

# SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 51, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAY-AUGUST 2021

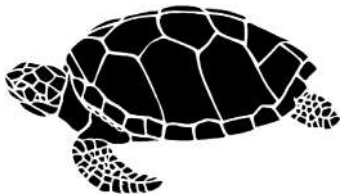
## NEXT MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
TIME: 7:30 P.M.  
PLACE: ONLINE  
SPEAKER: John Turner  
TOPIC: The Diamondback Terrapin:  
The Turtle with the Clown Lips

In May, our iconic diamondback terrapins emerge from their overwintering sites in the bottoms of harbors and bays. Join us to learn about the biology and ecology of the species and what we can do to protect it here on Long Island.

John is Seatuck Environmental Association's Conservation Policy Advocate and Four Harbor Audubon Society's Conservation Chair, and he was a co-founder of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society. His long career included serving as Director of Conservation Programs for the Long Island Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, as Director of the Division of Environmental Protection for the Town of Brookhaven, and in legislative positions with the New York State Senate and Assembly.

The Zoom meeting invitation will be posted on our website and Facebook page.



*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 to preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.*

## WATERFOWL ABANDONMENT: AN ANTHROPOGENIC DISASTER FOR NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE BIRDS ALIKE

*John Di Leonardo*

Every year, hundreds -- if not thousands -- of domestic ducks and geese are cruelly and illegally abandoned to the wild on Long Island, often following school hatching projects or Easter photoshoots. Now that many schools are going virtual and gatherings are limited, you might think this wouldn't be an issue during a pandemic, but suburbanites have found new reasons to purchase and abandon these animals. Citing an egg shortage, some are "panic buying" baby birds like they did toilet paper, not realizing that ducklings won't be mature enough to lay eggs for six months after purchase. Others say they thought the birds would break the monotony of isolation, but with many people going back to work, they can no longer give these animals the care they need.

It's a huge problem, and the impact on local ecosystems is serious. In 2020 alone, my organization Long Island Orchestrating for Nature (LION) rescued more than one hundred domestic ducks abandoned in the Town of Hempstead, despite fowl keeping being illegal in the municipality -- as it is in all Nassau municipalities without special exception from a Town Board. Many of these birds were sick and injured, with broken or deformed legs and wings. They suffered from frostbite, fungal and bacterial infections, and were riddled with parasites. This is not only tragic for the birds, it can also be disastrous for ecosystems.

Just like our companion and farmed animals, ducks and geese were domesticated by humans thousands of years ago. Years of selective breeding have produced animals vastly different from their wild counterparts, both physiologically and psychologically, just like dogs and wolves. Domestic waterfowl depend entirely upon the care of humans to survive. Bred for either egg or meat production, they have large bodies and small wings, rendering them flightless and unable



**SHOREBIRD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

The Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways needs your help to protect Piping Plovers, Least and Common Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers that nest between Point Lookout and Atlantic Beach. Volunteers will help prevent disturbances to nesting areas, and record the presence of Piping Plover chicks and any incidents of predation. Volunteers can also educate beachgoers on sharing the shore. Help is particularly needed on evenings, weekends, and holidays from May through August. If you are interested and can volunteer regularly, call John Zarudsky, Conservation Biologist, at 516-486-5272.

This is an excellent opportunity to observe the many personalities and daily dramas of our beach-nesting birds, and to see rare terns and sandpipers on migration, with occasional sightings of dolphins and whales -- all while social distancing.

A recent study by Audubon's Science team looked at nearly 400 sites where Audubon stewarded birds on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, including Piping Plovers, Least Terns, and Black Skimmers. The authors found that the populations of these vulnerable coastal birds grew 2 to 34 times faster at stewardship sites, compared to birds in protected areas without known stewardship. Volunteer and make a difference!



\*\*\*\*\*  
**MICHAEL SPERLING MEMORIAL**

SSAS created the Michael Sperling Bird Sanctuary by converting a Nassau County Stormwater Basin into a living tribute of native plants and wildlife habitat to honor our treasured President, Michael Sperling, who passed on February 5, 2020. We thank those who have generously contributed to his Memorial Fund. If you would like to make a donation to help us with the Sanctuary and similar projects, please make out your check to South Shore Audubon Society and write Michael Sperling Memorial Fund on the memo line. Mail your check to P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so your donation is fully tax deductible.

To learn more about Mike and the Sanctuary, and to see photos, videos, and a complete plant list, visit <https://smpilconsulting.com/the-michael-sperling-memorial-bird-sanctuary/>. The webpage will be updated to include a short film about the Sanctuary, information about Sanctuary events, and spring photos.

