, and other natural areas provide critical habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife. Despite intensive development over the past 100 years, Jamaica Bay still supports a great diversity of wildlife, including a robust population of Barn Owls. A frequent SSAS guest speaker, Don Riepe has been providing nest boxes and monitoring Jamaica Bay owls for over 30 years. His program will discuss population trends, management issues, and concerns regarding the future of this beautiful raptor in Jamaica Bay and the greater NYC area

Don retired in 2003 from the National Park Service. where he worked as a naturalist ranger and manager of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens. He is currently employed as Jamaica Bay Guardian and Director of the Northeast Chapter for the American Littoral Society. Don has written many articles on natural history subjects and his photographs have been published in many journals including Scientific American, National Wildlife, Audubon, Defenders, Underwater Naturalist, Parade and The New York Times. He has an M.S. in Natural Resources Management from the University of New Hampshire and has taught a course in Wildlife Management at St. John's University. A long-time member of the Port Authority's Bird Hazard Task Force, he also serves on the advisory board of New York City Audubon and is cochair of the Jamaica Bay Task Force. He's featured in the 2017 documentary film, Saving Jamaica Bay, that aired on PBS and can be borrowed from Nassau County libraries.

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.

Joe Landesberg

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 in recent years are at www.ssaudubon.org.

Nov. 24	Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern
	State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
Dec. 1	Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and
	Lido Preserve afterwards)
Dec. 8	Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
Dec. 15	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Dec. 22	Jones Beach Coast Guard Station
Dec. 29	Happy Holidays! — No Walk
Jan. 5	Mill Pond Park (Wantagh/Bellmore, north
	side of Merrick Rd.)
Jan. 12	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Jan. 19	Pelham Bay Park*
Jan. 26	Hempstead Lake State Park (Southern
	State Parkway Exit 18 south, Field #3)
Feb. 2	Point Lookout Town Park, S.E. corner (and
	Lido Preserve afterwards)
Feb. 9	Jones Beach Coast Guard Station

*For Pelham Bay Park (where we hope to see owls): Wear hiking shoes — it's a hilly forest walk to the bay. Take Throgs Neck Bridge to I-695 north to I-95 north. Take I-95 to exit #9, Hutchinson River Parkway north. Take first exit #5, Orchard Beach Rd., go past traffic circle, and continue on Orchard Beach Rd. to end. Turn left on Park Dr. Go past another traffic circle and enter parking lot through toll gates (free); meet at far left corner of parking lot (northeast corner). See www.mappery.com/Pelham-Bay-Park-NYC-Map or Google's map of "Orchard Beach Parking Lot" for reference.

Marilun Hamelz

Join us at the South Shore Audubon Holiday Party for Children with the Tackapausha Museum on December 14 from 1 to 4 P.M. It includes wildlife, nature crafts, and refreshments. This special event is a great time to visit the museum with children. It is also fun for adults.

SSAS will be providing the light refreshments and helping guests make bird feeder nature crafts.

Tackapausha Museum and Preserve is located at 2255 Washington Avenue (between Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway) in Seaford, telephone 571-7443. Admission is \$5 per person (adults & children).

 REVISED NEW YORK STATE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST: HOPE FOR THE THING WITH FEATHERS?

Brien Weiner

Last August, the Trump administration announced new rules that significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act, the nation's bedrock conservation law, making it harder to protect wildlife from the ravages of our climate crisis. The new rules make it easier to remove a species from the endangered list, weaken protections for threatened species (the classification below endangered), and, in a twist that tears the very fabric of the law, allow economic assessments to be conducted when deciding whether a species warrants protection. And in yet another salvo in the administration's campaign of climate change denial, only immediate threats will be considered. The revised rules would clear the way for new mining, oil and gas drilling, and development in areas where protected species live. Environmentalists and 17 State Attorneys General, including New York's Letitia James, immediately challenged the rules.

Fortunately, New York acts as a bulwark against the Trump administration in protecting endangered species as well as in combatting climate change. However, some cracks in that bulwark may be appearing with regulatory changes proposed by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in October "to reduce potential project delays when the species are present in a project area." The changes are designed to expand exemptions from incidental take permits, speed the review process, and avoid imposing regulations on non-cooperating landowners.

