



What (Not) to Do When You Find a Baby Bird

by Frank Scoblete

We members of the South Shore Audubon Society (SSAS) were tromping through the brush at Hempstead Lake State Park when I saw it on an adjacent path. "Look," I said. "A baby bird on the path!"

I looked at that helpless creature and realized there are few things in nature as helpless as a helpless young bird.

"Should one of us take it home and care for it until it's ready to fly free again?" I asked. I was new to birding then and a chorus of voices sang out, "Nooooo!"

The fledgling—an adolescent bird first leaving the nest—should be "active and alert, feathered on their backs and bellies, have stubby tails and should be able to hop when approached," said Lauren Schulz, Director of Rehabilitation & Operations, Volunteers for Wildlife, Inc. "It can be difficult for an untrained person to distinguish a fledgling from an injured adult bird.

"We always recommend taking a photo of the bird and calling our hotline at 516-674-0982 so that we may identify the bird for you."

What do we do, however, if we encounter an even younger bird—a nestling—that has fallen from the nest? Isabel Fernandes, Co-Director of Tackapausha Museum & Preserve, says, "Do not try to raise a baby bird. The best thing would be to renest it. Birds don't have a well-developed sense of smell and will not abandon their young if those nestlings smell like humans."

Fernandes related a story of a girl who found a nestling on the ground. She couldn't locate the bird's nest and called for guidance. Isabel "instructed her how to use a plant hanging basket as a new nest for the Mourning Dove. Later that day, the parent bird was seen taking care of its baby."

Both Schulz and Fernandes agree that when encountering a fallen

and/or injured bird, we should first reach out to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for guidance. We may be instructed to pick up the bird with a soft towel or T-shirt and put it in a ventilated cardboard box lined with towels to give the bird a warm, dark, safe place for transport to a rehabilitation site.

Fernandes also cautions that we should not feed the bird.

I didn't take the bird home that day. When we walked back to that spot a while later, the bird was gone. Members of SSAS believed the bird was back in its nest with its mother—which is exactly where it belonged. ♦



Fallen Nestlings • Courtesy Volunteers for Wildlife

NYS Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators:

Wildlife in Need of Rescue & Rehabilitation (WINORR)

Bobby & Cathy Horvath: Phone: (516) 293-0587

Volunteers for Wildlife

volunteersforwildlife.org • (516) 674-0982

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation List

Find local licensed wildlife rehabilitators near you.

Search by county & animal type • tinyurl.com/3mz5dzdp

Coming Attractions

Virtual Programs on Zoom:

Bald Eagle Family in Nassau with Jay Koolpix • 3/8

Chinstrap Penguins with Noah Strycker • 4/12

Winter Finches & FiRN with Matt Young • 5/10

...

In-Person Programs:

Central Park Bird Walk with Christian Cooper • 5/7

SSAS Picnic (following Bird Walk) • 6/12

See page 4 for details!

South Shore Skimmer

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The mission of the 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. ♦

Bird Walks

by Joe Landesberg



Joe Landesberg

Join us on our Bird Walks! To register, text me your name and contact information at 516-467-9498. We follow COVID protocols in effect at time of walk. Bird Walks are free of charge and start at 9 AM. No walk if it rains or snows. Text me regarding questionable conditions.

- Sun., 3/13: Jamaica Bay Preserve
- Sun., 3/20: Hempstead Lake State Park
- Sun., 3/27: Massapequa Preserve (Entrance at east end of train station)
- Sun., 4/3: Norman Levy Preserve
- Sat., 4/9: Oceanside Marine Study Area
- Sun., 4/17: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station
- Sun., 4/24: Pt. Lookout Town Park and Lido Preserve
- Sun., 5/1: Jamaica Bay Preserve
- Sun., 5/8: Hempstead Lake State Park
- Sun., 5/15: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh)
- Sun., 5/22: Norman Levy Preserve
- Sat., 5/28: Oceanside Marine Study Area
- Sun., 6/5: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station
- Sun., 6/12: Massapequa Preserve (Entrance at east end of train station)

For Future Bird Walks, check our website & Facebook page:

SSAudubon.org/bird-walks • Facebook.com/SSAudubon

Directions: SSAudubon.org/directions.asp

→ Special Weekend Bird Walks ← Save the Dates!

