



The **OSPREY**

November/December 2008 — Vol. XXXVIII No. 6

NATURE PROGRAMS

Monday, November 3rd

NY'S SECOND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS BY KIMBERLEY CORWIN

New York's second *Breeding Bird Atlas* is imminent. The book documents changes in our bird distributions over the past 20 years. Some species have increased greatly while others have declined alarmingly. A few species are new breeders in the state while at least one has all but disappeared. Kimberley Corwin, who coordinated the Atlas project and co-edited the Atlas publication, will show distribution maps and share some of the stories with us. Get a sneak peak into the book that New York's birders have been waiting years to see!

Kim is the Co-Editor of the *Breeding Bird Atlas* publication. She served as the Project Coordinator of the project from its start in 1999. Kim holds a Master's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University at Albany. In her spare time, Kim enjoys hiking and birding. She is an avid road cyclist and mountain biker.



James Galletto

The first feeding from A Red Tale

Monday, December 1st JAMES GALLETTO - A RED TALE

James Galletto will give a program called *A Red Tale* an intimate view inside the life of a Red-tail Hawk Family. We will follow their lives from egg to fledging to hunting on their own.

James Galletto has been photographing nature for ten years and is known world wide for his action and behavior photography. His images have graced the cover of *Natures Best Magazine* and have hung on the walls of Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, November 1, 2008 JONES BEACH STATE PARK AND POINT LOOKOUT

Leader: John McNeil

This area is a catch basin for all types of birds, and holds many surprises. We will try to catch the end of the fall migration as well as the arrival of our winter visitors from the north. Do not forget to bring a lunch.

Meet at the West End #2 parking lot at 9 am. We will drive to Point Lookout, check the jetties, and come back to JFK Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. Then check

Ocean Parkway east to Robert Moses State Park. If time permits we walk on the boardwalk to Fire Island Lighthouse. Contact your trip leader John McNeil at 631.281.2623 at home or on the day of the field trip, by cell 631.219.8947.

December 2008

December presents a special opportunity for you to join one of the Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) and/or the Waterfowl Census. The leaders and territories are listed on page 2. Please pick one and participate in this nationwide effort that has been going on for over 100 years. There are a few related stories inside.

Nature programs and membership meetings are held the first Monday of every month at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

These free programs are open to all.

(Directions are on our website.)

7:15 pm – Nature Chat

7:30 pm – Chapter News

8:00 pm – Speaker

**Saturday, November 22 &
Sunday, November 23**

SEED SALE

**See Insert for
Order Form**

Christmas Bird Counts & Winter Waterfowl Censuses

John McNeil

As the holiday season approaches, it is once again time to think about the winter bird counts. Each year, ELIAS members participate in a series of ten counts — five Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society and five winter waterfowl censuses sponsored by the NY Ornithological Association. Dates and compilers for the counts are listed below. If you would like to participate as either a field observer or a feeder watcher in any of the listed CBC's, or as a participant in any of the waterfowl censuses, please contact the compiler for the count(s). A fee will be collected from all observers over 18, to defray the cost of compiling the data and publishing for the CBC results. There is no fee to participate in the Waterfowl Censuses. Usually the compilers are very flexible and participants can bird with the group until they need to go. So...please do not hesitate to ask if you

can participate. All help is welcome.

Experienced birders are needed for each of the counts, but beginners are most welcome. If you are not an experienced birder, field parties who are familiar with the territory will help you learn your way around. We hope that new observers will find the counts to be as exciting as experienced birders find them to be, and that they will continue to participate in the future. This is the way we can develop an adequate pool of skilled, committed observers to continue the tradition.

Feeder watchers who live within the count circle are needed to provide additional coverage by recording the number of individuals and the variety of species that appear at the feeder during the count day.

For the most part, counting begins as soon as it is light enough to see (around 6:30 to 7:00 am) and continues until it is too dark to see anymore (around 5:00 pm). How-

ever, to hunt for owls, some observers start a few hours before daylight and continue for a while after dark. At least eight hours of field observation during daylight hours in a CBC circle is required for acceptance of a CBC report.

Field coverage is primarily done by some combination of walking and driving, but bicycles, boats, motorcycles, and other modes of transportation are also used.