In addition to changes in the law, the DEC proposed changes to the list of endangered, threatened, and special concern species (for the first time in 20 years). Some species are getting an overdue boost, while others may not have been boosted enough. The proposed changes to listed birds are as follows:

- ** Add to Threatened: American Three-Toed Woodpecker, Kentucky Warbler, Red Knot (from federally threatened)
 - r, Kentucky Warbler, Red Knot (from federally threatened)

 **Add to Special Concern: Barn Owl, Saltmarsh Sparrow
- Change from Special Concern to Threatened: Black Skimmer, Common Nighthawk, Yellow-Breasted Chat
- Change from Endangered to Special Concern: Peregrine Falcon
- Change from Threatened to Special Concern: Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Pied-billed Grebe
 - Remove from Endangered: Eskimo Curlew (now extinct)
- Remove from Special Concern: Cooper's Hawk, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk

One takeaway from the proposed changes is that many of New York's raptors are recovering. Especially notable are the Peregrine Falcon and Osprey, which have recovered from DDT, and the Bald Eagle, which declined to one breeding pair in 1973 and now numbers over 390

breeding pairs nesting in every region of the state. These success stories prove that the protections provided by the Endangered Species List can work, which makes it all the more curious why other declining species are not assigned classifications to match their risk. A glaring example of this is the Saltmarsh Sparrow, which is declining at a rate of 9% per year, and whose habitat faces multiple threats from development, mercury contamination, storms, flooding, and sea level rise. We have seen the evidence of these threats at our own Marine Nature Study Area in Oceanside. Extinction is predicted in about 50 years; this warrants a classification of at least threatened.

Other at-risk and declining species remain at the same level of classification. The Golden-winged Warbler remains at special concern despite the DEC's own assessment that "populations in the Northeast have declined severely over the past 40 years" and Breeding Bird Atlas data for New York "show a 53% decline in occupancy from 1980–85 to 2000–05. The Golden-winged Warbler (pictured, © Sue deLearie Adair) is most seriously threat-

ened by competition and hybridization with the Blue-winged Warbler. Reversion and conversion of early successional habitats to more mature forest types and de-



veloped habitats are also major threats." Again, the protections of a threatened species are required.

According to Audubon's recently issued Survival by Degrees report (www.audubon.org/climate/survival-bydegrees), 54 New York State bird species are highly vulnerable to extinction from climate change and eleven of these species occur in Nassau County: Eastern Whippoor-will, Piping Plover, Fish Crow, Wood Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Boat-tailed Grackle, Worm-eating Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. The Piping Plover and Boat-tailed Grackle could experience catastrophic habitat loss from sea-level rise. Of the 11 species, currently only the Piping Plover is state listed as endangered and the Eastern Whip-poor-will as special concern. The New York State Endangered Species List will need to accommodate many more birds in the near future.

The proposed new list is available on the DEC website at https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/34113.html. Comments can be submitted until January 24 by e-mail to: wildliferegs@dec.ny.gov with "Endangered Species List" in the subject line or by mail to: Joe Racette, NYS-DEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754. SSAS will be submitting comments and working with our state office, Audubon New York, to compile data in support of greater protections for vulnerable species. If you have concerns about listed or unlisted species, and/or observations or data to support changes in listing, please contact me at brien.weiner@gmail.com or 516-220-7121. To save our birds as our world warms, we must think and act both globally and locally.

As Emily Dickinson observed over a century ago:

I've heard it in the chillest land —

And on the strangest Sea —

Yet — never — in Extremity,

It asked a crumb — of me.

We owe our birds so much more than crumbs.

32ND ANNUAL WATERFOWL SURVEY

Bill Belford

Our waterfowl survey dates for the 2019–2020 season are **Saturdays**, **December 7**, **January 11**, **February 8 & 29**, and **March 28**. Our group visits the various ponds in southern Nassau County from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park. Volunteers can help out for a few hours or the whole day. Call Bill Belford at 385-1759 for more information and/or to volunteer.



SSAS EXHIBITS - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Marilyn Hamelz

South Shore Audubon has displays in an outdoor kiosk at Hempstead Lake State Park, on the walls during our general meetings, at conferences, and at libraries, and we have wonderful photographers with photos to share. If you would like to help with these or other displays at public locations, please contact me at mwhametz@ optonline.net.