May 7: **Annual Central Park Bird Walk** led by Christian Cooper
Contact Joanne re Central Park Walk: 516-433-0739

June 12: **Massapequa Preserve • Precedes SSAS Picnic**
Bird walk from 9 AM until picnic time at 11:30.
Contact Marilyn re picnic: (516) 799-7189 • mwhametz@optonline.net

Details to come: SSAudubon.org & Facebook.com/SSAudubon



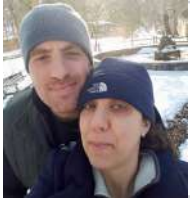
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Dennis & Isabel

On the Record: Dennis Fleury & Isabel Fernandes

An Interview by Alene Scoblete

Dennis Fleury holds a BA in Education from Cortland State University, is a state-licensed wildlife rehabilitator, and veterinary assistant. Isabel Fernandes holds a BA in Wildlife Management from SUNY Cobleskill and is a state-licensed wildlife rehabilitator. They are Co-Directors at Tackapausha Museum & Preserve in Seaford, NY. The pair has presented a number of live animal programs for SSAS over the years.

What inspired you to choose a career with animals?

DF: I've always been empathetic, rescuing feral cats and other animals from a very young age. My parents were great; I could bring home feral raccoon babies and they would sigh and help me figure it out. I had wanted to be a veterinarian and ended up a veterinary assistant. After working as a special needs teacher, I was hired at Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary where I started working with injured birds of prey and where I met Isabel.

IF: During my childhood I had a variety of interests. Luckily, during high school I had the opportunity to intern at Alley Pond Environmental Center, and learned about the various career opportunities available working with animals.

What part of your education most prepared you for the real world of animal rescue and rehabilitation?

DF: When I interned at Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary in Florida, and while I was the Education Director for the Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons, rehab was the focus. I was able to really get into the real wildlife rescue world. Isabel and I are state licensed wildlife rehabilitators, but we do that privately and on a small scale.

IF: Working at the TR Sanctuary and Audubon Center was a big part my understanding of animal rescue. Luckily, I went to college for wildlife management, which gave me a foundation in various field research projects as well as natural history. However, getting to work hands on with a variety of animals is always the best.

What are you most passionate about?

DF: Isabel. Other than spending time with her, it's being able to educate the public about wildlife and help them to appreciate nature.

IF: I'm most passionate about working with animals. I truly enjoy caring for all types of animals and helping them get healthy.

What is most rewarding in your work at Tackapausha?

DF: At Tackapausha, we have the tangible opportunity

to make animals' lives better in real, meaningful ways and on personal levels. We use science education to show people the importance of a personal relationship with nature.

IF: Watching a kid's face light up with excitement when seeing a real live Great Horned Owl and also knowing we are providing a permanent home for an animal that would otherwise not survive in the wild.

Your greatest challenge in your work at Tackapausha?

DF & IF: Trying to convince the public that the 85 acres of the Preserve is a wonderful place to be revered and respected. There is, sadly, a huge number of people who do not understand that the rules of the Preserve are to protect the species that live here. It is a shared space to be within nature, to experience a serene, peaceful natural place within suburban sprawl.

You educate the public. How do you connect with each age group?

DF: I can teach an adult class on wildlife rehabilitation and be very

scientific and serious and 10 minutes later I can be rolling on the floor with kindergartners playing with bunnies. I always try to keep my education programs lively and fun, and I try to connect with everyone I can.

IF: Be it a group of kids or adults, I always try to share information through experiences and stories. It's important that each presentation fit the group and that the presentation is fun and engaging, not just a list of facts and dire warnings.