The Winter Waterfowl Censuses have been compiled throughout the state of New York since 1955. These too are done in assigned territories, but only birds such as ducks, geese, swans, cormorants, grebes, and coots are counted. These censuses are usually done in mid-January by the same CBC compilers. If you would like to participate please contact a compiler.

Below are the people to contact to join the CBC and the Waterfowl Census.



Count	Date	Compiler	Contact Information
Quogue to Water Mill CBC	Sunday, Dec. 14th	Steve Biasetti	Hm 874-4684 Wk 765-6450 x205 biafamily@optonline.net sbiasetti@eastendenvironment.org
Montauk CBC	Saturday, Dec. 20th	Hugh McGuinness	907-1709 hmcguinness@ross.org
Sagaponack CBC	Sunday, Dec. 21st	Hugh McGuinness	907-1709 hmcguinness@ross.org
Central Suffolk CBC	Saturday, Dec. 27th	Eileen Schwinn	516-662-7751 beachmed@optonline.net
Orient CBC	Saturday, Jan 3rd, 2009	MaryLaura Lamont	722-5542 elamont@optonline.net
Smith Point to Shinnecock Inlet Census	Saturday, Jan. 17th	Jay Kuhlman	878-4461 sjkuhlman@aol.com
Yaphank to Peconic Bay Census	Midweek of Jan. 17th	John McNeil	281-2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net
Montauk Point to Amagansett Census	Saturday, Jan. 17th	Hugh McGuinness	907-1709 hmcguinness@ross.org
Reeves Bay to Noyack Bay	Midweek of Jan. 17th	John McNeil	281-2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net
Fresh Pond to Sag Harbor	Midweek of Jan. 17th	John McNeil	281-2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net

WHY THE COUNT IS IMPORTANT

From December 14, 2008 through January 5, 2009, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Grandmothers and students, soccer moms and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists will head out on an annual mission – often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house in the middle of winter.

These Citizen Scientists are taking action for conservation. By participating in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, they help scientists understand how birds are faring amid unprecedented environmental challenges. The data they collect informs the world about the State of Birds, and provides the information we need to shape their future and ours.

"Each of the citizen scientists who brave snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation," said Geoff LeBaron, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count Director.

Last year, thousands of volunteers counted nearly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. Each count occurs in a designated circle, 15 miles in diameter, and is led by an experienced birder, or designated "compiler".

The longest running Citizen Science program in the world, the count originally began on Christmas Day in 1900 when ornithologist and legendary birder Frank Chapman posed an alternative to an earlier traditional holiday "side hunt." Chapman proposed "hunting" birds to record

their numbers. Instead of firing a shotgun, now we have an annual snapshot. Decades of data have added up to results envied by other scientists who don't enjoy such a fleet of volunteer help, or creatures as easily seen and counted as birds.

"Counting is the first step in learning how environmental threats are affecting our birds," said LeBaron. The proverbial "canaries in the coal mine," birds provide an early warning indicator of the health of the world we all share.

"Last year these birds sent us a clear message that their fate is determined by human activity more than anything else," said Audubon President John Flicker when announcing WatchList 2007. The using CBC and other data sources, WatchList identified 178 species in the continental U.S. and 39 in Hawaii that are imperiled. The report was based on the latest available research, including the Christmas Bird Count. In June of 2007, CBC results were pivotal to the Common Birds in Decline Report which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past forty years, with some down as much as 80 percent.



Other Walks of Interest

Saturday, November 1

MaryLaura Lamont, ELIAS Board Member and NPS naturalist, will lead a walk on November 1. Meet at 9 am at the eastern section of Robert Moses parking Field 5. The walk will go to the **Fire Island Lighthouse**.

Saturday, November 22

Join MaryLaura Lamont, at **Hallockville Museum**, Sound Ave, Northville. There will be a \$5.00 fee charged to help Hallockville educational school programs. Meet at 9 am.

