



# THE **OSPREY**

Spring 2023 — Vol. XLIXI, No. 2

## The Calming Effect of Birdsong and Sight

### Eileen Schwinn

As far as I'm concerned, scientists have "just discovered" something that I – and many others who enjoy the birds – have known for a very long time. Birdwatching – or even just listening to birds – "can lead to an array of mental-health benefits in humans, including long-lasting stress relief". Shocked???? I'm only shocked that it's taken "scientists" so long!

The author of a new book, *Slow Birding: The Art and Science of Enjoying the Birds in Your Own Backyard*, Joan Strassmann, says "Sitting outside and listening to the birds and getting to know their songs is really calming. And to me, the special thing about birds is that they can leave – they don't have to be there, but they have chosen to be where you are and at some point, they'll move on." Her book (following the very modern trend in *Slow Cooking*) focuses on a handful – a little over a dozen – commonly found birds in her St. Louis yard and nearby park. She studies the bird – an American Robin, for example – and really STUDIES it. What's it doing? What's it eating? How is it eating? How is it interacting with its surroundings? Other birds nearby? Where's it flying? How's that nest building going? Etc. Before you fall asleep reading this portion, Ms Strassmann, an evolutionary behaviorist and professor of biology, goes on – at times in minute detail – presenting scientific studies about American Robins – and all the other birds in her yard.

But back to my original topic – how birds can calm the savage beast – HUMANS! A study published in *Scientific Reports* this past October, which made headlines, found that "seeing or hearing birds improved people's mental wellbeing for up to eight hours." Over 1,000 people used a phone app to register their "mood" a couple of times a day, noting whether they could hear birds or see them, "people

with depression, as well as those without a mental-health condition, experienced significant improvements in wellbeing "when they had bird experiences involved. And this improvement in outlook and feelings, wasn't due to other "environmental factors", such as trees, plants or water – the study controlled those elements.

Other studies seem to present the same end result of the effect birds have on us mortal beings – a 2017 study published in *BioScience*, found that an abundance of birds in urban neighborhoods was "associated with a lower prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress". In 2020, *Ecological Economics* published that there was a correlation between happiness and the actual number of bird species around a home – "around 14 species was as satisfying as earning an extra \$150 per month". WOW!

HAVEN'T SOME OF US IN THE BIRDING COMMUNITY BEEN SAYING THIS ALL ALONG???????

OK – I'm no credentialed scientist, and I didn't even look up all the above studies to read them in full – I'm sharing most of this info from an article on the topic I read a couple of months back – I can't even remember the exact source! But I do know that we here at ELIAS have found – especially over the past three years – more and more folks have "come to birding" for relief from the stress and strain of Covid Life. And, those folks have stayed with the birds and birding, which is really exciting. We are soooooo happy to share what – for a long time – was "our little secret" – Birds are FUN, and NICE, and they make us FEEL GOOD. Good weather, bad weather, tired from the get-go – any time, any day – look out the window, walk down the driveway, sit on the deck, join a bird walk – whatever – just DO IT– I, and all those scientists who study such things, will smile. And so will YOU!

### *ELIAS needs your help!*

Are you Interested in joining our Board of Directors? We are looking for new board members to help ELIAS continue to offer the community, walks, and programs to encourage understanding, appreciation and conservation of Long Island's fragile natural diversity. The board gets together for bimonthly meetings to make decisions, foster ideas, and create and execute new projects.

How can you help? You do not need to be an expert birder. Skillsets especially useful include finding speakers for Monthly Members meetings, education and outreach ideas, grant writing, business/non-profit management as well as helping on bird walks and other activities such as Earth Day or reinstating our Annual Dinner.

What commitments are needed? Active board members attend six Board Meetings per year (Jan., March, May, July, Sept., and November). Additional time would be needed to help with set up and prepare for our joint Earth Day event with the Quogue Wildlife Refuge, or our Annual Dinner. Finally, Board Members usually attend Member Meetings on the First Monday of Each Month (except January).

We'd love to hear from you! If interested, please reach out to one of the board members at meetings, or walks or call (numbers are on the back)..

**THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

# It's Spring

**Byron Young**

As the Osprey return from their winter habitats in the Southern United States, Central American and South American they will be reclaiming their nesting sites, making necessary nest repairs in preparation for the nesting season. It is always a sure sign of Spring to see the first arriving Osprey.

Our other early nesters, the Bald Eagles and Great Horned Owls will be busy feeding their young. The Bald Eagles started repairing their nests in late December and early January. In the case of the local pair that I have been watching for several years, they decided to move their nest site to a more secluded site in the pine tree stand. It was interesting to watch the pair carrying branches up to six feet long as they laid down a new nest. The male would bring in a large pine bow

*Start the spring with a visit  
the Quogue Wildlife Refuge on  
Earth Day April 22, 2023.*

and then wait patiently until the female decided where it should be placed, at least that is my interpretation of the activity. Bald Eagle nests are massive, especially ones that has been used for years.

