



# THE OSPREY

January/February 2017 — Vol. XLII, No. 1

## Tiny Packages Bring Tons of Joy

Eileen Schwinn

For most people, hummingbirds hold a special place in their hearts. Right up there with unicorns, the birds evoke a sense of wonder and beauty. A sign of spring. A hovering super star.

The summer and fall of 2016 was a unique hummingbird year for me – and for many other birders. In early July, my dear friend, Eric Salzman, found an eye-level Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest in his yard. Over the weeks he sat and watched the female sit on her tiny nest, formed of lichen and spider web, and nestled in the slight bend of a cedar tree branch. I joined him in watching, on a few mornings, and managed to photograph not only the bird on the nest, but her two successfully hatched young! The female continued to feed her young in the nest for about 10 days, at which point, they grew bigger than their nest and proceeded to fly – staying in the general area, and still fed by the female for another few weeks.

A visit to the nearby Baiting Hollow Hummingbird Sanctuary of Paul Adams, allowed me to see more Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in action, among Dr. Adams wonderful gardens overlooking Long Island Sound.

At the end of August, a Rufous Hummingbird – a rarely encountered species on the East Coast, although each year one or two show up on Long Island during the Fall Migration – appeared at Morton Wildlife Refuge in Noyac. Visiting the feeders at the nature office, the bird was only present for three or four days, and left the area, never to be seen there again, about forty minutes after Eric and I visited the Refuge! We were lucky and took a few photographs of this visitor –

Fast forward to the end of November, 2016. I had just returned home from a two week vacation, and my phone rang. Margaret B, in Aquebogue, had gotten my name from the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Margaret

*continued on page 4*



CATHY TALDONE

*One of the two Rufous Hummingbirds wintering at a home in Aquabogue.*



EILEEN SCHWINN

*Two of the young Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that fledged in East Quogue this summer in their lichen covered nest*

## The President's Corner

# Snipe Hunt!

Byron Young

I do not normally chase rare birds unless they are relatively close to home. I guess I will never achieve a "big year" with that poor attitude. Anyway, when a Snipe was reported at the Swan River Preserve, I figured that was close enough, so I ventured over in late October with no success at finding the bird. Undaunted, I stopped by on November 12, 2016 after chasing the waterfowl around Patchogue Lake. I was heartened to see a photographer and a birder (one of our members) watching closely from the boardwalk along the north edge of the Preserve's small impoundment.

Approaching cautiously, they kindly pointed out this remarkable camouflaged bird hiding in plain sight. After a bit the bird moved so I could see it and count it toward my 2016 species list. The three of us spent nearly 45 minutes watching the bird feed actively, probing the muddy sediment for some delicious morsels of what I do not know.

We watched the Snipe interact with the female Green-winged Teal who was not much bigger than the Snipe. At one point they were feeding side by side. After the Teal moved away a Mallard decided to invade the Snipe's space. This interaction did not go so well as the Snipe flushed and moved off a few feet allowing us a much better view and photographic opportunities. The bird moved back toward us probing the soft sediment and paying us little attention.

The bird flushed out onto the island in



the middle of the ponded area when a second hidden Snipe called from the island. We did not see the second Snipe that remained hidden from our view.

Once back in the car, I checked my Fifth Edition of Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America* to confirm the correct common name for this Snipe, (Common Snipe, *Gallinago gallinago*). However, when I went to enter my observations on e-Bird they only recognized the Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*).

Sorry about the Latin lesson, I hope it does not bring back too many bad memories. Now I was confused, so I began to check further. The Sixth Edition of Peterson's *Field Guide* identified the bird as Wilson's Snipe but Sibley's *Field Guide to Birds* published in 2000 lists the bird as the Common Snipe. Finally, the Second Edition of Sibley's *Birds of the East* lists the bird as the Wilson's Snipe.

Being curious I continued my search for the elusive Snipe via the World Wide Web. I plied Google with several questions in my search for information turning up scholarly articles, popular articles and finally settled on Wikipedia for my source as it provided a simple description regarding the difference between the Common Snipe and the Wilson's Snipe. Are you ready for this? The main difference between the Common Snipe found mainly in Europe and the Wilson's Snipe, found mainly in North America is, "the number of tail feathers, with seven pairs in the Common Snipe and eight pairs in the Wilson's Snipe. The Wilson's Snipe also has a slightly thinner white trailing edge to the wings (the white is mostly on the tips of the secondaries)." The concluding remark in this paragraph is "identification of these species is complex."