Sunday, November 23

MaryLaura will lead one more walk to the **William Floyd Estate**. Enter by the Service Entrance gate, at 20 Washington Ave. in Mastic. Contact MaryLaura at work (631) 399-2030 for details and info. Meet at 9 am

From the Field

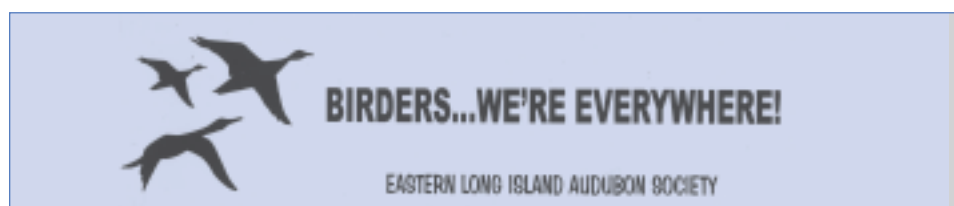
The planned walk to Jamaica Bay was cancelled due to Hurricane Hanna. The walk to Smith Point Park took place too late to get a report into this issue of the newsletter.

**ELIAS hats are available
at meetings, events
and The Seed Sale**

Editor's Note

Thank you to Hans Schwinn, MD for the the wonderful photos of Alaskan wildlife that appeared in the last issue. Photo credit was inadvertently left off.

Look for ELIAS bumper stickers!



Ho Hum Becomes *Oh Wow!* On a Christmas Count

Don and Gigi Spates

Thus far, the morning of December 15th, Christmas Count 2007 for our sector of the Quogue to Watermill area had been relatively quiet with common overwintering bird species in average numbers. The weather was cool and mostly sunny.

Toward 11 am as we drove around a corner in the hills above Shinnecock Bay we saw many birds crisscrossing a small side street. On the east edge of the road was a row of mature red cedar trees; on the west side, an overgrown, undeveloped lot. As each of us exited the car we could hear and see a variety of birds on the ground, in the cedars and flitting back and forth from one side of the road to the other. The south-facing side of one cedar tree, somewhat in the middle of the row and full of cedar berries, was the spotlight of activity of a variety of species. Immediately, one group of birds stood out as unusual: about robin-size, long-tailed, rose-raspberry red with white wing bars on dark wings, they showed prominently in the late morning sun, hanging upside down and sideways, stoking their chunky beaks with cedar berries. They were obviously Pine Grosbeaks. The other "stand out" birds mixed through the dark foliage, also with thick beaks rounded on top, showed yellow in the sun. At first glance we thought the yellow ones were Evening Grosbeaks which we had seen a number of times before, but not recently. Looking for a few more moments we knew that we were not right with that call, as the white on the wings were bars not patches, and the shapes were more elongated than Evenings, with decidedly longer tails and dark not light beaks. The whole head proportion to the beak spoke Pine Grosbeaks. Both Peterson and Sibley bird guides verified the red Pine Grosbeak males and the confusing, yellowish birds as Pine Grosbeak females. What a glorious sight—all mixed in with Pine Siskins, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Robins! We

had a solid twenty minutes of binocular observing, even with time to set up and use our scope while the Grosbeaks remained in that one cedar tree, moving only to feed. Indeed, we approached that cedar within 15 to 20 feet while the feeding frenzy of all the birds continued, moving a little into the thick-foliaged branches, then quickly back out in full view again. Then, gradually the Grosbeaks and Siskins were replaced by a flock of Starlings that wanted in on the feast.

Both observers discussed and agreed upon the identification of this sighting of

Pine Grosbeaks. We had no photographic equipment with us, but the length and closeness of observation and the staying power of the birds left no doubt as to what we had seen. The dense evergreen trees growing against the back of an old building, their branches full of berries, certainly provided shelter from the winter chill and cool breezes of the day, and food for hungry birds. The birds, in turn, provided warmth to the heart and feast for the eyes of two Long Island birders.



Catching the Wave

Mary Beth Wilson

I was awakened early on the morning of October 7th by the branches of the pussy willow tree in my yard tapping on the window. That, and the chilly wind coming out of the northwest, told me that the weather forecasters had actually gotten it right for once, and the cold front they had predicted was really here! As I raced outside to my car and headed over the bridge towards the Fire Island National Seashore, I could feel it in the air....the hawks were coming!

The east side of Field 5 at Robert Moses State Park was crowded with cars that I knew, at this time of year, did not belong to beach goers....the Fire Island Raptor Enumerators were here, and so too, flying overhead in a steady stream, were the raptors themselves!

