



The OSPREY

July/August 2011 — Vol. XXXVI No. 4

Nature Programs

Nature Programs are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. All programs are free and the public is welcome.

Monday, July 11, beginning at 7:15 pm

A Walk Around Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Join in to enjoy the summer evening as we take advantage of the extra daylight hours to explore Quogue Wildlife Refuge. We hope to hear (and see?) Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-wills-widows calling at dusk. Gigi Spates, a retired head of QWR will give us some history. Members of the ELIAS Board of Directors will be IDing the birds. If the weather does not cooperate the back up plan is to show the movie **Ghost Bird**, the saga of the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Monday, August 1, beginning at 7:15 pm

Exploring the Everglades

Scott Stoner & Denise Hacket-Stoner

The Everglades' 1.5 million acres comprise the largest remaining subtropical wilderness in the United States. The Stoners have explored the Everglades National Park from its entrance near Florida City all the way to Florida Bay. Through a slide and music program, they will look at different habitats and the birds and other wildlife. **The speakers:** Scott Stoner is past president of both the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and the Audubon Society of the Capital Region. Scott is a former Long Islander, from the Hamlet of Brookhaven. He was a member of ELIAS when it was Moriches Bay Audubon and participated in many CBCs. Denise is a past officer and director of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. They are looking forward to the return trip.

Monday, September 12 beginning at 7:15 pm

Visiting Jamaica with Eric Salzman

The island of Jamaica, the third largest of the Caribbean islands, is not much bigger than Long Island. It has (by some counts) the highest number of endemics in the West Indies. In a visit of less than a week, we only saw 82 species but one third of them were species that can only be found on this one island and another third were forms – species or subspecies – unique to the West Indies. There are not many places where you can see so many endemics in so small a space. There is good birding in many parts of Jamaica but our visit last April

was focused on the famous John Crow and Blue Mountains with its mix of coffee plantations, small villages, resorts, villas, rain forest and indigenous birds. The avifauna is a mixture of neotropical and temperate North America types including many wintering birds and migrants familiar from back home. But when was the last time you saw a Rasta Bird, Mountain Witch, Doctorbird, Hopping Dick or Old Man Bird?

Summer Field Trips

Saturday, July 23 meet at 8 am

Pikes Beach, Dune Road

Trip Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Meet at bay-side parking lot along Dune Road in the town of Westhampton Dunes. Usually fall migration has started by this time, and the tides will be cooperating as we catch the early shorebird migrants moving through our area on their way South. Meet at 8 am at Pikes Beach (along Dune Road in Westhampton Dunes). We will be looking for Oystercatchers, various sandpipers, plovers, and other shorebirds. We'll keep our eyes open for various sparrows as well. On the field trip, ELIAS will provide Town of Southampton Temporary Parking Passes for those who need them. Please contact your trip leader at 516.622.7751 if you need more information.

Saturday, August 20 meet at 8 am

Westhampton Dunes Beach Bird Walk

Trip Leader: Carl Starace

Meet Carl at the Westhampton Dunes County Park. It is east of Cupsoque Beach, and not far from Pikes Beach. It is the lot that has the viewing platform. We will be going for a walk of the area sponsored by Cornell and Suffolk County Parks. You can contact Carl at his e-mail address: castarace@optonline.net for additional details.



From the Field... in search of warblers and other migrants

William Floyd Estate
Sally Newbert

On May 2 ELIAS members were joined by a group of students from East Islip on the William Floyd Estate walk. The Estate does not open to the public until Memorial Day, so we roamed over the 600+ acres led by MaryLaura Lamont. As we headed out we started listening (Mary-Laura birds largely by ear) for a Blue-winged Warbler, who was not to be found. But as we crossed the field in front of the house a Kingbird watched us from a tree-top. Beside the creek was a cooperative Northern Parula. More listening for the Eastern Towhee and the Blue-gray Gnat-catcher.