What do you do to kick back and relax?

IF: We enjoy hiking together and spending time with our indoor cats. Dennis enjoys swimming and reading. I love gardening. We also rescue and foster kittens for adoption, and we both love to release the opossums, squirrels, and cottontails we rehab. We are converting our front lawn into a pollinator garden and having great fun with that.

Anything else you'd like to tell us?

DF & IF: We could not ask for better friends throughout the years than SSAS.

Also, we'd like more people to come [to Tackapausha] and experience what we have to offer. ♦

**“It is a shared space
to be within nature...”**

Coming Attractions



Jay Koolpix

A Bald Eagle Family in Nassau County with Photographer Jay Koolpix

Tuesday, March 8 @ 7:30 PM

→ *Virtual Program on Zoom*

Jay chronicles, in both photos and videos, the daily triumphs and challenges of a pair of Bald Eagles raising two beautiful chicks right here in Nassau County. What an opportunity for us to observe these magnificent, intriguing birds as they engage in one of nature's most demanding feats—parenting in the wild!

Born in Spanish Harlem and raised in foster homes, Jay mostly worked two jobs at a time until his retirement seven years ago. He first took up macro photography of insects and flowers and then discovered the joys of bird photography.

The Chinstrap Penguins of Elephant Island with Noah Strycker

Tuesday, April 12 @ 7:30 PM

→ *Virtual Program on Zoom*

Once the bleak refuge of British explorer Ernest Shackleton and his crew, Elephant Island now hosts thousands of nesting Chinstrap Penguins. In 2021, Noah Strycker and a team of Stony Brook University researchers traveled there on the Greenpeace ship *Esperanza* to count the number of breeding penguins. Join us for an uncommon view of the most common penguin in the Antarctic.

Noah is a penguin scientist, author, and Big Year world record-holder. He has penned six books and is the Associate Editor of *Birding* magazine. Visit noahstrycker.com.



Noah Strycker



Matt Young

From Finches to the Launching of the FiRN with Matt Young

Tuesday, May 10 @ 7:30 PM

→ *Virtual Program on Zoom*

Last year, much to the delight of birders, winter finches were in abundance. This year, it is hard to find these colorful visitors from the North. Matt—the founder of the Finch Research Network (FiRN)—is here to tell us all about these beautiful winter finches, what led to the founding of FiRN, and what FiRN plans to accomplish in the future.

A lifelong nature lover, Matt holds an MS in Ornithology. He has done extensive fieldwork for Cornell Lab of Ornithology and served as editor and sound engineer on several projects including audio files for Audubon, Merlin, and Cornell Lab. He has authored finch species accounts for breeding bird atlases and published peer-reviewed journal articles. Visit the FiRN website: finchnetwork.org.

Find program updates & links on SSAudubon.org • facebook.com/SSAudubon

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, June 12 @ 11:30 AM

South Shore Audubon Picnic

In Person @ Brady Park in Massapequa following Bird Walk
Bring a cold lunch • SSAS supplies snacks & beverages

Details to come: SSAudubon.org & our Facebook page or
contact Marilyn: (516) 799-7189 / mwhametz@optimum.net



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Injured Wildlife Hotline: (516) 674-0982

volunteersforwildlife.org

Insights: Fighting Climate Change Quickly & Correctly

by Jim Brown



Jim Brown

We—and especially the political leaders we elect—must heed the well-considered advice of climate activists like Greta Thunberg and climate scientists that advise the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on necessary steps in confronting the reality of runaway global warming.

The major thrust of that advice is that we must rapidly transition the world to 100% renewable energy as quickly as possible, bearing in mind that reaching that goal in time to save the planet will necessarily require systemic change in our most basic social, political, and economic relationships.

Aside from human-induced climate change, there are other aspects of what is increasingly termed the current Anthropocene Epoch, i.e., the human dominated epoch of geological history.