On the other hand, the Great Horned Owls typically nest in trees such as cottonwood, juniper, beech, pine, and others. On Long Island it would be pine trees, maybe oak trees or they adopt a nest that was built by another species, but they also use cavities in live trees, dead snags, deserted buildings, cliff ledges, and human-made platforms. This according to the Cornell School of Ornithology's "All About Birds" website.

Our local birds, the Northern Cardinals, American Robins, Carolina Wrens, several species of sparrows and others will be setting up their nesting territories. Their sunrise calls will announce the advancing

Spring. These are our early nesting birds, but April brings about a glorious change with a warming days, plants beginning to bud, and the arrival of numerous species of migratory birds. The change in weather recharges our batteries to get outside in search of returning birds, thinking about our gardens and the flowers and shrubs necessary to attract birds and butterflies. I am making plans to plant a couple of American Holly, and maybe a River Birch. I might also plant a berry bush or two as a food source for the birds as they return from the south to their nesting ground in the boreal forests of the Northeast and Canada. Of course, there will be the nectar bearing flowers for the hummingbirds and butterflies.

A good way to start the spring is to visit the Quogue Wildlife Refuge on Earth Day April 22, 2023. You can visit our table and look through the information we will have. There will be plenty other exhibitors present so something may catch your eye. Typically, one of the local arborists will be available with free samples of saplings to plant in your yard. You can also sign up for one of the two bird walks, hosted by ELIAS, looking for early migrating songbirds or hold over winter waterfowl on the Ice Pond. Maybe the local Bald Eagles will make an appearance. I would certainly expect to see an Osprey or two fly by. However, that may be a bit presumptuous on my part.

As April gives way to May ELIAS will host a series of bird walks in search of migrating warblers and other songbirds. May is always an exciting month as millions of birds will be migrating across Long Island for their summer nesting territories. Check out our listing of walks on page 3. Our walks take you to locations that tend to concentrate migrating birds. However, you can simply watch for migrating birds in the treetops around your home. You never know what might stop by for a feast of insects or just to rest up for a few minutes on their long journey to their nesting grounds. As May gives way to June local birds will have settled into their nesting patterns and movements will be more about finding food for the ravenous young. Mom and Dad will be busy searching for food. It has been reported that up to 96 per cent of our terrestrial birds eat insects. Another recent report stated that worldwide birds consume between 400 and 500 million tons of insects. So, make some room for insects in your yard. I know they can be pests but think about the young birds looking for their next meal.

We look forward to seeing many of you on our walks and monthly members meetings. Check out our warbler ID quiz to be ready for those quick IDs. I hope you all have a great Spring birding season.

## **What! Turkey Hunting Really, for the whole month of May?**

New York State DEC has instituted a Wild Turkey Hunt for the entire month of May from sunrise to noon. As of this writing they have not announced exactly which parks or areas will be used for the hunt. If we need to make changes to the schedule of our Spring walks, the information will be on the website and will be sent to our members with Constant Contact messages. Please be sure to register for the walks with the leader in case of any changes..

Please be careful if you go birding on your own. Perhaps an orange hat would be in order.



## FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, March 18, 2023 Meet at 8:30 am**

### **Elizabeth Morton National Wildlife Refuge**

**Led by Eileen Schwinn**

Flocks of over-wintering birds are here, just waiting for a hand out. LITERALLY – your hand out, with a few sunflower seeds and WOW! Famous for being able to feed the birds up close and personal, The Refuge is located on Noyac Road, just west of Sag Harbor. The walk is approximately 2 miles, and will take about 2 hours. Dress for the weather – some years, sunshine, and other years, deep snow! But no matter what the weather, an excellent way to kick off the beginning of Spring, the return of migrating birds, and re-visiting with long time human friends! Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net, to register.

**Saturday, April 15, 2023 – Meet at 8:00 am**

### **North Fork County Park**

**Led by Byron Young**

The entrance to this park is just east of Church Lane in Riverhead (5330 Sound Ave). Vernal ponds, meadows and wooded areas attract a variety of migrating and nesting birds. Each Spring day is different but, hopefully we will find warblers, thrushes, early migrating birds, and raptors. First stop will be along the entrance road, before parking and walking the well-mowed and chip-covered trails. Dress for the weather, and tick protection! There are no rest room facilities. Contact Byron Young, youngb53@optimum.net, to register

**Saturday, May 6, 2023 – Meet at 8:00 am**

### **Rocky Point DEC Area 26**

**Led by Byron Young**

Usually an excellent spot, with hills, vales and some mud puddles to attract migrating – and locally nesting – warblers! Located at the eastern most parking lot, on the south side of the Route 25A Bypass, about 1/8 mile west of the fork to the 25A Business district, this “hidden” gem is frequently used by mountain bikers, hikers and bird watchers throughout the Spring. It also hosts bugs, attracted to early budding trees. Those bugs attract the birds! Contact Byron Young, youngb53@optimum.net, to register.