Now armed with all of this information one can safely search out the illusive vagrant Common Snipe. You simply need the subject Snipe to display its tail feathers so you can count pairs of feathers and then display its wing so you can look for the slightly thinner trailing margin. Better yet if you can find both species in a cooperative mood that would make the task that much easier. Better yet, you can simply accept the fact that these birds are there to confuse us and go along with the latest edition of whatever field guide you are using or what e-Bird accepts for North American Snipe and that is the Wilson's Snipe.

Final count, two Wilson's Snipe added to my 2016 list, One seen and one heard. I expect that sometime in the not so distant future some ornithologist will petition to have these two species lumped together. I will continue to be confused but undaunted in my search. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow birder and photographer on November 12 for pointing out the bird and our conversations while enjoying this encounter. 🐦

## ELIAS Meeting

Monday, February 6, 2017, at 7:15 pm

### Bobwhite Quail Release Program, Helping to Make a Native Bird, Native Again

**Abra Morawiec**

Nestled in the middle of farm country on the North Fork of Long Island, Feisty Acres raises a carefully curated selection of game birds for meat, eggs, and release. They are certified organic by NOFA-NY and all birds are raised on pasture. Being certified organic means that farmland is free of all prohibited chemical inputs such as synthetic pesticides and herbicides. No antibiotics are administered to any livestock, at any time, and there are absolutely no GMOs present in their feed or pastures. The pasturing practices leave the land better off than how we found it and all of our birds enjoy sunshine, fresh air, bugs, as well as plentiful grass and vegetation.

Throughout the season, we raise Coturnix (Japanese Quail), Chukar Partridge, French Guinea Fowl, and Heritage Breed Turkeys. We also raise Northern Bobwhite Quail for release purposes, to help re-establish the native population on the North Fork. Our Bobwhite Quail Release Program was started in the spring of 2016 after the successful launch of a Kickstarter Campaign. During the 2016 season, the farm released over 220 Bobwhites in hopes that mature coveys would self-procreate in the wild. Feisty Acres rents land from Biophilia Organic Farm, which is in the middle of approximately 200 acres of preserved farmland, vineyards, and open space, which creates a prime environment for these native birds to thrive. In 2017 and beyond, we hope to continue our program, releasing anywhere from 200 - 400 Bobwhites a season. Along with regular releases, we wish to help facilitate proper land management that will maintain habitat for these native birds. The preservation of indigenous plants that Bobwhites depend upon for food and shelter are crucial in making our program successful.

*Bobwhite Quail Release*



## Winter Bird Walks

Saturday, January 14, 2017 – Meet at 9:00 am  
(Please note the new date)

### Lakes Around Patchogue

**John McNeil, Rosemary Valente, Co-leader**

Meet at the parking area at corner Lake Drive and East Main Street in East Patchogue by the side of Swan Lake. We will check out Swan Lake and then visit several other favorite spots for a look at the bountiful water birds that flock to LI in the winter. Always hoping for a few surprises! Dress for the weather!

Saturday February 4, 2017 – Meet at 8 am

### Montauk

**Eileen Schwinn**

Always cold and exciting, a field trip to Montauk Point, Camp Hero and other Points of Interest in the Montauk area, is planned. We will meet at 8 am at the closed Concession Stand at the Lighthouse - The End - and work our way back west! Dress in multiple layers and dress WARMLY (The Restrooms are open - and heated) We will be checking our recent reports for the rare birds which sometimes appear in the general area, and as always, view Block Island Sound from the Camp Hero Bluffs for great rafts of seabirds. Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net for more info, and 516-662-7751 the day of the Field Trip.