Among them is the rapid decline of biological diversity, the loss of plant and animal species, and the accompanying decline in sheer numbers of individuals of non-human species throughout the world. Recent Audubon studies have highlighted these sad trends with respect to birds.

The world is experiencing a sixth major period of extinction and a rapid loss of diversity—this time caused by humans.

This phenomenon is sometimes related directly to greenhouse gas production that has skyrocketed with industrial development, but also arises from such factors as general anthropogenic habitat loss and environmental degradation.

Aware that climate change must be fought with clean, renewable energy should not blind us to the fact that new projects can cause environmental damage if not correctly carried out.

For example, the energy company Equinor, currently developing important offshore wind facilities off Long Beach, has decided it is no longer cost-effective to build environmentally friendly gravity-based turbine foundations.

It intends to switch to pile-drilling monopiles, the construction of which will further endanger Right Whales, already on the brink of extinction.

Renewable energy projects can be done quickly and sustainably, minimizing damage to wildlife and the environment. But one basic required systemic change is to better control what corporations do, even if they are companies providing us with clean energy. Profit taking must not determine solutions to fighting climate change. ♦

"The world is experiencing a sixth major extinction...."

Evelyn & Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarship 2022

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Information & Application: ssaudubon.org/bishop-scholarship

Application Deadline: April 30, 2022

This scholarship is possible due to the generosity of the late Evelyn Bishop.
Questions? Contact either: Betsy Gulotta: (516) 546-8841/eagulotta@optonline.net or Betty Borowsky: (516) 764-3596.

→ ***Scobe Squawks*** by Frank Scoblete will return in the next issue! ←

Dark Skies for Migrating Birds

by Brien Weiner

Seventy percent of bird species migrate each year and 80% of those birds migrate at night, **using the night sky to help them navigate.**

As they pass over cities and towns, **they can become disoriented by the collective light pollution,** often causing them to collide with buildings or windows.

Others can circle in confusion until dawn when they land—depleted and at risk.

The proposed **NYS Dark Skies Act** would require shielding outdoor lighting, or extinguishing outdoor lighting between 11 PM and sunrise, or using motion-activated lights with a duration of less than 15 minutes.

Call to ACTION

Don't wait for legislation to stop killing birds. Reduce outdoor lighting now—and sleep well! ♦



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Through Guy's Eyes

by Guy Jacob



Guy Jacob

Eliminate Egregious Tax Subsidies

The passage of **New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)** in 2019 engendered substantial discord between preexisting laws and statutes and the lofty goals of the CLCPA.

The Fossil Fuel Subsidy Elimination Act (S7438/A8483) would go a long way toward ameliorating this troubling disharmony. This bill would repeal certain exemptions from sales, use, and petroleum business taxes that encourage the use of fossil fuels.

Tax subsidies are the guiding hands of government molding the market, hindering or advancing innovation, shaping our future for better or for worse. **Propping up the fossil fuel industry** when we're spending so much effort trying to scale renewable energy **is more than counterproductive—it's dysfunctional.**

Forcing ordinary taxpayers to subsidize petroleum industry taxes while we are building offshore wind farms is like eating raw kale in one hand while eating fried pork fat in the other. Unequivocally, the fried pork fat will negate any health benefits the kale provides. It simply makes no sense to eat that way. Likewise, it is irrational to allow these subsidies to continue while we wave a green banner.

It's time, New York, to reconcile our laws and **eliminate the dissonance** between the past and the promise of a clean energy future.

Any legislator who cosponsors this bill should proudly boast that s/he supports a tax break for everyday New Yorkers to the tune of \$334 million annually—even while maintaining fuel subsidies that protect New Yorkers in financial need. **Reducing taxes by eliminating these egregious subsidies is both fiscally responsible and sensible.**

Now is the time to tackle our inconsistencies. The time is at hand for a new tomorrow, one that prioritizes what we say we value. ♦

Call To ACTION

Email your NYS Senator and Assembly Member. Ask them to support The Fossil Fuel Subsidy Elimination Act: S7438, Krueger/A8483, Cahill

Find more information at: tinyurl.com/2p8tymc3



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Thank you for your support!