**CREATE YOUR OWN BACKYARD BIRD SANCTUARY (AND HELP SSAS)**

SSAS is delighted to announce an exciting partnership with the up-and-coming restoration contractor and design firm Spadefoot Design and Construction, LLC. Spadefoot helped us create the Michael Sperling Bird Sanctuary and we are now offering to restore bird habitat in your own backyard! Imagine birding while sipping your morning coffee in the comfort of your own home. Spadefoot Design and Construction will generously work free of cost for any of our supporters who donate \$200 or more to SSAS. Included in this gift are an individualized design consultation, a visual rendering, and a plant list to create your at-home bird sanctuary. Further, your contribution will be earmarked for future restoration projects and maintenance of the Michael Sperling Bird Sanctuary. Visit <https://www.spadefootny.com> or call (516) 225-8545.

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**JOIN US IN THE TACKAPAUSHA GARDEN**  
*Louise DeCesare*

Welcome again to our new season at the native garden at Tackapausha Museum Preserve at 2225 Washington Avenue Seaford (next to the Stop & Shop on Merrick Road). We meet the first Saturday morning and third Tuesday afternoon of every month. Hours may vary to avoid summer heat and will be posted on the SSAS Facebook page and by email.

You will be alerted to cancellations (rain or other conditions), by email as soon as we know. If the weather is bad, it is likely we will not meet, and you will be informed. Please share your telephone number as an additional contact to make sure we can reach you.

Last year we had some newcomers, and we also look forward to seeing some old faces joining us for this new season! We are still observing the same Covid protocols for safe gardening -- masks, 6-foot working distance, and individual areas to work. If you feel ill or have been around anyone who has tested positive for Covid, we ask that you stay home and stay safe. Everyone should bring his or her own garden tools. We have bags but if you have buckets, knee pads, and/or garden stools, they are helpful when working! Be mindful of the sun and bring sunblock, sunglasses, a hat to cover yourself, and some water.

We welcome everyone to "drop in," even if you only have an hour or so to help out. If you know you will definitely be coming, please send me a quick RSVP at [Lmdecasare128@gmail.com](mailto:Lmdecasare128@gmail.com) or call (917) 548-6974, so we can better plan our gardening activities. Otherwise, just come if you find you have the time!

To learn more about the native plants in the Tackapausha garden and how to grow them, there is a print-





# JERRY BISHOP ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Betty Borowsky and Betsy Gulotta

Sponsored by SSAS, two \$1000 scholarships are offered to college juniors or seniors or graduate students earning a degree in the areas of biological or environmental science. To receive an application, contact Professor Gulotta at Betsy.Gulotta@ncc.edu or download one from <http://www.ssaudubon.org/bishop-scholarship>. Applications are due by April 30, 2021.



## LEAD YOUR CHAPTER!

Any member in good standing may suggest candidates for officers and directors for the 2021-2022 term, which will start in June 2021. We are still looking for a President and new voices. If you are interested in helping to lead SSAS, or have a special skill to contribute, please contact Nominating Committee members Betty Borowsky (764-3596), Gail Brown (608-1446), or Wendy Murbach (546-6303).



VOLUNTEERS FOR WILDLIFE (516) 674-0982



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OUR WEBSITE <http://www.ssaudubon.org>



OUR E-LIST [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas\\_list](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list) is no longer available.

Yahoo ended all Groups on December 15, 2020.



Phone: (516) 931-1445

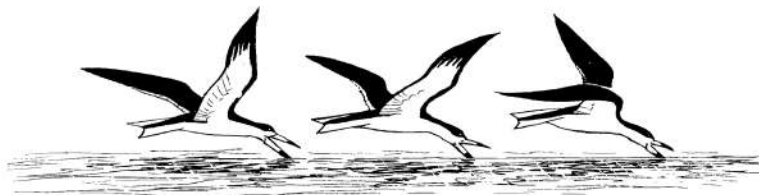
Fax: (516) 931-1467

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## COMMUNITY BAG DONATION

SSAS has been selected as the beneficiary of the @StopandShop Community Bag Program! Each time the \$2.50 reusable bag is purchased at the Stop & Shop at 460 Franklin Avenue in Franklin Square during the month of May, we will receive a \$1 donation. After May, we can still receive a \$1 donation if customers specify South Shore Audubon on the Giving Tag.



## AmazonSmile and SSAS

SSAS is registered with AmazonSmile, where Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to charities selected by customers. Prices are the same as at the main Amazon site, so if you're an Amazon customer, please support us via <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7300504>.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

- Peter and Dorothea Bruno
- Michael Devlin
- Maureen Hogan
- Diana Ihmann
- Steven Kalka
- Charles and Joan Kemnitzer
- Miguel and Abby Melendez
- John and Jane Moore
- Dolores Rogers
- Carol Scheuer
- Cathy Wellikoff
- Dorothy Zondag

## SCOBE SQUAWKS

*Frank Scoblete*

### The Meaning of Cardinals

People are always looking for the meaning of life.