**Saturday, May 13, 2023 – Meet at 8:00 am**

### **Wertheim NWR**

**Led by Byron Young**

We will meet at 8 am in front of the Refuge Headquarters. The Refuge is located at 340 Smith Road in Shirley. First stop on our walk will be the river overlook to see what might be around the waters edge. From there we will proceed along the roadway that crosses over the River stopping near the Maintenance buildings in hopes of catching the nesting Bluebirds. Then depending upon everyone’s ambition we can then continue on the 2.5 mile White Oak trail. We will end our walk by checking out the bird feeders behind the Refuge building.

Please register with Byron Young, youngb53@optimum.net.

**Saturday, May 20, 2023 – Meet at 7:30 am**

### **Hunters Garden**

**Led by Eileen Schwinn**

Located on the west side of Route 51 in Northampton (the border of Brookhaven & Southampton, just north of Sunrise Highway), Hunters Garden is a truly unique DEC managed area. Vernal ponds and dirt trails lead us through a rather hilly section of the South shore. Past finds include: both Cuckoos, Scarlet Tanager, Vireos, Wood and Hermit Thrush, Gnatcatchers, and a nice selection of warblers! The walk is approximately 2-3 miles – you might wish to bring a light snack and water along. Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net, to register.

**Friday, May 26, 2023 – Meet at 7:30 am**

### **Quogue Wildlife Refuge**

**Led by Eileen Schwinn**

Our home! We will meet in the former parking lot (please park across the street, parallel to the railroad tracks), we will walk the Loop around the Ice Pond (about a mile). Good warbler-loving habitat – pine woods, open fields and tangled understory. Past visits have offered Mourning Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Scarlet Tanager and even a Yellow-throated Warbler – but no guarantees! Well stocked feeders and clean restrooms are also provided! The QWR staff keeps the trails wide and brush free, so ticks are rarely a concern. Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net, to register.

**Saturday, May 27, 2023 – Meet at 8:00 am**

### **Manorville Hills**

**Led by Byron Young**

Enter the park from the north bound lanes of Route 111, Daniel Roe Highway, in Manorville. It is part of the Pine Barrens, and a nice stopping off point for migrating warblers. Habitats include marshy areas, fields and woods. Contact Byron Young, youngb53@optimum.net to register.

**Tuesday, May 30, 2023 – Meet at 7:30 am**

### **Hunters Garden**

**Led by Eileen Schwinn**

A revisit to one of the busiest bird stop-over locations in our area. Pristine woods, it’s hard to imagine you are still on Long Island. See Above for possible birds and info. Different day usually means different birds! Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net, to register.

**Saturday, June 17 2023– Meet at 8:30 am**

### **South Fork Natural History Museum**

**A Joint Bird Walk and a Memorial – Led by Eileen Schwinn, Byron Young, Tom Moran and Darlene McNeil**

A joint-exploration of SOFO’s meadow home to nesting Bluebirds, Baltimore Orioles, Indigo Bunting, Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Cedar Waxwing, Purple Martin, and more. (This walk originally was led by noted birder and composer, Eric Salzman, a member of both organizations. As my mentor, I often feel Eric’s presence along the trails and birdlife here, and it’s my honor to be a Leader of the walk). Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net, to register.





# Birding Tips for the Mobility Challenged

“Are there any places I could take someone in a wheelchair, or a spot to just watch the birds from the car?” Asked a visitor to the ELIAS website. The question went out to the ELIAS board. They put their heads together came up with some possibilities.

Mount Sinai Harbor, Cedar Beach, Town of Brookhaven has a paved path that leads from the main parking lot to the Inlet. There are a couple of slight grades along the path. If you drive to the end of the road there are spots to see the Inlet and watch for shorebirds, loons, ducks and small birds. If you don't have a Brookhaven sticker there is a fee during the summer but the rest of the year it is open to all.

The Mattituck Inlet DEC State Boat Launching Ramp is open year round and there is no parking fee required. This spot is located on Nagules Road off Breakwater Road on the West side of Mattituck Inlet. There is ample parking adjacent to Mattituck Creek and a couple of active Osprey platforms. You can also gain access to a small dock adjacent to the launch ramp or you can walk on the paved roadway leading into the launching area.