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Phone: (516) 931-1445 Fax: (516) 931-1467

E-Mail: lenny@konskerandcompany.com

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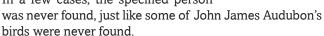
BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

Sy Schiff

Whose Bird? Common Bird Names and the People They Commemorate by Bo Beolens and Michael Watkins contains an alphabetical list of the people, with their biographies, who have had birds named after them. There are about 10,000 birds in the world, not all named for people and only 1,000 of them in the United States. So, many of the people covered here are probably not known or familiar to us.

This book covers the common names of the birds, their variants, named subspecies, and earlier names. So, the aggregate potential list is much larger. The names used for the birds come from the original collector, the original describer of the bird, relatives and friends of the above, or famous people. It's confined to common names

although scientific names are part of the biographical sketches. The index is on the scientific name only. A lot of research went into finding who these people were. In some cases more than one person with the same name occurs and the details need separation. In a few cases, the specified person



Taxonomy has brought great changes. Also, research has brought clarification. Former described birds have become subspecies, subspecies have become species, and birds became different species. Where this has occurred, alternative names appear below the original name. This happens a great deal. Examples, for instance: LeConte's Thrasher and LeConte's Sparrow were named after two different contemporary cousins by two different describers. Wurdermann's Heron was first described in 1858; it's now considered a hybrid of the Great Blue Heron and its white form. Its alternative name is listed as Great Blue Heron, the more common form. Where there are hybrids, only one parent is listed, as for Lawrence's Warbler.

Fifteen species are named after Brian Houghton Hodgson, a prodigious Indian collector in the early 1800s working as an official for the East India Company; 12 have alternative names. The 1800s were a great period of exploration of the Asian, Australian, and African continents by European explorers, natural history establishments, amateur naturalists, military men, employees working in foreign locations, and physicians attached to various enterprises. Birding was done via shotgun, and skins were collected and sent off to experts or museums to identify and classify them. Everything was new. So we have a lot of foreign (to us) names of individuals not otherwise heard of as they covered the world.

The real interest in the book is not only who these people were, but what they were doing and where they were. Not all were off in the wilds and not all had anything to do with birds. Where did the bird that was named after them came from and how it came to be named makes an interesting read. The book can be off-setting since so much covers nonnative fauna and unheard-of people. However, it's the ultimate bird trivia source. You don't read this book; you jump around and keep finding new facts.

FREEPORT LIBRARY'S NEWEST NATURE BOOKS FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Editor's note: In October we received the following letter from library director Ken Bellafiore regarding our annual donation: "On behalf of the Freeport Memorial Library, I would like to thank you and the members of the South Shore Audubon Society for your generous donation of \$500. As you suggested, the funds will be used to increase our collection of nature-oriented books. All materials purchased will have a bookplate added as a note of thanks. The books that have been purchased are listed below."

- - A seed is the start by Melissa Stewart
 - The Nature Craft Book by Clare Beaton
 - Trees, Leaves, Flowers & Seeds by Smithsonian
- - Forest Talk: How Trees Communicate by Melissa Koch
- ₩ Wild Moms: Motherhood in the Animal Kingdom by Dr. Carin Bonder
 - Growing Your Own Tea Garden by Jodi Helmer
- Grow your own Herbs by Susan Belsinger & Arthur O. Tucker
 - ✓ In Oceans Deep by Bill Streever
 - Ground Rules by Kate Frey
 - → A Wilder Time by William E. Glassley
- The Tangled Tree by David Quammen [the author, coincidentally, is this year's recipient of the Audubon New York Award for Environmental Writing ed.]
 - 🤝 Historias secretas de los Árboles by Noel Kingsbury
 - Creating Sanctuary by Jessi Bloom
- The Birds at My Table: Why We Feed Wild Birds and Why It Matters by Darryl Jones
 - Our Native Bees by Paige Embry

You can use encore.alisweb.org to request that any of these books be reserved for you at your own library via an interlibrary loan.

SCOBE SQUAWKS Franklin Versus Franklin

Frank Scoblete

This information may be apocryphal but so what? Apocryphal stories can be fascinating. A biblical apocryphal story titled "The Wisdom of Solomon" has the author (the smartest man of all time!) caution men not to marry more than one wife, as the anger and conflicts caused by those backbiting women couldn't be contained.