Indeed, people are usually looking for the meaning of everything. Brilliant people such as Einstein and Stephen Hawking are looking; stupid people such as conspiracy theorists are also looking. Conspiracy theorists think they have found it in some powerful plotting person or some powerful plotting group of people.

I'm looking too. I am looking and I have been looking since I was 17 years old, which was long, long ago. Have I found it? No.

Many people have looked to birds to find such meaning. Birds fly not only in the sky but in our dreams, fantasies, and desires. In our fears too. Many human beings look to birds for omens and information about everyday things.

We all know the dire meaning from the arrival of a Blackbird, Raven, or Crow into our lives. In short, make sure you have your funeral expenses paid for yourself and perhaps for grandma, if you see one of these birds.

In stories, poems, and friendly gossip, you can see the strength of the bird superstition in the world from the distant past right up until the present; when your neighbor found one of those black birds dead on his stoop, that could be a frightening moment. Much of bird mythology is upsetting but some bird myths are quite nice.

Many religious Christians love the story of the White Dove descending above Jesus' head as a symbol of peace between God and man. In Judaism, the Eagle protecting her young was a symbol of God's love and protection of his people.

While the Owl is often thought as the symbol for wisdom, it is also associated with the evils of ancient witchcraft. It was also associated with the devil. I love Owls so I am a little afraid of throwing my lot with them.

My favorite small bird is the colorful Cardinal, a family of which resides in the bushes in my Japanese garden. I see them every day, even in the coldest winters.

There is a strong myth connecting Cardinals and death -- a good myth thank heavens, because it's bad enough that I love Owls. I don't want to become too popular with Satan.

If someone you loved, admired, or simply liked recently passed away, the visitation of a Cardinal is thought not only to symbolize that person, but for many believers it is thought to be a short-term reincarnation of that deceased person, sending the message that he or she is all right and is thinking about you.



I do not know how many birders believe any of these myths, but the good myths, meaning the ones that are uplifting as opposed to horrifying, could be comforting for them.

My Cardinals visit me every day. At this stage of my life, I have many relatives, friends, and acquaintances who have passed on. Maybe all those visits are in fact loving messages for me.

### Scobe's Yay or Nay

This is my "review" section where I will publicly take a look at various things that I usually take a look at without telling anyone I have taken a look at them. These can be books, articles, documentaries, short stories, or films.

Today, most people, including birders, have wider tastes than in the past. In fact, our tastes have become so wide that we, as a population, have become rather wide too, but that's probably from addictive junk food.

Yay stands for good. Nay stands for not-so-good.

So today I wish to inform you of a television show titled Zoo based on a James Patterson novel titled Zoo. I like science fiction and even before our Covid-19 pandemic I would read novels and watch movies about pandemics. Of course, my intelligent and insightful self never thought any of that nonsense would actually happen in real life.

The premise of Zoo is terrific. The animals, including all the birds, decide to kill all the human beings on earth. Correct. Little Chihuahua from down the block wants to eat your face off. (Actually, I think all those barking, scratching annoyances want to do that anyway.) Hummingbirds would go for the eyes, of course.

The first season was a Yay. The leader of the human group was a pretty blonde French woman with a normal face. They killed her off quickly and introduced a new attractive woman in the second season. Then, as the show progressed, something really weird happened. The lips of all the women on the show went from normal, to puffy, to puffier, to puffiest. From normal to pouty to poutier, to poutiest. Just like that!

Those of you old enough might remember those huge red wax lips from long ago. Like that. Some producer or director or who knows who must have told the actresses that the men who watch the show really like puffiest, poutiest lips. And so puffiest and poutiest they became.

It got to the point where I was constantly shouting out to my wife, the Beautiful AP, "Oh, God, they puffed up the lips of another actress! Her lips look closer to the Blob than to a human!"

It got to the point where I lost track of the story line. Birds attacking people? Who knows? I couldn't follow the story, I could only follow the lips.

Finally, my wife came into the room, put her hand on my shoulder, and said, “This show is driving you crazy. Stop watching it. Read a book about a pandemic or something.”

I stopped watching it. Yet my sleep has now been disturbed by lip-mares.

The Zoo deserves a huge, lip-glossed Nay!

Frank Scoblete’s web site is [www.frankscoblete.com](http://www.frankscoblete.com). His books are available from [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) (where you can support SSAS), Barnes and Noble, Kindle, eBooks and at bookstores. If you want to comment about something you have seen just send Frank an email at [fscobe@optonline.net](mailto:fscobe@optonline.net) and vote Yay or Nay.