Orient Point State Park offers a nice drive along the water with wildlife views on either side. No paved walkways but many people walk along the road. There are seasonal restrictions on useage. The park closes at 4 pm during the winter. This would be a good choice for a nice early spring drive. A short distance east continue your drive down Narrow River Road, a quiet road with fields and river views, often has good bird sightings.

There are other Town Beaches along the north shore of Long Island that are accessible during the winter, early spring, and late fall. During the busy summer season you would need various town parking permits.

Riverwalk, downtown Riverhead, runs along the Peconic River. Park near the boardwalk to access it. This is a nice

*Some of the boardwalks at Smith Point near the FINS tower. Some walkways go toward the Wilderness area. Near the Refreshment stand are other paths with ocean views..*

evening walk and quite birdy at times.

Along the South Shore you might try Shinnecock Inlet on the West Side near the commerical fishing docks. You can park and have a nice view of the Inlet, Shinnecock Bay and the ocean just outside of the Inlet. There are no easy paths to walk on or negotiate a wheelchair but you might be able to get out and walk around the parking lot, not the best option.

Continuing along Dune Road between Shinnecock Inlet and Cupsogue County Park. There are a number of spots to pull off and watch for birds, Tiana Beach on the Bay Side being one of them. There is a short Boardwalk along the edge of the parking lot. There is an active Osprey nest adjacent to the site and you never know what you might find around the parking lot from Snowy Owls in the winter to migrating shorebirds in the spring. No Snowy Owls this winter though. Quogue Wetlands has 2-3 parking spots and a boardwalk that goes part way to the bay. There is one large step to get up onto the boardwalk.

At Cupsogue County Park there is a ramp that leads up to the deck overlooking the ocean and the bay, though I suspect that the slope of the ramp might pose some issues but it is worth a visit to see for yourself.

If you are near Westhampton stop at Brook Avenue a little west of the town. There is a small spot to sit and watch the

birds and ducks. There are benches and a bricked “patio” to welcome you.

Quogue Wildlife Refuge has an area called the Fairy Dell. It is across the railroad tracks from the Refuge. Parking on the side of the road is fine. From there access the boardwalk, which is flat and goes through the marsh.

Smith Point County Park and the National Seashore (FINS) offers a Boardwalk that goes through some of the dunes west of the Ranger Station. Park in the handicapped spots. The Handicapped Parking area adjacent to the Refreshment stand has paved paths to the Refreshment stand where there are benches that overlook the ocean. Watch for birds and maybe even a whale spout.

A bit further west is the Bayard Cutting Aborium which has some nice paved pathways through the park, most of which are relatively flat.

There are a few spots to just park near the water and enjoy the view. Iron Pier Beach in Riverhead, and Trumans Beach among them. Southampton has Coopers Beach where there is a U shaped drive that gives you ocean views. Don't forget these are great until the summer when restrictions abound.

*If you have a favorite spot to go when its cold or you just need a little car birding send us a note and we will try to share it in the next Osprey.*





# Warbler ID Match Game

## Darlene McNeil

**E**ven though it may still be winter, now is a great time to get in shape for Spring!

Soon those beauties will be singing from the treetops or skulking around the bushes. Here is a fun game to brush up on your warbler ID skills! See if you can match the warbler species to its description! Although only 8 or 9 species of warblers nest on Long Island, if it is a good Spring all the warblers here should be passing through on their way to their breeding grounds.

### Description #1

My favorite place is the understory among the outer branches of shrubs and small trees in clearings, road edges, and disturbed areas. My song tells you that I am glad to see you, some folks think I say, *pleased, pleased, pleased, to metcha!* I look very different in Spring and Fall. In the Spring I sport a bright yellow cap, two bold white wing bars, and some nice chestnut color on my flanks, and I like to perch with my tail cocked upwards.

### Description #2

My favorite place to be is in the understory and unlike other warblers I keep my same outfit in Spring and Fall. My song is a lazy buzzy one and some folks think I say, *I am so la zee*, while others think I say, *beer, beer, beer, beeee*. I am a sharp dressed man in midnight blue, with a black throat, white belly and a neat white square (handkerchief) on my wing. My girlfriend is very drab olive brown, but she sports a white handkerchief on her wing too.

### Description #3

My favorite place to be is in the high canopy of trees, eating insects from the tips of high branches. I have a very distinctive song that some people think I say, *trees, trees, I love trees* or *zay, zay, zoo, zee*. I have a lemon colored face with a black throat but my girlfriend and I do not look the same, she doesn't have a black throat like I do







D

**Description #4**

My favorite place to be is foraging on the outer edges of trees and shrubs plucking tasty insects from the underside of leaves. I sing a very short song with the last notes being the loudest and most emphatic and some think I say *wheeta wheeta wheet'eo*. My girlfriend and I look different, I have a bold black mask and necklace with tassels. I have a bright yellow chin and breast, with big white wing patch. If you can catch a glimpse of the underside of my tail it is half white and half black.