Saturday, March 4, 2017 – Meet at 8 am

### Morton Wildlife Refuge

**Eileen Schwinn**

A big hit and a great way to enjoy the last bit of freezing cold winter weather!! We will meet at the Refuge parking lot at 8 am, and walk approximately 2 miles on this hike. Not only do the birds eat right out of your hand the minute you get out of your car, but there are frequently pockets of over-wintering birds along the way. Dress warmly and appropriately. Bird seed will be provided. Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net for more information, and at 516-662-7751 the day of the trip.



# PROTECT WILDLIFE WHILE WATCHING WILDLIFE

## Advice from the DEC

While DEC encourages people to enjoy watching wildlife on public lands, they ask that you do so in a way that protects wildlife, especially endangered and threatened species.

Short-eared Owls, a New York State endangered species, return from their breeding grounds in Canada to spend the winter in the Grasslands of Calverton and along Dune Road and Meadow Lane (in addition to various Upstate Grasslands.)

Short-eared owls roost on the ground in taller grasses, unlike most owl species. The owls fly from their roosts around dusk each day and put on an aerial show while foraging for mice and voles. They are easily disturbed by people walking near their roosting sites.

This can cause them to unnecessarily expend energy flying or to abandon their roost site.



SALLY NEWBERT

Owls and other birds roost to conserve energy.

DEC asks visitors to all public lands, to observe the following guidelines for the protection of wildlife, including the Short-eared Owls and other endangered or threatened species:

### PROTECT WILDLIFE

Avoid repeatedly flushing or otherwise purposely disturbing wildlife when watching or photographing them.

NEVER purposely chase wildlife!

Keep a respectful distance from nests and young, especially in hot, cold, or windy weather.

Stay in your vehicle, it serves as a blind and often allows for closer and longer observations without disturbing wildlife.

### PROTECT HABITAT

Stay on existing roads, trails, or pathways to avoid trampling fragile vegetation.

Leave the area as you found it.

### RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Know and observe the laws, rules, and regulations governing the site.

Get prior permission to enter private or posted property.

Be considerate of others around you.

### ORGANIZED GROUPS

Group actions have magnified effects.

Ensure that all members of the group know and follow the above guidelines.

Monitor the behavior of group members and ensure they act responsibly.

### REPORT VIOLATORS

Purposely disturbing, flushing, or chasing an endangered or threatened species is harassment and is **ILLEGAL**.

**If you witness such activity please document it and report it to the DEC Dispatch (1-877-457-5680)**

*Short-eared owl, seen and counted during the Quogue to Watermill Christmas Bird Count.*

## THE FARMERS MARKET FARM STAND



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*continued from page 1*

had a hummingbird in her yard, at her feeder and among her plants, for nearly a month. She was worried about what to do for the bird, now that the days and nights were getting colder. She assumed it was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, but when I suggested she take a closer look – she realized the bird had a rusty colored chest! I was already on my way to Margaret's home!! Yes, it was a Rufous Hummingbird she had been watching over!

This little beauty was not as colorful as the earlier-in-migration Rufous, but it was even more remarkable, since it had arrived and stayed in the area for a much longer period of time. And probably more amazing, is the fact that a SECOND Rufous Hummingbird appeared at Margaret's feeder five days after she called me! This wonderfully generous person allowed a steady stream of birders to come visit her yard, in spite of Thanksgiving holidays and the start of the Christmas Season!!! As of this writing (early December) Margaret's Two Birds are still at the well-maintained feeder – Margaret did set up a second one – and the still blooming plants in her magnificent yard.

One final note – around the time of Margaret's first phone call to me, a prominent birder in Water Mill gave me a call – he had a Calliope Hummingbird, which was fully documented, in HIS yard. I was able to see this under-the-radar bird. However, I was not able to take any photographs, due to the bird's position and the lighting. That homeowner did get the photos, as did another local birder.

Birds are amazing – they never seem to stop surprising us. A sign of Spring turns into a hope for the Holidays. They bring together of people who turn out to become friends. All within a 0.12 ounce package! Now to me, that's a TON of JOY

*Thank you, Eric S., Paul A, Margaret B., and John S. for allowing me to share your very special little visitors. And don't forget – feel free to give me a call ANYTIME!!!!*

*P.S. As of January 3 the birds are still going strong. Margaret has set up two "roosting" spots for her hummingbirds with heating pads, branches and twigs to perch on. She has put tiny poinsettia artificial plants outside - just to provide a "red" target for the birds!*



*The first Rufous Hummingbird seen at Elizabeth Morton Wildlife, as quickly as it was reported, it was gone.*

## Backyard Bird Count

Join this Citizen Science Count  
from February 17-20, 2017

**It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!**

**1. Register** for the count or use your existing login name and password. If you have never participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count or any other Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you'll need to create a new account. If you already created an account for last year's GBBC, or if you're already registered with eBird or another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login information.