On the hawk-watch platform, the counters were calling out sightings all over the park. "K bird on the left, Sharpie overhead, Merlin coming in over #2... This is like it was in the old days!" I heard shouted over and over again. In the two hours I was there, the flow of birds never let up, and at the end of the day, the tally told the story... 109 Sharpies, 309 American Kestrels, 107 Merlins, 9 Ospreys, 1 Cooper's Hawk and 5 Peregrines.

I'm sure that there have been days with higher counts, but for me, a relatively new comer to the hawk watch scene, this was one of the best birding days I had ever seen. The perfect weather, the excitement among my fellow birders on the platform, and above all the joy of seeing so many magnificent raptors streaming across the sky are all part of why I just smile when people say to me, "You're getting up at WHAT time to go WHERE??"



Turkey Vultures, a new species for LI

Larry Penny

Chief East Hampton Natural Resources

It was Tuesday evening after Labor Day when I got a call from Charlie Morici who caretakes parks and nature preserves in Montauk for the Town of East Hampton. What he had to say made my ears pop. He had discovered a Turkey Vulture nest with two nestlings in a parkland on the north side of Montauk. Would I like to see it? I sure would, was my reply. To my knowledge Turkey Vultures had never nested in Montauk nor any other place on Long Island. I met Charlie at the Navy Road park site the next morning; I brought along another nature preserve manager, Walter Galcik, who caretakes Shadmoor Park on the ocean in Montauk. I looked around in the trees and saw nothing, I asked Charlie where was the nest.

He very politely informed me that vultures don't nest in trees, but on the ground in a cave, on a rocky ledge, or similar non-arboreal spot. I had majored in ornithology in college, had studied birds on both coasts and obviously I still had a lot to learn. Charlie led us to a spot in a county park where there was a little concrete building no bigger than an outhouse left over from the World War II days when the military occupied most of Montauk. He didn't want to go through the narrow brushy pathway to the building's entrance — he had already done it twice and had contracted a bad case of chiggers.

Walter and I sidled through, looked into the semi-dark space and immediately were met with loud screeches; when our eyes adjusted to the dimness, we saw the two Turkey Vulture chicks, dark bodies, naked necks, whitish heads huddled together trying to hide. The place stank of vulture excrement and vulture regurgitation. Vultures don't carry prey to their nests in talons the way hawks and eagles do, they carry it in their crop semi-digested. It was so dark, I had to use the flash on my camera, but I snuck a picture or two before we backed away. The par-

ents were nowhere to be seen, but Charlie had seen them around off and on during the weeks prior to our visit.

When I wrote about the young Montauk vultures in the *East Hampton Press*, a local teacher, Brad Dickinson, scion of a well-established Montauk family that raised cattle and horses for generations when Montauk was more like the wild west than an exurb of New York City, called me up about those vultures. It turns out that two obstreperous lads, both 13 years-old and summer school students of his, Richie Malik-Atkinson and Anthony Santich had discovered the chicks a month-and-a-half earlier while exploring that part of the hamlet. They came to class and reported that they had found two albino Turkey chicks in an abandoned building. Brad followed them to the spot, and, there were the two whitish chicks all right, but they weren't Turkeys, they were Turkey Vultures. They provided the provender for a very enlightening class look into the life of these scavengers, which, by the way, in the past ten years or so had become more and more common on the South Fork, even showing up on Christmas bird counts from time to time.

The story is not finished. Just today I learned from Gigi Spates who used to run the Quogue Wildlife Refuge so ably with the late Carl Helms, that two Turkey Vultures with wing injuries which had been together in the same cage at the refuge in the early 1980's turned out to be male

and female. How did they find out, that the two, over the course of three years, had twice made a nest and had each time produced a single offspring. They proceeded to take good care of each hatchling as any good bird parents would do until it was time for fledging. Carl and Gigi let them go and that was that.

But now, Gigi wonders if somehow, Turkey Vultures, as so many other birds, exhibit site fidelity — they come back to the place of their origin. It's quite possible that these two chicks, having grown up in the confines of the Quogue Wildlife Sanctuary, were in some way responsible for the growing presence of Vultures on Long Island. Recently more than one observer has reported seeing them feeding on road kill deer. When the observers' vehicles passed by, they didn't fly off, the way many crows don't leave roadside carcasses when cars pass by.