**Description #5**

My favorite place to be is at the middle canopy and tops of willows. I have a loud distinctive song which some folks say sounds like, *Sweet, sweet, sweet, I am so sweet*. My girlfriend and I look different. I am an all bright yellow bird with beautiful red streaks on my breast and flanks. My favorite food is insects.

**Description #6**

My favorite spot is foraging on the forest floor for invertebrates in the leaf litter. My name comes from the type of nest I build. I have a very loud song for as small of a bird as I am. Some folks think I say, *Teacher, teacher, teacher, teacher*. I have an olive brown back and a spotted breast. I keep my same outfit Spring and Fall. My girlfriend and I look the same.

**Description #7**

My favorite place to be mid story in the trees. I like to eat by gleaning insects from leaves and branch tips, watch out, I hop around fast and move my wings pretty fast. My song is described as a rising buzzy trill that pinches off at the end and some think I say *zeeee-up*. I have a blue back and a yellow throat and breast, I have two white wingbars and I have white broken eye arcs. My girlfriend looks different, I have a warm chestnut/black chest band.

**Description #8**

My favorite place to be is in the understory, and one of my favorite behaviors is to creep along the trunks of trees like a



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Nuthatch. Some folks say I my song sounds like a squeaky wagon wheel, while others think I say *wheezy, wheezy, wheezy*. I am handsomely decked out in all black and white with stripes. My girlfriend and I look the same

### Description #9

My favorite place to be is in the understory and I like to feed on the upper portion of bushes and tops of small trees on insects. I like to probe my bill into curled leaves. My song is buzzy and some think I say *bee-buzz*. I am a small bright yellow bird with blue-gray wings with two white wingbars, and I have a black line that goes from the tip of my beak to just behind my eye. My girlfriend and I look the same.

### Description #10

My favorite place to be is in tangled vegetation at the edges of marshes and wetlands. I am pretty vocal singing my loud song which some folks think I say, *wichety, wichety, wichety*. I also make a loud chip noise that sounds like *chunk*. I look different in Spring and Fall and my girlfriend and I look different. I sport a big black mask, and a yellow throat and belly with an olive colored back. I am very curious and will come visit you if you pish me out.

### Description #11

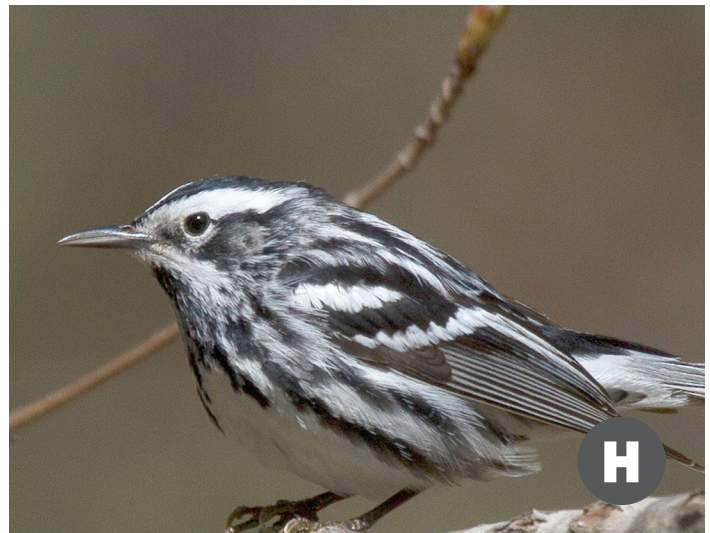
My favorite place to be is midstory looking for insects on the bark and limbs of trees. But sometimes if you are lucky you can see me turning over leaf litter on the ground. My call is an insect like trill. I am a drab olive-buff color with a distinctive mustard colored head, four bold black stripes on my head, and a black eye stripe. My girlfriend and I look the same.

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Information for this quiz came from Cornell's Lab of Ornithology's *All about Birds* and *The Warbler Guide* by Tom Stephenson

Answers are on page 11

**Editor's note:** Darlene gives you mnemonics for the bird songs as part of the clues, if you would like to hear the bird songs – the way the birds say them – Cornell's Lab of Ornithology's *All about Birds* has recordings.