Ben Franklin and his illegitimate son William Franklin were close for a while, but when the Revolutionary War was brewing, William was a "loyalist" to the British, while Ben supported the revolution. That didn't enhance their relationship.

William and Ben also disputed which language should be used by Americans; it was a toss-up between German and English. The Germans dominated the northern populace throughout the early days and they were the first of the hated immigrants. Ben wanted people to speak only English, while William leaned towards German. That didn't enhance their relationship either.

But their big blowout came about because of a bird or, rather, two birds — the Bald Eagle and the Wild Turkey. There was a big debate flaring in the colonies as to which bird should be their emblem and, later on, the emblem of the United States.

William championed the Bald Eagle because he and his supporters thought the bird was regal and a true monarch of the air. Ben advocated the Wild Turkey because it was combative and didn't take any guff from other birds or people. It also tasted a lot better than the Bald Eagle. Perhaps Ben liked the Wild Turkey because it was quite promiscuous, enjoying the intimate company of as many lady turkeys as it could.

To this day Americans love turkey, consuming over 750 million pounds of it, according to the University of Illinois Extension.

William's predilection for the regality of the Bald Eagle probably came from his love of the British crown and royalty in general. Although not as promiscuous as his father, William did sire his own illegitimate son, much like Ben and King Solomon.

A close look at the Bald Eagle will reveal that although it does nail fish and small varmints, it will also chow down on carrion. So it isn't as regal as William at first thought. Still, unlike the turkey, the Bald Eagle does not make a habit of attacking people. It's generally a loner, while the Wild Turkey prefers gang colors.

Father/son relationships can be fraught with difficulties, as many of you know; just look at Luke Skywalker and his dear old dad, Darth Vader. That relationship cost Luke an arm, although I actually prefer the leg (of a turkey that is).

Visit Frank's web site at www.frankscoblete.com. His books are available from smile.amazon.com (where you can support SSAS), barnesandnoble.com, as e-books, and in bookstores.

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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 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:

Our new members since the last <i>skimmer</i> are:		
Baldwin Barbara Myers, John Stahl		
BellmoreRoland Graham		
East Meadow Joan Capuano, John Linahan, Lewis		
Zimmerman		
East Rockaway Leland Jacob, Joseph Kelberman		
Farmingdale Bob Dackow, Miriam Giotta, Albert Haller		
Floral Park Diana Gerasimovich, Barbara R. Stones		
Garden City Anne Goldman		
Hempstead Richard Spencer		
Hewlett Ed Abrevaya		
Levittown Katherine Darr		
Lynbrook Barbara Andrzejewski, Dan & Carol Donaldson,		
Joseph Emmett, Sadiah Mohammed		
Massapequa Jo-Ann Fuina, Jean Kohler		
Merrick Priscilla Billig, Kenneth Krill, Edward Morrison		
Plainview David H. Diamond		
Rockville Centre Thomas F. Beck		
Roosevelt Anali Zapata		
Seaford Mary Bartolotta		
Valley Stream Joseph Malone, Jennie Richichi		

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.

DISCOUNTED AUDUBON CALENDARS AVAILABLE FROM SSAS

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At our walks and meetings we'll be selling Audubon calendars at a bargain price of \$11 apiece and two for \$20.

The Songbirds and Other Backyard Birds Picture-a-Day Wall Calendar (list price \$15.99) features a photograph and related text at the top, plus smaller images throughout the tall grid. Samples of its 28 pages are at https://www.pageaday.com/brands/audubon.

This year, the other calendar we're offering is the Birds in the Garden Wall Calendar (list price \$14.99), "with Audubon's tips for attracting more birds to your back-yard."

SYSTEM CHANGE, NOT CLIMATE CHANGE!