As we neared the marsh Ospreys were flying over and a female was sitting on her nest on the other side of the creek. Barn swallows were flying by the marsh. The Willets were calling from low in the marsh grasses as a cooling breeze was blowing. *Very nice.* On to the fields and other habitats, through the woods where there is an Osprey nest in a tree. Finally a pair of Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers were spotted. Around another corner, there, in a beautiful, just blossoming oak where there were a trio of bright Yellow Warblers playing tag. Down the next path a Black and White warbler. As we checked out another field with Bluebird houses, *oh my*, a pair of Bluebirds laying claim to one of the boxes and fighting off a pair of Tree Swallows. In the same field there was small flock of Goldfinch, three Red-tailed Hawks circling over head. We headed down to another area of the marsh and with a little bushwacking to a hidden pond we found a



Teens from East Islip on the WFE walk



At the WFE the Owlet peeks out of his nest as the Yellow Warbler flitted around the oak tree.

pair of Ibis and several Egrets, mostly Greats and a Little Blue Heron. Ospreys were flying here too. Down another path MaryLaura pointed out a Great-horned Owl nest. Just as we arrived one of the adults flew leaving the baby to stare at us from the nest. Several Yellowlegs flew over. On the way back we encountered two fox cubs, near an upturned tree, presumably their den!

As a farwell we watched a Tom Turkey run in front of the group. ■

William Floyd Estate, May 22nd
Sally Newbert

On our next trip to William Floyd we were greeted by Tom Turkey in the large field in front of the house, and by a brave baby fox that just hung out and then slowly sauntered off under one of the buildings. Again the marsh was well-populated by Osprey, and both Snowy and Great Egrets. We got to the pond in the marsh, which had either a Yellowlegs or an interesting Solitary Sandpiper. It never did show us its legs. In the fields several pairs of Bluebirds had set-up nests. I still haven't gotten tired of seeing Bluebirds. Perhaps because I had to wait several years before I finally saw one. It is the New York State Bird. It is said it carries the sky on its back and it just seems pictures just don't do it justice. In one field a male and female were both sitting on their box.

If you have a chance this summer do go see the William Floyd house. It is open on weekends and on Federal Holidays. William Floyd was one of four signers of the Declaration of Independence from New York State. If you have a history buff as your weekend guest, here is something that should be an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon and it probably won't be crowded. ■

Sue, Eileen and Linda try to determine who is in the bushes in Maple Swamp



Robert Cushman Murphy
County Park, Sally Newbert
On May 7

Carl Starace led a group into the area around the Calverton Ponds, a new birding location for our group. As we walked the wide trails and stopped at two ponds we spotted several Pine Warblers, Blue-winged Warblers, a Brown Thrasher and several Kingbirds.

A few people proceeded to the DEC property by Rocky Point and discovered a gold mine of Orioles, both types, heard Scarlet Tanager and decided it was definitely worth revisiting. ■

From Eric Salzman's Blog
Maple Swamp, May 8

Eric may have started off his comments expressing disappointment, but any trip that includes Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting and both species of Orioles can't be all bad.

Editor

This morning's walk in Maple Swamp was disappointing in the absence of the swarms of May migrants that have been seen here in years past but there were



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LINDA SULLIVAN



LINDA SULLIVAN



JOHN HEDECKER

In Maple Swamp, (top) a Scarlet Tanager and a Chestnut-sided Warbler. (middle) along the trail by the Naked Indian sign, also known as Ninja Crossing and, a preening Baltimore Oriole.



LINDA SULLIVAN



EILEEN SCHWINN

Eric Salzman (left) and Mark Cocker in Hunter's Garden. (below) Singing Red-eyed Vireo



EILEEN SCHWINN

seen together with and in contrast to a Chipping Sparrow. This bird, seen first in the grass and then on lower branch of a Red Cedar, was described as flat-headed, streaky, with yellow on the face and colorful on the back. Both of the birders who saw it well were fairly experienced and recognized it immediately as something different and "out of place," describing it as "like a bright Seaside Sparrow." A flat-headed sparrow is almost certainly an *Ammodramus* but our Seasides are not colorful or bright (and probably do not visit old horse farms very often) and the adult Grasshopper Sparrow is not streaky on the front. The bird that fits is Henslow's Sparrow and I can say from personal experience that the facial color of this species, although usually described as green or olive, can look quite yellowish in the right light! At any time and place, even the suspicion of a Henslow's is a 'wow' moment! ■