## UPCOMING EVENING PROGRAMS

MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 3 AT 7 PM

### Be A Good Egg

**Shelby Casas**

**Coastal Program Associate for Audubon NY**

Shelby will be presenting on Audubon New York's **Be A Good Egg** outreach program and reviewing outreach event training. Audubon New York has been running this program at beaches across Long Island with partner organizations since 2013. This presentation will cover Long Island beach nesting shorebirds, all sites involved in this work, the program's history, the importance shorebird stewardship and how the chapter can be involved. We will review outreach training and creating positive engagement with beachgoers during Be a Good Egg events.

Prior to her role with Audubon New York, Shelby worked with Audubon Connecticut as a seasonal Coastal Waterbird technician. She started her birding journey at Clarkson University studying Golden-winged Warblers population distribution in Northern New York where she graduated with a BS in Biology and focus on Environmental Science. Shelby oversees Audubon's coastal bird conservation work on Long Island. She is trained in threatened and endangered species stewardship and monitoring, environmental education, and applied conservation. In 2022 she was awarded the Conservationist of the Year award for her shorebird work on Long Island by the Audubon CT/NY State office and is based at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary & Center in Oyster Bay.

MONDAY EVENING, MAY 1 AT 7 PM

### Gulls of Long Island

**Kim Lato**

Join Kim Lato, a PhD student at Stony Brook University and native Long Islander to learn all about our native gull species. Gulls might pester you at the beach for your lunch, however these animals are a critical part of marine ecosystems. In this presentation, Kim will introduce you to the common gull species found on Long Island, where they nest, what they eat, and where they are going. Learn about GPS tracking data of these birds, and how our actions as humans can impact the behavior of these animals. This free program is co-hosted by Eastern Long Island Audubon Society and Quogue Wildlife Refuge.



Join in on June 5th at 7 pm for an open discussion on binoculars, scopes and other birding equipment.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 FROM NOON TO 3:00 PM

## Earth Day Celebration at Quogue Wildlife Refuge

**COME AND CELEBRATE  
NATURE AND OUR LOVELY PLANET.**

The day will include guided Bird Walks by ELIAS, live animal presentations, crafts for the kids, environmental exhibitors, self-guided kayaking and canoeing on Old Ice Pond and a few surprises.

This celebration is offered by Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, Westhampton Beach Earth Day, & Quogue Wildlife Refuge. A great day for all ages!

Check  
<http://quoguewildliferefuge.org>  
for more detailed schedule of events.







## Golf Course Certification Not What It Seems

### Dan Cristol

North America has about 20,000 golf courses covering millions of acres. That presents both a threat and an opportunity for bird conservation.

Researchers have been examining golf courses to answer the seemingly simple question of whether they are good or bad for birds. Large, highly visible avian die-offs from exposure to golf course pesticides have been alleviated due to wiser use and banning of the worst offenders, such as chlordane. But lack of mass mortality alone does not mean that golf courses serve as lovely green oases for birds, as they do for golfers.

Golf courses generally have as many or more individual birds and species as the natural habitats around them, which is a win for birds. But the high numbers are achieved because golf courses, while retaining some of the original birds present, also attract new ones by providing water, grass and forest-edge habitat for urban-adaptable species that were absent from the previous habitat. These are the same species that thrive in suburban backyards and don't need additional habitat to sustain healthy populations.

But there are bright spots, even for birds in need of conservation assistance. Populations of a few species, such as Red-headed Woodpeckers can thrive on

golf courses if they are managed with birds in mind. Also, it is possible to design or modify golf courses in ways that help more birds.

Obviously, reducing inputs of fertilizers and pesticides by using more native plant species and reducing the width of fairways is a huge start. But the research on which parts of golf courses actually host birds of conservation concern is clear – retention or restoration of more acres of intact native habitat is the key. That means maintaining larger patches of forest including oaks, and leaving dead trees in place. Fairways that zig-zag tightly through thin strips of pines are useless for most native birds, whereas a course that retains a large mixed forest at the center, with no cart paths or outbuildings, will support bigger populations of birds, including some of conservation concern.

Golfers often tell me with pride that their golf course is an "Audubon Bird Sanctuary." I just smile, not wanting to burst their bubble. In fact, some golf courses are certified by an unrelated organization, Audubon International, as being part of their Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The National Audubon Society, a storied bird conservation non-profit that often opposes the development of new golf courses, sued Audubon International to stop it from misleading golfers, but failed to convince the judge that the name created confusion.

Audubon International sole purpose is to advise golf courses on reducing water use, encouraging environmental outreach, minimizing chemical use, and managing wildlife. Golf courses join Audubon International for \$1,000 and pay an annual \$500 membership, allowing them to work through the bronze, silver or gold certification processes if they wish. The United States Golf Association also contributes a massive sum each year. The golf industry is the biggest contributor to Audubon International, which also advises other developers and industries on improving their environmental footprints.