**SSAS MEMBER ALERT:  
NEW MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE**

All SSAS-only members will renew their membership in September. National Audubon Society members will need to check their renewal date and renew directly through NAS.

**NAT'L AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (844) 428-3826  
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 to our next online meeting from 7:30–9:00 P.M., normally 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.

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..... Anthony & Annmarie Deluca, Michael Devlin
- Bellmore ..... Steven Biegler, Angela Martin, Kim Musgrove
- Bethpage..... Paul Kelly
- Cedarhurst..... Frank Rizzo
- East Meadow..... Joy Brann, Harvey Fischer, John A. Rodger Jr. Foundation
- East Rockaway..... Julia Romano
- Elmont ..... Michael Gerbasi

- Farmingdale..... Daniel Looney, Seth Socolow
- Floral Park ..... Nam Forster, Sara-Jane Kintzer, John O’Connell, Francine Yesner
- Franklin Square ..... Mary Conlin
- Freeport..... Richard Holdsworth, Regina McEwen, Helga Wright
- Garden City ..... Sue Davis, Grace Charitable Foundation
- Hewlett ..... Eddy Abrevaya
- Hicksville ..... Rosemary Cuccaro, Charles Gornell, Amber Krauss
- Island Park..... Edward Fale, Sally Wolff
- Levittown..... Gasper & Teresa Scaturro
- Lido Beach ..... Carolyn Olson, Susan Russo
- Long Beach ..... Carol Alpern, John Broderick, Matthew Scaglione
- Lynbrook..... Annette Monzert
- Malverne..... Miguel Cane, Philip & Kathleen Fracassa, Alene Scoblete
- Massapequa..... Kenneth Addy, James Burke, April Maffeo, Kristin Mancuso, Karen Maul
- Massapequa Park ..... Constance Diamond, Mary Cramsie, Caitlyn Heaney, Clare Kaiser
- Merrick ..... Sharon Cordova, Jeffrey & Felise Fox, Linda Gornell, Harriet Jonquiere, Linda Krisch, David McDonough
- Oceanside ..... Anu Kikas, Angela O’Brien
- Plainview ..... Devang Jai
- Rockville Centre ..... Carol Eisenberg, Jill Hissong, Julia Anne Merker, John Morahan
- Seaford..... Louise Beckert, Rita Pumpurs
- Valley Stream..... Norma Brown, Sharon Kugler, Mohammad Sajid, Raoul & Joan Vergosen
- Wantagh..... Arthur Miller, John Pierce
- West Hempstead..... Judy Clark

**DON’T SHOOT BIRDS AT CLOSE RANGE!**

As nesting season provides wondrous opportunities to observe and photograph birds, it is incumbent upon us to respect their space and follow ethical bird photography guidelines: see <https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography>.

**MAY IS WETLANDS MONTH**

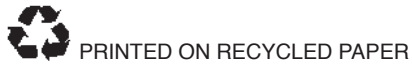
Wetlands provide habitat for birds and protect us from storms. Unfortunately, our coastal marshes are being impacted by habitat fragmentation, rising sea levels, and human development. Audubon New York is restoring wetlands at Idlewild Park, Mastic Beach and Sunken Meadow. To read more, see <https://ny.audubon.org/conservation/long-island-sound-area-salt-marsh-projects-aim-create-more-resilient-coastline>. Tell your elected officials to support funding and fast action to save our coastal marshes!



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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

*Americans Committed to Conservation*



**DATED MATERIAL**

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& COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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Jim Brown, VP & Conservation Co-Chair .....	608-1446
Joe Landesberg, Treasurer & Field Trips .....	536-4808
Mike Zito, Recording Secretary .....	507-9419
Paul Andersen, Director & Programs .....	504-8711
Betty Belford, Director .....	385-1759
Bill Belford, Director & Information and Research .....	385-1759
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Wendy Murbach, Director & Membership .....	546-6303
Dolores Rogers, Director & Welcoming .....	426-9012g

**BECOME A MEMBER OF SSAS**  
**Think Globally, but Join Locally!**

Option 1. You can join SSAS for a year by sending \$20 payable to South Shore Audubon Society using the form below. Our address is P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

Option 2. To join NAS and your all-volunteer local chapter, you can help SSAS by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS (we get \$0 from these dues unless you join through us). Mail the form below and your check payable to National Audubon Society to SSAS at the address above. The special rate for the first year is \$20 per household.

Renewing? Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS.

Donations to SSAS are always welcome! \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I'd like to join:  SSAS only  National Audubon too

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Zip+4)

PHONE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Code R15 (South Shore Audubon Society)