Hunter's Garden, Eileen Schwinn Wednesday, May 11

an intrepid group of 10 birders met in the fog and cool temps in the main clearing of Hunter's Garden, located along County Road 51 on the Southampton/Brookhaven Township border. The following is as Eric Salzman described it:

"It was, above all, a warbler day, with a count of 15 species including a couple of the less common varieties. Hunter's Garden was active from the moment of our arrival at 7:15 am, with, among other things, Bay-breasted and Blackburnian Warblers plus the more familiar species:

Yellow-rumped, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Pine Warbler, Northern Parula and Common Yellowthroat. A pair of mysterious, rather unmarked gray birds with weak eye stripes, first thought to be warblers, were finally identified as Warbling Vireos, a bird that has become more common on Eastern Long Island and is being seen more and more in migration. Red-eyed Vireos were singing everywhere. Other birds included Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown-headed Cowbird, Eastern Towhee and Chipping Sparrow."

Also spotted was Mark Cocker, British author of *Birders – Tales of a Tribe*. Mark was spending a few days as the house guest of Eric and his wife. He certainly added to the groups enjoyment, and we were all amazed how well this foreigner could pish in the American birds! ■



At Terrell River with Jay Kuhlman

Terrell River, Sally Newbert

May 14 was a rather cloudy, chilly day, but the rain held off. Jay Kuhlman led us on a walk that did not show us many birds, although we did hear many. But right at the end a Blue-winged Warbler perched and just sat by the parking lot, while in the tree behind a Red-eyed Vireo was forcefully singing. ■

Hallockville Farm Fields and Hallock State Park, Sally Newbert

May 21 took us to the fields of Hallockville Museum Farm and Hallock State Park which does not have its own access road yet. The Farm was bustling with a wool and fiber festival. It was awash with llamas, of all things. There have been quite a few changes in the fields, and unfortunately some of the hedgerow has been removed. Just as the hedgerow restarted we did come upon an Indigo Bunting that

continued next page



Looking for the Redstart at Hallock State Park

perched a few times before disappearing. As we proceeded into the woods, we realized the woods were just loaded with Yellow Warblers. Redstart were also there and a highlight, I think, was finding a Wood Thrush on a nest, at eye-level. ■

Pine Meadow County Park/



Wood Thrush on its nest

Hunter's Garden, Tom Moran

Saturday, June 5 was a sunny, mild, morning when we met at Pine Meadow County Park/Hunter's Garden for our migrant walk. Carl, our walk leader, did a fine job guiding us through the confusing web of intersecting trails on a loop hike over rolling terrain with a variety of evergreen and deciduous trees. In the parking circle we were treated to a flock of Cedar Waxwings, an Eastern Peewee and a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Other species that we actually had to work for included Common Yellowthroats, a Wood Thrush, a Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrows, RS Towhees, a few Pine Warblers, Ovenbirds, Baltimore Orioles, BC Chickadee's, Goldfinch, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and Blue Jays. Afterwards Carl and Sally saw and Indigo Bunting along County Road 51. 



TOM MORAN

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Pheucticus Ludovicianus

Carl Starace

The Latin word *Pheucticus*, probably stems from the Greek, *Phycticos*, "painted with cosmetics," as if the male Grosbeak's breast was rouged. The Latin word, *Ludovicianus*, means, "of Louisiana or relating to the state," where it was first identified. The Rose-Breasted is one of five North American grosbeaks, the others being the Blue, Black-headed, Evening and Pine. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak breeds in our Northeastern States, (all of New England), and into Canada. In the U.S. it breeds as far west as the Dakotas, Nebraska and Kansas, down into parts of Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Ohio. In the east it breeds coastally south to Maryland and down the Appalachian chain to the northern parts of Georgia. In winter it resides from Central Mexico into South America to Peru.