Going Native: Plan a Bird-Friendly Winter Garden

by Betty Borowsky & Louise DeCesare



Betty Borowsky

Winter can be a trying time, especially during a pandemic. So many activities are restricted. But, you can brighten up the winter months for next year, come what may. Simply **select native plants that will attract birds to your property.**

You will see a much more diverse group of species than if you use a feeder. No worries about refilling the feeder or attracting mammal pests! Plus, **you will be able to observe the birds' behavior in their natural environment.**

It takes just a bit of planning. There are **two excellent groups of native plants** that can provide food for our birds through the winter; **woody plants** (trees and shrubs) and **herbaceous plants.**

One example of a good woody plant is the **American holly** (*Ilex opaca*), which provides berries through winter. This is a true bright spot in winter! The red berries are beautiful against the shiny green leaves, which remain all year.

Brighten up the winter months!

Another example is **Atlantic white cedar** (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*), whose cones open in mid-winter and provide seeds for many species. It's an evergreen, so it retains its leaves in the winter.

Herbaceous plants die back in the winter, but many native species have hardy seed-heads that provide good food for overwintering birds. For example, the **cone flower** (*Echinacea purpurea*) has spectacular flowers during the warmer months, but, when the

above-ground parts die off in the fall, the seed heads remain upright and available for the birds.

Other herbaceous plants include **black-eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia* spp.), and **coreopsis** (*Coreopsis* spp.). If you don't cut back their stems in the fall, you will see wonderful birds throughout the winter!

Just a word of caution: although birds can eat them with impunity, some berries and seeds are toxic to humans and pets; so, make sure you know which plants are toxic—especially if you have young children and/or beloved pets.

For a comprehensive list of native plants that can provide food for birds in the winter in our area, visit: **audubon.org/native-plants**. ♦



Louise DeCesare

Michael Sperling Bird Sanctuary Update

by Brien Weiner

Thanks to the dedicated work of Spadefoot Design & Construction and many volunteers, we've largely removed invasive vegetation from our Michael Sperling Bird Sanctuary and our native plantings are taking hold, along with other native plants that have returned on their own.

We are now partnering with **Massapequa HS Environmental**

Studies students to test different methods of removing the remaining mugwort; what we learn can be applied to the Sanctuary and to other habitat restoration efforts.

Please consider donating to our Michael Sperling Memorial Fund to support this living laboratory.

Send your check to SSAS, PO Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031 and

write **Michael Sperling Memorial Fund** on the memo line.

For donations of \$200 or more, Spadefoot will provide you with an individualized design consultation, a visual rendering, and a plant list to create your own backyard bird sanctuary. Visit spadefootny.com or call (516) 225-8545. ♦

Eco Tips & Tricks

Water your indoor and outdoor plants with the water from your dehumidifiers.

Don't throw out a used toothbrush. Clean it and use it to remove the lint from your clothes dryer.

Thank you, Donors!

Vivien & Lloyd Abrams • Sharon Bogart • Linda A. Ferraro • Kathleen & Philip Fracassa • Alec Hemer • John Holly • Peter A. Joannidis • Bruce Kopit • Richard Kopsco • Deborah Martin • Tom McCloskey • Christine Tashjian • Lee Winters

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See Page 4 for
Upcoming Programs!

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Special Weekend Bird Walks:
May 7 & June 12 • See page 2

Who's Who

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Join South Shore Audubon Society!

Become a member of our local chapter for **only \$20 per year!** Receive our newsletter, *South Shore Skimmer*, which includes listings for our local outings and programs as well as the latest on environmental issues and initiatives.

To **join or renew** your membership, make your check payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** and send the form and check to: **PO Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520.**

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Circle One: JOIN or RENEW

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