I'm not an authority on Turkey Vultures, but I have heard the story more than once that before the Battle of Gettysburg, a turning point in the Civil War, there were no Vultures around. Following the battle, they appeared and have nested in the area ever since. If true, it would be an example of site fidelity in Turkey Vultures. Montauk can probably look forward to having them back along with their parents in the next breeding season and in future years.

One of the chicks in the outhouse-size building left from WWII. Turkey Vultures nest on the ground, not in trees like other hawks and eagles.



PROJECT FEEDERWATCH BENEFITS BIRDS AND PEOPLE

CONNECTION WITH NATURE PROMOTES WELLNESS



ITHACA, NY
More than a hundred studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in

children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing — benefitting themselves and the birds.

"It is a great winter time activity for the whole family," says Alaska FeederWatcher Nancy Darnell. "If you have children, they will come to love watching the birds. All of this is fun and a chance to contribute to scientific studies, too!"

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8 and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges — a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

"Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the



world's largest database on feeder-bird populations," says project leader David Bonter. "We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows."

"Project FeederWatch opened up a whole new world for me," says participant Cheri Ryan of Lockport, Kentucky. "It's so interesting to watch the activities of the birds. I learn something new each time I participate."

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project — part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Repolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado — the state's first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor'easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.


Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the Grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. "Nature is not merely an amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and

functioning," says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or access to the environment in any way improves a child's cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child's psychological well-being. Wells also notes that when children spent time with nature early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.



Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights.

Many FeederWatchers echo this comment from Mary Strasser of Wisconsin: "The greatest reward for me as a participant in Project FeederWatch these many years has been observing birds and behavior that I might have missed had I not been part of this project." 



Photos supplied by Project FeederWatch. Clockwise: American Tree Sparrow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee and at left, an Evening Grosbeak.

Conservation Column

“Nobody can do everything but everybody can do something”

Beth Gustin

Election day is almost here. There are some issues that dominate the media and our own political discussions. Things such as the economy, the wars, and healthcare are extremely important and we pretty much know where politicians stand on these issues. Although the environment seems to have been put on the back burner in recent weeks, we should not neglect to consider environmental concerns when casting our votes this year. The website of the League of Conservation Voters is a great place to research the environmental

records and views of politicians on the national level. Local issues such as land conservation, groundwater quality, and pollution in our waterways are just as important as national issues, and our choices of local officials may have a more immediate impact on our day to day lives. Although Eastern Long Island Audubon Society does not make any political endorsements, we do encourage our members to consider the local, national and global environment when making their voting decisions.



From Kaler's Pond Nature Center

Jay Kuhlman

The Kaler's Pond Audubon Nature Center ended its program with a Wildlife festival on October 5. This concluded a good summer, with new support from the residents of the area, and help from Suffolk County Legislator Ed Romaine, as well as the Town of Brookhaven.

The gardens have continued to grow and expand. The bird feeders are always active. The next endeavor will be monthly programs held at the Center Moriches Library from January to April on Sunday afternoons. The titles will be announced in the issue.



Chapter Renewal & Membership

For \$15 a year, you will receive 6 copies of this newsletter. You will also be supporting our local education and conservation activities. (Members of National Audubon who are not chapter members receive one copy of this newsletter per year.)

This is a Renewal New Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Make Check payable to:

Eastern Long Island Audubon Society

and mail to:

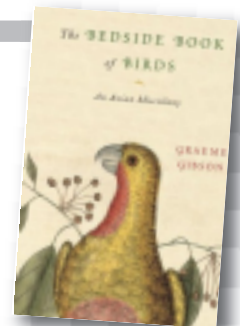
ELIAS, Membership

PO Box 206

East Quogue, NY 11942-0206



A Nifty Gift



The Bedside Book of Birds — An Avian Miscellany

by Graeme Gibson

Can't fall asleep? Have this by your bedside! You won't fall asleep immediately, but you will take your mind off all the worries that are keeping you awake! Beautifully illustrated, a page or two excerpt of poetry, folklore, or a chapter from a published volume of literature may put your mind at ease. I've heard from an acquaintance, that a copy of this book is in the guest room at their friend's home. I can't think of a nicer gift to give a birder, or for a birder to give to anyone else who needs to understand why we do the things we do!