Jim Brown

On November 4, the Trump administration officially put the U.S. on track to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. Official notice was sent to the United Nations that our nation will no longer remain a signatory to this treaty aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions to fight climate change. Under the conditions of the treaty, no nation could officially give notice to leave the agreement for three years and then there would be a one-year waiting period until final withdrawal took effect. The Trump administration gave official notice of its intent on the first day possible, exactly three years following the adoption of the agreement on November 4, 2016. The United States will no longer be a treaty signatory on November 4, 2020. And what are the reasons given for leaving? Our government and its backers believe that policies such as engaging in rigorous lowering of emissions by investing in renewable energy, halting investments in fossil fuel infrastructure, and improving fuel efficiency standards of motor vehicles are bad for America. Fighting climate change in a serious way is thought to lessen our global competitiveness and limit our national economic prosperity. Behind this is either a denial of the reality of climate change or perhaps the cynical view that money is still to be made from fossil fuels, and as the world warms and then burns, a rich nation like ours will surely be able to weather the crisis.

The views of the current national administration are indeed extreme but the views of our prior governments were also far too sanguine regarding our responses to the climate emergency we have been facing for years. The U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that the nations of the world must soon, by 2030, make transformative social, economic, and political changes in order to confront climate realities. Not doing so will result in catastrophic warming and a diminished existence for all of us — for the humanity and wildlife that remain. Large areas of the world are on the path to becoming totally unlivable for human beings — islands and coasts are becoming submerged and current desert areas are heating up far beyond survivable temperatures.

Addressing impacts on birds, a recent report by National Audubon, "Survival by Degrees," predicts that "twothirds of North American Birds studied — 389 out of 604 species — may face unlivable climate conditions across most of their current ranges by 2080 if global temperatures remain on track to rise by 3°C (5.4°F)." The fight against the ravages of climate chaos requires an international response. A nation such as our own cannot expect that its wealth will protect us from the impacts of a warming planet. The U.S. and industrialized nations of Europe may be able to afford to better mitigate damage than the poorer countries of the Global South. New York City,

for example, may survive with flood gates and seawalls (though worsening the plight of adjoining Long Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut). Countries such as Bangladesh and Indonesia will be hard pressed to do likewise. Already, huge areas of Bangladesh are experiencing catastrophic flooding. Indonesia is planning to move its capital from Jakarta, on the island of Java, to a safer spot on

Borneo. Jakarta, with a population of over 10 million people, is sinking at the rate of almost 7 inches per year, partly due to sea level rise. Climate-change induced drought is a factor causing Central Americans to migrate to the U.S. border from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These climate-

vulnerable nations simply do not have the resources to adequately address and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change. The number of "climate refugees" throughout the world will only increase, along with social conflict and even wars, unless, as the IPCC recommends, transformative changes are instituted worldwide.

The technological means to combat climate change are known and the goals of quickly and drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reaching 100% renewable energy utilization are indeed achievable. It is technically possible to transform our energy sources to limit global warming to the 1.5°C (2.7°F) by 2030 specified by the IPCC. What is uncertain is the ability to rapidly transform our social, political, and economic systems — at all levels, from the international to the local — to enable the achievement of that goal.

The power of fossil fuel companies must be drastically curtailed. These powerful corporations seek profits and their behavior is mostly dictated by short-term financial considerations. Planning for a future without fossil fuels and a just transition to renewable energy sources - a transition benefitting displaced workers and communities most harmed by environmental degradation — must be instituted at all levels. Leaving international treaties such as the Paris Climate Agreement is extremely unhelpful. Honoring international treaties on climate should be a required routine, and ongoing and close international cooperation to fight climate change is essential. Another systemic change that is essential is the necessity of transferring wealth from the nations historically responsible for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions to the climate-vulnerable Global South. Not only is this an ethical imperative, but if not seriously undertaken. will undoubtedly create untold disruptions and crises that will affect us all. These are big changes, but the planet requires them!

Editor's note: On June 2, 2017 (a day after the Trump administration first announced its intentions), Audubon President and CEO David Yarnold said, "Scrapping the Paris Climate Agreement is an abdication of American leadership in the fight against the biggest threat facing people and birds."

MILL POND PARK FISH LADDER One Small Step for a Fish, One Giant Leap for an Ecosystem

Brien Weiner

With development threatening many SSAS bird walk sites — namely Hempstead Lake State Park, Jones Beach State Park, Massapequa Preserve, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Alley Pond Park (see the September *Skimmer*) — it is a pleasure to be able to write about a potentially positive development at another of our sites, Mill Pond Park. The Seatuck Environmental Association received a grant of \$100,500 from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop a shovel-ready design for fish passage for Bellmore Creek's primary, head-of-tide barrier at Mill Pond Park, thereby improving the ecosystem and habitat for both fish and birds. The steering committee for the project includes SSAS as well as other environmental organizations, civic groups, and DEC and Town of Hempstead conservation staff.