Description: Breeding plumaged males are very distinctive, striking really. They have crimson red breasts in the shape of a V. Fully black heads with overly large whitish bills and the pure white upon their bellies edges up the sides of that V ending at the base of its neck. The flanks edging its white belly are a buffy color. The wings are black with a large white bar and smaller white bars in the wing coverts below. The back, or mantle and tail are also black. The breeding male's rump is prominently white. In flight a breeding male shows additional crimson in the armpit and a white patch in its underwing coverts. Non-breeding males are wholly different. Its head is dark capped with a white supercilium below it and wide dark auriculars and white malar stripe. The nape is buffy, throat and breast almost a warm peachy color with fine streaking along its flanks. Its wingbars are not as well defined as in the breeding males, the back is more grayish than black. With the female we




have a streaky whitish breast, its other markings being similar to a non-breeding male. In flight the females underwing linings are a warm buff color.

Behavior: The Rose Breasted is not a very conspicuous bird, spending a great deal of its time feeding in the leafy canopy. It plucks insects there and also fruits. They enjoy eating the petals of flowering trees. This I well remember from a bright, warm April day birding at a small preserve on Dauphin Island, near Mobile, Alabama. I had just sat down under a large trunked tree for a snack and looked up to see all these petals slowly drifting down to the moss covered ground. I stood up to take a look above and there were 16 breeding-plumaged males hard at work in the canopy. Oh yes! Its those kind of moments that make birding in the field so rewarding. Rose-breasteds will eat the seeds of elms, (and sunflower seeds at feeders on occasion), blossoms of Hickory and Beech, Gypsy Moths and some wild fruits.

Flight and Song: If you are lucky enough to see one on the wing, its flight is undulating with deep wingbeats and shot glide. A male's song is long, liquid and robinlike. He will often sing on the nest and occasionally at night. The call is a harsh *EEEEK*. The female's song is similar to a male's but softer.

Where to Find: I would only say: *follow its song*. The bird is neither abundant nor easily seen. Study its song on the website, "all about birds," and/or purchase a bird program for your ipod, iphone or other device and spend a great deal of time out birding and you may come up with one, or a pair. Remember this. They are very partial to wooded edges of streams, orchards, pastures, even suburban yards. Go!

Good Spring Birding to All Carl Starace 

Conservation Column

Beth Gustin

“Nobody can do everything but everyone can do something”

In the heat of summer when we are cranking up our air conditioners it is a good time to think about electricity conservation. Although electricity is a clean source of energy at its endpoint (meaning us, the consumer) some extremely serious environmental problems are created by its source—coal mining, production, and burning. So besides saving money and preventing blackouts, here are some other reasons to conserve electricity.

Most of the coal in the United States is mined by surface mining and much of this type of mining is done in Appalachia. Surface mining dramatically changes the earth's landscape as entire mountaintops are stripped off to expose coal underneath. Hundreds of thousands of acres of trees are destroyed and tons of waste removed from the mountaintops are then often dumped into valley and streams causing devastating pollution.

Each year, one coal burning power plant produces millions of tons of carbon dioxide (a leading cause of global warming), tens of thousands of tons of sulfur dioxide (a leading cause of acid rain), and hundreds of pounds each of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), mercury, lead, and arsenic. Hundreds of tons of ash and sludge removed from smokestack scrubbers end up in landfills.

Water that is used to cool coal-fired power plants is discharged back into the environment, causing “thermal pollution” in streams and lakes.

After all of this, only about 35% of the coal's heat is actually used to produce electricity. The rest is emitted into the atmosphere or cooled by the cooling water.

There are some easy ways to conserve electricity:

- Turn off lights EVERY time you leave a room.
- Set your indoor air conditioning to a reasonable temperature, and add a few degrees when you leave the house for

the day. Turn off the AC and open windows on cooler, breezy days. Check the filters on the AC unit once a year.

- Draw the blinds or shades during the day to prevent hot sunshine from warming your house and making your AC work harder.
- Unplug electric “vampires”— all of those things that suck electricity when we are not actually using them – cell phone and MP3 chargers, coffee makers, TVs, printers, microwave ovens. Plug other vampires into “smart” electric strips.
- Put your computer into *Standby* or

Sleep mode when you are not using it.