An Unbelievable Variety Awaits in Arizona



Mike Higgiston

I recently visited Southeast Arizona on a birding trip to add to my life list. The local guide I hired last year was very successful so I decided on a return engagement. Our first day found us in world famous Madera Canyon, about a 90 minute drive south of Tucson. An early start was and is always advisable in the desert as the temperatures easily topped the 100 mark every day. Our first target bird was the Black-capped Gnatcatcher, a rare visitor from Mexico, which is now nesting in Madera. While searching for the Gnatcatcher, we saw Black-throated Sparrow, Acorn Woodpecker, Bell's Vireo, Canyon Towhee, Vermillion, Ash-throated, Dusky-capped and Brown-crested Flycatchers. If one never travels west to bird, these birds are only a rumor. Finally, a family of four Gnatcatchers was found and entertained us with their constant movement and chatter. One surprise was the sighting of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which was at the edge of its western range.

We continued up the canyon and stopped at a rental colony, where folks were maintaining about 15 feeders, many designed for Hummingbirds. It has become the go-to site in SE Arizona for Hummingbirds and we saw Blue-throated, Black-chinned, Magnificent, Broad-billed and Berylline, our target Hummer. A Mexican species, the Berylline usually wanders into Arizona canyons in the summer. An extra special treat at the feeders was another south of the border species, a male Flame-colored Tanager, who stopped by to pick at an orange. Other western birds noted in the surrounding cottonwoods and oaks were Bridled Titmouse, Berwick's Wren, Mexican Jay, Bronzed cowbird, Hepatic Tanager, Hooded Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher. Upon returning to the parking lot, we met a pair of birders who pointed out two Montezuma Quail. We returned the favor by showing them a Whiskered Screech Owl in a nest hole.

A Tufted Flycatcher, another Mexican species, had been reported in the extreme

southeast corner of Arizona. We decided to go for the bird even though it meant a 1:30 am wake-up call. Along the way we saw Lesser Nighthawk hunting bugs by the light of lamp posts and Common Poorwill, which tend to roost on lonely country roads. We arrived at dawn but were unable to see or hear the Flycatcher. One small bird had too much habitat to choose from and so had no loyalty to the place where it was first found. We did spy a Buff-breasted Flycatcher, a somewhat similar looking bird, which caused some unneeded adrenaline rush. Also seen was Painted Redstart, Band-tailed Pigeon and Grace's Warbler. A stop at the Wilcox sewage pond on the way back to Tucson

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One surprise was the sighting of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which was at the edge of its western range.

afforded us good looks at an unexpected White Pelican, Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Cinnamon Teal, a colony of Wilson's Phalaropes and two Scaled Quail. An Eurasian Collared Dove was found a few blocks away.

Wednesday morning found us on the road to Patagonia, south of Tucson. We stopped at many birdy places and enjoyed watching Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Cassin's, Tropical and Thick-billed Kingbirds, Common Ground Dove, Black Phoebe, Lucy's Warbler, Phainopepla, Lark Sparrow, Grey Hawk, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Black-Bellied Whistling Duck and Roadrunner. We ended our day early as Thursday would be another early start and would mean a hike of two and a half miles up 2700 feet of elevation. We needed to avoid the sun while hiking and it's always a good idea to be present at the site when the dawn chorus began. Our target bird was the Crescent-chested Warbler, seen this year for the first time only two days before.

I must admit I was somewhat apprehensive about such a hike as I am not a hiker. I

am especially not attuned to steep climbs. However, by just maintaining a one step at a time rhythm, I was able to complete the climb to Kent Springs, a wet spot in a decidedly dry area. We did see two elegant Trogons and a Greater Pewee along the way. The vistas were incredible. There were mountains on our left and right and we found ourselves looking down into the desert basin many miles away. On arriving, it was a pleasure to remove our backpacks and sit and listen for birds. Less than a half hour after arriving, a mixed flock of Passerines flew into the area and we saw our target bird amid the Bridled Titmouses, Nuthatches and Wrens. And then they were gone. Another hour of birding saw few birds and we started our return trip. We were certainly fortunate in our timing, as no one has reported the bird since.