**2. Count birds** for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the GBBC. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day, for each new location, or for the same location if you counted at a different time of day. Estimate the number of individuals of each species you saw during your count period.

**3. Enter your results** on the GBBC website by clicking "Submit Observations" on the home page. Or download the free eBird Mobile app to enter data on a mobile device. If you already participate in the eBird citizen-science project, please use eBird to submit your sightings during the GBBC. Your checklists will count toward the GBBC.



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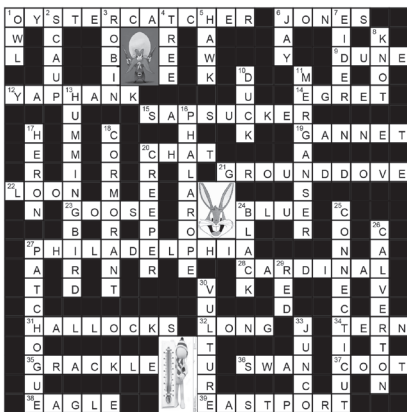
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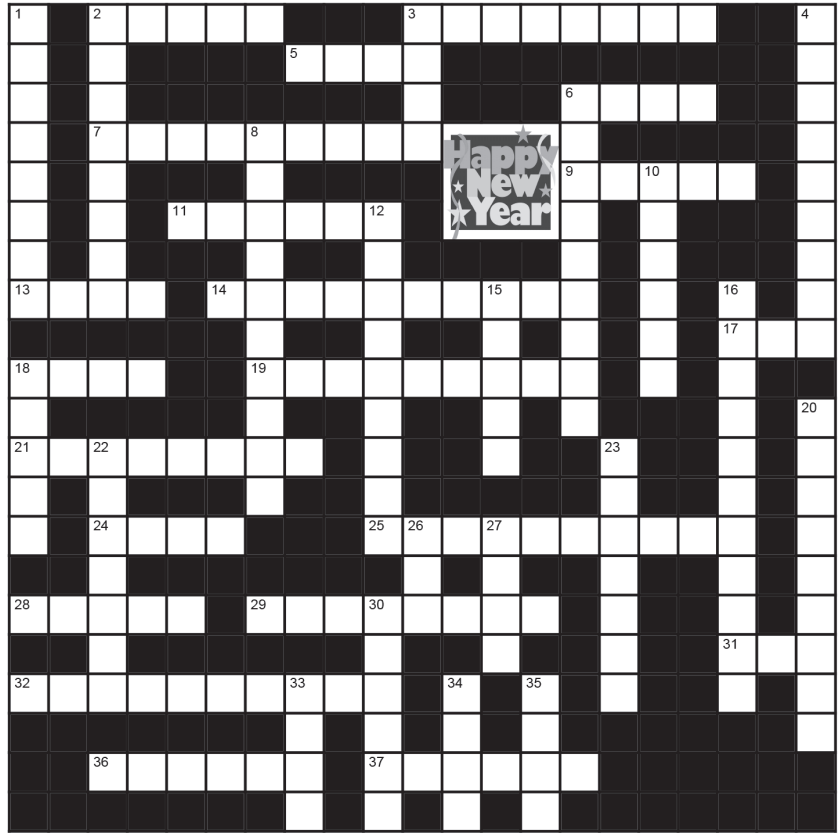
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### Answers to last issue's puzzle Dress Warm and Go Birding by Tom Moran



## Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer... If it were only so... Tom Moran