- Only put full loads into your clothes washer, dryer and dishwasher. Keep your lint filter clean and avoid over drying. Try drying clothes the old-fashioned way, on a clothes line.
- Insulate your hot water heater.
- Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs, especially for those lights that are switched on for more than a couple of hours a day. BE SURE to dispose of these bulbs properly – stores such as Home Depot and Lowe's accept them for disposal.



Pheasant Meadow

Last spring ELIAS set up a Bluebird trail in a newly preserved area in East Moriches called Pheasant Meadow. It is along Evergreen Ave., and be warned, it is very ticky in some areas. This spring there were Bluebirds, but unfortunately the young did not make it. It is home to many species, though. In addition to the ever present Red-winged blackbirds, Beth Gustin, who monitors the boxes, has seen a variety of wildlife there. Her observations include a Mockingbird, a Red-Tailed Hawk, a female Oriole, a groundhog and a pair of Tree Swallows.



PHOTOS: BETH GUSTIN



Colorado Rocky Mountain (and Plains) High Eileen Schwinn

Eileen Schwinn

I recently had the opportunity to travel with Massachusetts Audubon to bird the North Central part of Colorado, in search of high altitude birds and plains residents. The group of 8 birders and two leaders traveled the state in comfort - two SUVs. And everyone had a window! Starting at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR just hours after de-planing, we headed north, eventually visiting the Pawnee Grasslands, Arapaho NWR, the Garden of the Gods, and some out of the way, amazing places. We saw a total of 152 birds over the week, and added some great memories. Highlights included Cinnamon Teal, Mountain Plover, Scaled Quail, Greater Sage-Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Clarke's Grebe, Burrowing Owl, and OUTSTANDING view of Long-eared Owl, Lewis' Woodpecker, Pinyon Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, American Dipper, McCown's Longspur, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and ALL the Rosy-Finches! We had deep snow and winds to contend with, as well as dust-bowl like conditions! A wonderfully cohesive group, this is a trip I will long remember, especially the 3:30 am wake-up call to drive to a little dirt road just outside Milner to witness the Greater Sage-Grouse breeding behavior, and the 50 mile and hour winds atop Loveland Pass (elevation 11,990 feet, in search of the White-tailed Ptarmigan - we dipped!)



Juniper Titmouse



American Dipper



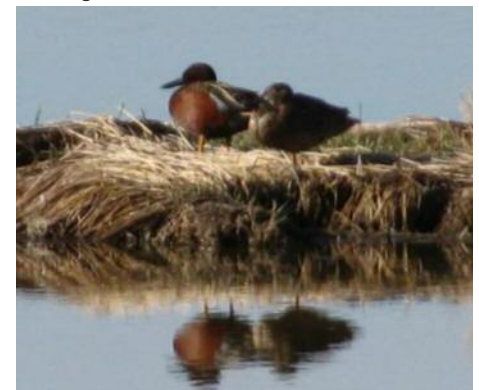
Clark's Nutcracker



The unforgettable Greater Sage Grouse display



Eileen freezing in search of the White-tailed Ptarmigan



Cinnamon Teal



Stellar Jay



Long-eared Owl



Two SUVs made for comfortable travel, and everyone had a window!

Kahler's Pond

Jay Kuhlman

The nature center is open as of May 28 until September 18th. The usual hours are Thursday through Sunday from 10 to 3 or 1 to 5 depending on the temperature. People don't come out in the heat.

Audubon Adventures Program

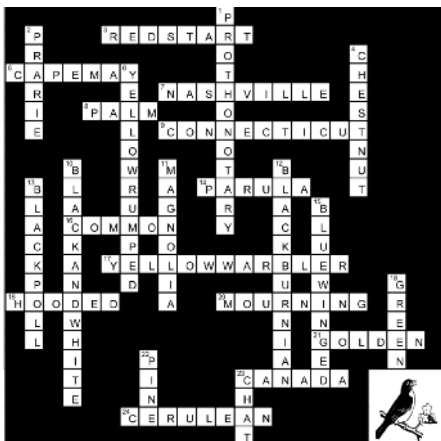
There will be an Audubon Adventure program running from July 7 - August 5th. Julia Hryvniak will be doing the programs this year. She graduated from Stony Brook in Environmental Studies and was an environmental educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension. The program will be held at the center, 9 am until noon, on Thursdays and Fridays. The programs are geared for children K - 5. The price is \$295 for the whole series. Activities include exploring forests, ponds and bays to learn about the animals found there. Observe plants and animals up close with help from our knowledgeable staff. Check the Kaler's Pond web site or call 631-878-5576 for further information or to register.