Friday was our last day and after lunch we left for California Gulch, an area about a mile from the Mexican border. Our quarry was Five-striped Sparrow and Buff-colored Nightjar. The Sparrow prefers to roost and nest on vegetation covered canyon walls and, in comparison, makes the Yellow-bellied chat an easy bird to see. This day we were unsuccessful in seeing the Sparrow but heard its call often. An approaching thunderstorm cut short our searching and we returned to the cars to move to the Oro Blanco Mine site to listen for the Nightjar. As we waited for nightfall, we ate dinner and chatted and waited out an hour long rain shower. Nightfall arrived and we could hear the bird calling. Our guide had use of an infrared devise and was able to see the bird. We got into position and saw the Nightjar as a flood light illuminated the bird.

One couldn't ask for a more enjoyable trip. I noticed that a Yellow-green Vireo, usually seen along our entire border with Mexico, was found in Madera Canyon while I was flying home. It's just one more reason to return to Arizona next year.



Feeder Survey

Brian O’Keeffe

The Survey will be conducted the 1st week of the month starting on Sunday and ending the following Sunday.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEEDER SURVEY

- Define an area containing feeders that you can see all at once from a window. The area should be one you glance at frequently during your daily routine.
- Don’t include birds seen off premises.
- Predators perching in or swooping through the count area (not just flying over) may be counted if you feel that they were attracted by the birds at the feeder.
- Record the largest number of each species that you see in your count area during the eight-day count period.
- Do not add counts from previous days together. Be specific with the species name, e.g. we can’t use just the name Sparrow, Blackbird or Gull.
- At the end of the count period, record your final tallies and send in the form immediately.

Personal observations and comments are welcome as are suggestions to improve the surveys and reports.



Survey Dates:

November 2-November 9, 2008

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Phone _____

- _____ Mourning Dove
- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Blue Jay
- _____ House Finch
- _____ Black-capped Chickadee
- _____ Tufted Titmouse
- _____ Downy Woodpecker
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco
- _____ House Sparrow
- _____ White-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- _____ American Crow
- _____ European Starling
- _____ Common Grackle
- _____ Carolina Wren
- _____ Northern Mockingbird
- _____ American Goldfinch
- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Hairy Woodpecker
- _____ Common Flicker
- _____ Rufous-sided Towhee
- _____ American Robin
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Other _____

Survey Dates:

December 7-December 14, 2008

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Phone _____

- _____ Mourning Dove
- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Blue Jay
- _____ House Finch
- _____ Black-capped Chickadee
- _____ Tufted Titmouse
- _____ Downy Woodpecker
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco
- _____ House Sparrow
- _____ White-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- _____ American Crow
- _____ European Starling
- _____ Common Grackle
- _____ Carolina Wren
- _____ Northern Mockingbird
- _____ American Goldfinch
- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Hairy Woodpecker
- _____ Common Flicker
- _____ Rufous-sided Towhee
- _____ American Robin
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Other _____

Please mail immediately after each survey period to:

Brian O’Keeffe,
12 Union Ave.,
Center Moriches, NY 11934.

Or to send via the internet, go to:
easternlongislandaudubon.com and

- 1) Click on Chapter Projects
- 2) Click on Feeder Statistics
- 3) Click on To submit via the internet, etc.

On Birds and Books...**Two new Field Guides —
Just in time for Holiday Gifts!****Reviews by****Eileen Schwinn, ELIAS President**

Two birding field guides recently appeared on local bookshelves, and either would make a fine holiday gift for any bird enthusiast!

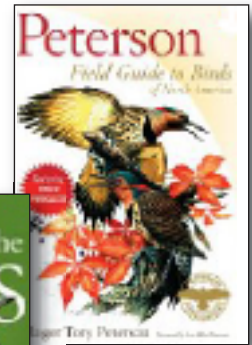
Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America, edited by Ted Floyd, covers 750 species and “introduces a whole bird approach” into one volume. Multiple photographs are used for each bird, along with range maps, and a five-and-a-half hour DVD of birdsongs. Various plumages and gender differences are shown as remarkably clear photos, with uncluttered backgrounds. An excellent introduction, glossary of terms, and an American Birding Association Checklist, round out this well thought out, easy to navigate guide.

Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America, by Roger Tory Peterson, is the highly anticipated update to the

original classic. Released with much fanfare on the 100th birthday of the late author, the guide uses the familiar illustrations drawn by Roger Tory

Peterson in a larger format. Multiple species on the same page, with the familiar arrows pointing out key characteristics, help the birder with identities. Range maps are on species pages, which makes use of the guide much easier! Enlarges range maps, a life list, and access to video pod casts (which, admittedly, I have yet to conquer) round out this beautiful guide.

While both volumes are “advertised” as Field Guide, I think their size makes them a little bulky to actually stick in a pocket or under a belt. Better kept in the car or home on the shelf for later reference. Remember, no one guide can provide all the information on every species — as an example, a few spring times ago, I observed



a Yellow-Crowned Night Heron with bright red legs! No guide I had with me showed or mentioned this feature.

When I got home, I

began searching all my books, finding this high-breeding characteristic mentioned in only one book.

Either — or better yet, both the **Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America** and **Peterson Field Guide to the Birds of North America** — would be a welcome addition to any birder's library.

**Great Friends, Great Flexibility and a Grand Sense of Humor****A Supremely Bad Idea —
Three Mad Birders
and Their Quest to See It All**

by Luke Dempsey

I am extremely jealous of Luke Dempsey. There, I've said it. OK, well, not about everything in his life, but definitely the birding part of it. He's got great friends, great flexibility in travel and great experiences to tell you about. Oh, and an absolutely grand sense of humor. His book, **A Supremely Bad Idea** — part memoir, part travel review, and part bird check-list records Dempsey's journey from his “first” bird through to this past January, in a casual, easy to read way. He's Joe Every-one — not a scientist, not Big Year obsessed, not a big-name — just a guy who was bitten by the birding bug as so many of us have been. A resident of New York City, his birding in Central Park expanded

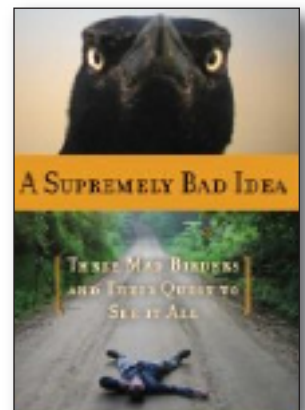
to weekend trips with his friends, Don and Donna. Then onto vacations with these pals to Arizona, Florida, Michigan, the Pacific Northwest, Texas, and Colorado — just the places we mid-level birders have all been to or have on our to-do list. He writes about Montauk, Jones Beach and Union Square — our places and our birds — too! And it's not just about the birds. As he puts it, “.....expecting rare birds,.....we found rare people, too.”

Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, birders with bird-related names, anti-immigrant vigilantes, the “Pregnants”, bad motel rooms (really, really bad motel rooms), nearly missed plane flights, Pacific Northwest early settlers history, “Barbara” (his car's GPS voice of reason and direction), breathtaking places, and a multitude of other reasons show why this


British-born, long-time U.S. resident, falls in love with America over and over again. The captioned happy snaps of birds and whatnot are an added treat.

A supremely good idea — pick up this book and read it. I laughed out loud and shed a tear or two along the way, following Luke and his posse. And I wished I could call him up and ask to be invited along. I think you will, too!

Five great big Feathers!



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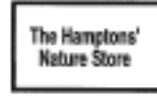
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Mark Your Calendars!

November

Sat., November 1 **Field Trips: Jones Beach** *See page 1*
Fire Island Lighthouse *See page 3*

Mon., November 3 **Nature Program:**
NY's Second Breeding Bird Atlas
by Kimberly Corwin *See page 1*

Sat & Sun., Nov 22 & 23 **SEED SALE AT QUOGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE**
Orders must be received by November 10.

Sat., November 22 **Field Trip: Hallockville Museum** *See page 3*

Sun., November 23 **Field Trip: William Floyd Estate** *See page 3*

December

Mon., December 1 **Nature Program:**
James Galletto - A Red Tale *See page 3*

December 14 through
January 5, 2009 **Christmas Bird Counts** *See page 2*



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