**Across**

- 2 See 18 Across.
- 3 36 Across, 3 Across, 6 Across, seen at Trinity Church this last fall.
- 5 Lesser, 18 Down, backed, 5 Across.
- 6 See 3 Across.
- 7 The location for 11 Across last fall.
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ Duck, see one at our Lakes Around Patchogue walk, January 14.
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ Hummingbird, rare sighting in 7 Across last fall.
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_-billed Dowitcher, the less common one on Long Island
- 14 26 Down, throated, 14 Across, seen at Lido West Park this fall.
- 17 Great Horned, for example.
- 18 18 Across, 2 Across, maybe to be seen again this year from Osprey Point Park?
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Duck, favors rocky coastal waters.
- 21 21 Across, 34 Down. Larger than a Fish one.
- 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow, not to be confused with a Savannah.
- 25 Provides endless entertainment as they run to and from the surf.
- 28 28 Across, crested, 6 Down, primarily coastal, has white chin patch.
- 29 \_\_\_\_\_ Pintail, see one at our Lakes Around Patchogue walk, January 14.
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_-headed Woodpecker, adult and immature were seen near Blydenburgh Park this fall.
- 32 Belted \_\_\_\_\_, active, noisy bird seen at ponds/lakes.
- 36 See 3 Across.
- 37 Black, Surf or White-winged

**Down**

- 1 Northern \_\_\_\_\_, common red backyard bird.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Wigeon.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Grosbeak.
- 4 Black and white Auk, maybe see one off Montauk Pt.
- 6 See 28 Across.
- 8 Small, active divers in fresh water and salt bays.
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_-crested 6 Down.
- 12 European \_\_\_\_\_ A large flock in action is called a murmuration.
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow or Wren.
- 16 Perches prominently, white wing patches, imitates other birds.
- 18 See 5 Across.
- 20 Not Carolina here.
- 22 \_\_\_\_\_ Towhee.
- 23 Attractive, common duck...
- 26 See 14 Across.
- 27 27 Down, 35 Down, Junco, a common snowbird.
- 30 Bicknell's \_\_\_\_\_, breeds in high mountain fir forests, like at the top of Whiteface Mtn. in the Adirondacks.
- 33 \_\_\_\_\_ migration, fun to watch from Robert Moses platform.
- 34 See 21 Across.
- 35 See 27 Down.

## There is Still Time for Teens to Apply for Summer Camp Scholarships

**ELIAS is offering scholarships for three students in grades 7 through 12.** The campers would attend New York State Department of Conservation camps for one week. The campers choose between camps in the Adirondacks, Catskills, or western New York State. Campers enjoy fishing, hiking, canoeing, volleyball, and hunter safety training. Activities such as sampling streams for aquatic life and hiking in the dark to listen to the sounds in the woods are designed to bring conservation concepts to life. More information about the camps is available at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov). Search for teen camps.

The candidate should be interested in the environment, and anxious to learn more. (Parents need not be ELIAS members, but the camper must live in Eastern Long Island.)

### Here is what the candidates need to do:

- Write an essay stating why they are worthy candidates of the scholarship. Include environmental experiences and interests. Also, describe what benefit they might derive from the experience.
- At the bottom of the essay, the candidate should include his or her name, address, city, state, zip, phone, date of birth, name of school and grade. The student should also note if and when he or she has attended an outdoor education/ecology camp. Previous scholarship winners may reapply.
- Parents should attach a letter stating that they are aware of the transportation stipulation (see below).

### If accepted:

- Campers are responsible for their own transportation to and from the camp and for their own physical examination, if the camp requires it.

For more information, call Suzi at 516-443-4906 or Evelyn at 631-727-0417.

**Please send essay and information by February 4, 2017 to:  
Education Committee, ELIAS, PO Box 206, East Quogue, NY 11942-0206**

Include name, address, phone, date of birth, name of school and grade on the bottom of your essay.

Let us know if you have ever attended an outdoor education/ecology camp? If SO, what camp, where, and when?

Please sign your essay.

There is an application form on [www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org](http://www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org) that you can download.

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# The **OSPREY**

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## Chapter Renewal & Membership

For \$20 a year, you will receive 6 issues of *The Osprey* and you will be supporting our local education and conservation activities.

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*Please be sure to include your email. You will receive an email confirmation, a pdf of the first newsletter and updates and reminders of programs and trips including notices of any program changes or cancellations due to weather. This list is not shared.*

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