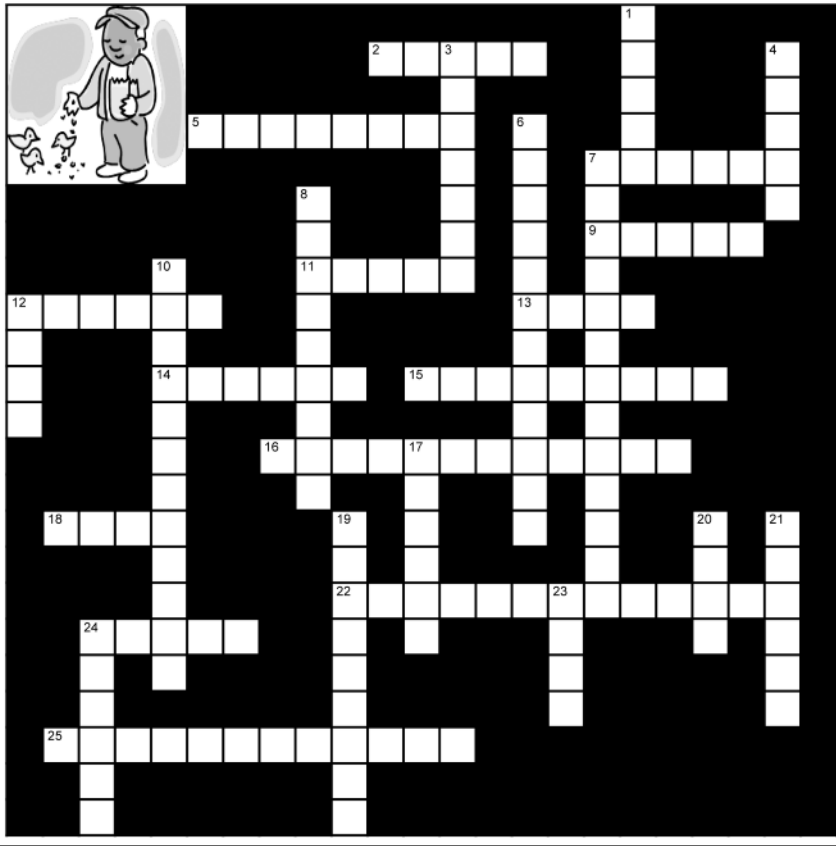
The membership column will return in the next issue. John McNeil is out of town for this issue.

Answers to last issue's puzzle

Warblers



Bird Food by Tom Moran



ACROSS

- 2 Water flavored with this can attract hummingbirds
- 5 Make your own suet feeder using one of these evergreen seed pods (2 words)
- 7 A fruit that is a special favorite of orioles
- 9 Egret with yellow feet
- 11 _____ thistle, especially popular with finches
- 12 A device mounted on a pole to prevent squirrels from eating the seed
- 13 A fat product loved by woodpeckers
- 14 Tern with a black cap and deeply forked tail
- 15 The long-billed is more partial to fresh than the short-billed
- 16 Could be a sandpiper or a plover
- 18 Very little eaten in bird tests
- 22 Smaller cormorant without white throat patch
- 24 Save it for bread, not a good bird seed
- 25 Plover, not to be confused with American or European

DOWN

- 1 The waxwing you will most likely see on LI
- 3 Yellowlegs with a slightly upturned bill
- 4 Great _____, large bird with yellow bill, black legs and feet
- 6 Puts on an amazing show by dipping its lower mandible into the water while flying
- 7 Flamboyant red bill
- 8 Gray seed preferred over black?
- 10 Short legged night- heron
- 21 Marbled _____ seen at Cupsogue last year
- 23 When served fine cracked can be a low cost feed, hold the salt and butter
- 24 Often calls its name, a grayish sandpiper
- 12 Swallow with deeply forked tail
- 17 _____Hearts, often preferred for cold weather
- 19 Save this type of flour for the kitchen, too, not so popular with birds (2 words)
- 20 Crushed Hulled _____, not for horses this time.