Is an Audubon International certified golf course better for birds? A study in 2005 with the partial title "Fool's Gold" indicated that golf courses certified at the gold level were not clearly better for birds than non-certified golf courses nearby, despite hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting fees to Audubon International.

Why certify a course? The answer can be found in another study, which showed that golfers were willing to pay \$34 more per round of golf to play a certified sanctuary. Because golf has a bad environmental reputation, the knowledge that one's course is "Audubon-certified" apparently assuages guilt or provides a more valuable experience in other ways.

*Continued on page 11*

## THE FARMERS MARKET FARM STAND

Just West  
of Buoy One

Watch  
for Spring  
Opening



**Proprietor: John Carson**

**76 Montauk Highway, Westhampton, NY 11978 • 631.375.0612**

**Featuring Blue Duck Bakery Breads & Pies**

**And the finest-fresh seasonal local produce — including our own hand-pressed lemonade, fruit jams, raw honey, maple syrup, chowder, fruit and savory tarts.**

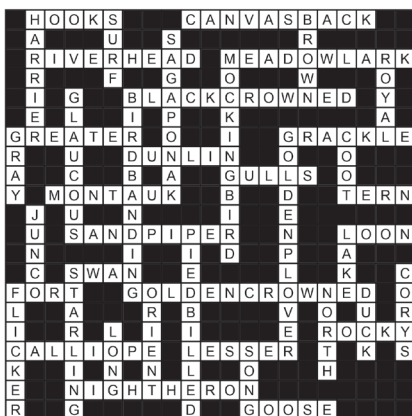


For the latest information - check the website for meetings, walks & other events

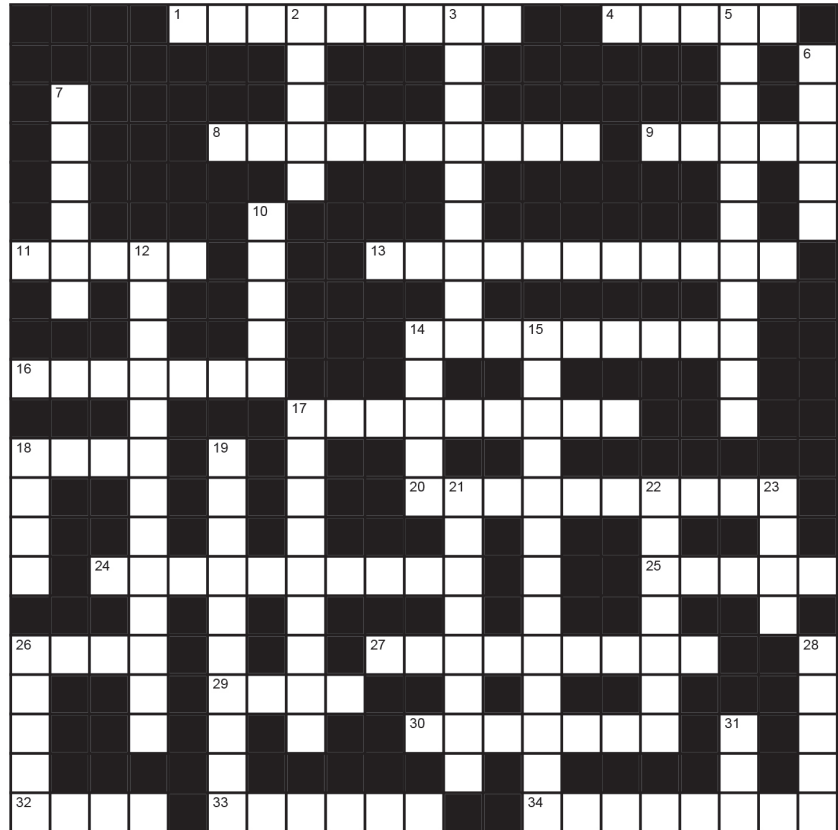
Our mission is to be an inspiration to those who feel a sense of kinship with Long Island by encouraging an appreciation for the natural world and a commitment to the environment.