Throughout the Long Island estuary, fish ladders are enabling native diadromous fish (fish that divide their life cycles between fresh water and salt water), such as river herring (alewife and blueback herring) and American eel (pictured), to repopulate our streams. Their populations



declined as dams and culverts for residential and commercial development impeded their mi-

gration. The decline of these fish as forage for other species reverberates along the entire food chain. With the aid of fish ladders, we can restore healthy ecosystems to estuarine, freshwater, and upland habitats. Bellmore Creek is one of only two-dozen streams on Long Island where remnant runs of river herring still exist. Access to the 15-acre Mill Pond would provide vital freshwater spawning habitat for river herring.

Ideally, dam removal is the preferred method of reconnecting tributaries because it allows not only greater access for fish, but also transport of sediment downstream so that salt marshes can keep up with sea level rise. Many dams no longer serve their original purpose and require costly maintenance. Dams create the conditions under which debris accumulates and invasive aquatic vegetation thrives, both of which become costly to remove, as is the case at Mill Pond. The possibility of removing the Mill Pond dam will be explored as part of Seatuck's project. When dams are removed, wetlands form rapidly and serve to mitigate flooding. Mill Pond provides valuable habitat for wintering waterfowl, and there is a growing movement that recognizes the necessity of wildlife corridors if species are to survive. Given limited space, however, Mill Pond Park is a good candidate for a fish ladder; river herring were discovered in Bellmore Creek in 2015 and 408 were counted in 2019, but estimates reach 1000.

Fish ladders generally fall into three categories. Pooland-weir fish ladders feature a series of pools separated by

overflow weirs that break the total flow of the impoundment into discrete passable increments. Baffle-based fish ladders use baffles to dissipate the speed of water flowing through a flume to create a low-velocity zone of passage for migratory fish; an example is the fishway at Massapequa Lake. Nature-like fish ladders mimic natural streams, using boulders, cobble, and other natural materials to create appropriate hydraulic conditions for multiple species, including fish; they require more space than is available at Mill Pond Park.

As for the birds, Ospreys return to Long Island as river herring move into the estuary and streams. Herons and egrets congregate around fish ladders, sometimes to the point that ladders need to be covered with nets so that the birds do not pick off all the fish. The addition of a fish ladder to Mill Pond Park should provide SSAS with productive bird walks and opportunities to engage community scientists and local students in surveys and stewardship. For more information, see https://www.seatuck.org/images/PDF/Seatuck_RestorationStrategy_v12.pdf.

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.

DRIVE-THROUGH HOLIDAY LIGHTS AT JONES BEACH

Mike Sperling

Jones Beach State Park's West End, unfortunately, will yet again be used for a "Magic of Lights" show. SSAS has strongly opposed the light shows throughout their on-again, off-again history, except when it was briefly relocated to the Jones Beach Theater's parking field. If you're wondering why, go to the West End in the daytime and look at the dozens of tall displays along more than a

mile of the West End's main road, the diagonal wires that prevent them from toppling over, and the electric cables that connect them to big transformers. Try to picture motor vehicles inching through the show every night from 5 P.M. until 10 or 11 P.M. for 44 days, dripping toxic fluids

and polluting the air as they go. If you see broken bulbs on the ground, other debris, or a dead bird, please send us photos. New York should be celebrating the holiday season without commercializing a designated Important Bird Area. The primary sponsors are New York Community Bank, Toyota, and OK Petroleum; write to them if you're one of their customers.

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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2019-2020 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND **COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Michael Sperling, President & Skimmer Editor 221-3921
Brien Weiner, VP & Conservation Co-Chair220-7121
Joe Landesberg, Treasurer & Field Trips 536-4808
Alene Scoblete, Recording Secretary 596-3239
Guy Jacob, Director (6/22) 312-3348
Richard Kopsco, Dir. (6/22) & Brookside Preserve 825-6792
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