**It's not as good as birding, but...**

Answers to Winter 2023 puzzle by Tom Moran



**Some Cool Recent Birds Tom Moran**



**Across**

- 1 American \_\_\_\_\_, doesn't live up to its name color in winter; think precious metal!
- 4 19 or 28 Down (start with 28 Down).
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Duck, shouldn't it be – billed Duck?
- 9 25 Across is one of several types found at Montauk and elsewhere this winter: Black and white ocean birds from the north.
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ Owl or Egret
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_ Merganser
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ Blackbird, *conk-la-ree!*
- 16 Beaky Buzzard, who had a run-in with Bugs Bunny, was one.
- 17 Red \_\_\_\_\_, a good showing of these at Paumanok Path this winter.
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_ Inlet, Montauk, upclose Kittiwakes and 25 Across here this winter.
- 20 Gray or rufous – not Sawhet
- 24 About the size of a crow, only the Ivory-billed would be larger in NA, Pileated \_\_\_\_\_
- 25 Common and Thick-billed were seen at the same time at Montauk this winter
- 26 A number of them were present at Beaver Dam Rd this winter...*you old* \_\_\_\_\_.
- 27 \_\_\_\_\_ Morton NWR, Chickadees will eat out of your hand!
- 29 Crazy as a...
- 30 \_\_\_\_\_ Long Island Audubon Society.
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_ Dove/Pidgeon.
- 33 Small beach bird, tip of long bill curved down.

34 Here, not White-winged, not Gray-headed, not Pink-sided, not Oregon... Here Slate-colored group of \_\_\_\_\_ Junco.

**Down**

- 2) Smaller than a Hairy (24 Across)
- 3 Black-capped \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Gull. Made an appearance at Setauket this winter.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Turnstone
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Point. Good place to see Great Cormorant in the winter
- 10 Bald \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow. I prefer "Oh, Canada..."
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ Gull (possessive)
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_ Nuthatch, not Red-breasted. *Yank!*
- 17 Hamlet on LI that includes EPCAL.
- 18 Carolina, House, Marsh, Sedge, Winter...
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_ (4 Across )
- 21 Northern \_\_\_\_\_ (points of a compass)
- 22 South \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ Bays
- 23 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow. Or to do something for fun, sometimes with mischievous intent
- 26 \_\_\_\_\_ Waxwing. Not his cousin who is unconventional and often into art.
- 28 \_\_\_\_\_ Grebe, a locally uncommon one seen in Kings County this winter
- 31 Renamed Canada from Gray, *really?*



**Golf Course Certification  
Not What It Seems**

*Continued from page 9*

Is Audubon International doing any good? Yes, all of their recommendations are good for the environment, though not particularly valuable to local birds. Is there any harm in greenwashing a golf course with a confusing certification? That's a more complicated question that each golfer needs to answer for themselves. But knowing the facts should be helpful in working that out.

Product labeling in general is a fraught business, from gory TV images of dolphins being killed in tuna nets in the 1970s to the recent uproar when the Marine Stewardship Council's revoked its stamp of approval from Maine lobster because of the deaths of so many northern right whales from entanglement. Every time a sustainability certification program is created to inform consumer choice, the affected industries start their own alternative self-certification programs. The result is confused consumers, and conscientious golfers are no exception. But imagine how many more birds there would be if that extra \$34 was going to the National Audubon Society instead of Audubon International?

*This article was used with the permission of the author, Dan Cristol. He teaches in the Biology Department at the College of William and Mary and can be contacted at dacris@wm.edu. To discover local birding opportunities in the Williamsburgh area visit <http://williamsburgbirdclub.org/>*

# Quogue Wildlife Refuge

**Eileen Schwinn**

**Sunday, February 4, 2023**

Thanks to all for braving the cool start to the day at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. This trip was a postponement and location change for the scheduled trip to Shinnecock Inlet.

Our birding day started in the parking lot, where we able to see and hear Nuthatches - both Red and White, as well as the always present Black-capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse. A total of 23 species were seen by the majority as we took a stroll to the Refuge feeders, the Chocolate Pudding Pond, the Dam Trail and then back to the Martin Field. For some, I hope this first visit to the Quogue Wildlife Refuge was an enjoyable one, and please return again - it's a gem and provides a quiet, safe trail system to enjoy in any season of the year!

Special THANKS to Byron, the Esteemed President of Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, for providing hot chocolate to us after the walk, which was enjoyed inside the Nature Center!

Some of the birds we saw:  
Gadwall (the solo duck with the black tail in the Ice Pond)  
Great Blue Heron  
Turkey Vulture  
Red-bellied & Downy Woodpecker  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
White-and Red-breasted Nuthatches

Carolina Wren  
House Finch & American Goldfinch  
Dark-eyed Junco  
White-throated and Song Sparrows  
Red-winged Blackbird

**Answers to the  
Warbler ID Quiz**

- A.** Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Description # 2
- B.** Black-throated Green Warbler  
Description # 3
- C.** Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Description # 1
- D.** Common Yellowthroat  
Description # 10
- E.** Ovenbird  
Description # 6
- F.** Worm-eating Warbler  
Description # 11
- G.** Blue-winged Warbler  
Description # 9
- H.** Black & White Warbler  
Description # 8
- I.** Northern Parula  
Description # 7
- J.** Yellow Warbler  
Description # 5
- K.** Magnolia Warbler  
Description # 4

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# THE OSPREY

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