Birds and Butterflies of Ghana

Text and photos by Linda Sullivan

Having just returned from a wonderful 21-day adventure in Ghana, West Africa, I am excited to share my experiences with you.

Travel seems to beget travel. Chris McCormick and I met Peter and Ranjit, a British couple, in Trinidad last year at the Asa Wright Nature Center. They attend the Bird Fair each summer in London and made contact with Ashanti African Tours there. They set up a private tour for the four of us, which traversed most of the country of Ghana and truly hit all of the stellar birding and butterfly locations. Ashanti Tours boasts of being able to show clients 450 species of birds and 920 butterfly species in 21 days! They are not kidding. I will not be listing them all here!

The Kakum National Park in Cape Coast, famous for its canopy walkway some 40 meters above the rainforest floor, was both an aviary delight and an engineering wonder. The canopy walk consists of a 350 meter long wood and rope walkway suspended between 7 trees and broken up by a number of viewing platforms large enough to accommodate spotting scopes. It offers a rare opportunity to actually look into the forest canopy. We spent several hours here on two separate early morning outings. The dawn symphony of insects and birds was as amazing as were our visual delights. We were treated to views of the African Cuckoo-Hawk, African Harrier Hawk, African Green Pigeon, Red-fronted Parrot, African Grey Parrot, Yellow-billed Turaco, Western Grey Plantain-eater, Black Spinetail, African

A Spinning Jenny at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary



Pygmy-Kingfisher, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, African Pied Hornbill, Rufous-sided Broadbill and many, many others!

Another trip highlight was our visit to a remote village near Aboabo, close to the northeast border of Kakum National Park. It is here we searched for and eventually saw the exquisite Yellow-headed Picathartes. Seeing a Yellow-headed Picathartes is a chance in a lifetime event. These birds only exist in this remote area of West Africa. It is an ancient bird, one that only survives in the high humidity and eternal warmth of the equatorial jungle. Because the bird only inhabits rocky areas and makes its mud nest in and around cliffs and caves, it was a bit of a challenge just reaching the location. We walked for about one hour in the heat and humidity and then had to climb a steep hill to reach a perch high up on some rocks where we could wait for the birds to return to their nests. These birds rarely venture more than a few hundred meters from their nesting area. The reason for this is their preference to eat insects that have bred in bat guano, which is only found in the caves they nest in. We were told to sit very still and be as quiet as possible. We did this for three hours. Much to our delight, our efforts were rewarded as ever so cautiously the birds slowly started coming into view. We were within 25 feet of them as they arrived! We had an excellent and intimate look... and even photo opportunities!

Mole National Park was our base of operation for four action packed days. It was here that we had the privilege of seeing 3 African Savanna elephants bathing in the water hole located within sight of our hill top accommodations. Olive-sided Baboons frolicking poolside and inviting themselves to share lunch with the guests entertained us. The resident family of Warthogs would frequently be seen. Once away from the Lodge, we encountered Hamerkop, Saddle-billed Stork, Hadada Ibis, White-faced Whistling Ducks, Banded Snake Eagle, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Grasshopper Buzzard, Wahlberg's Eagle, White-throated Francolin, Double-spurred Francolin, African Jacana and just



A Blue Pansy at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary

so many more! On one particularly exciting morning we were treated to great views of the Pel's Fishing owl.

Traveling further north, we arrived in Bolgatanga in the upper Eastern Region of Ghana. Here, along the shores of a large river, we encountered the beautiful Egyptian Plover. This colorful shorebird curiously incubates its eggs in the sand and whenever it leaves the nest, hastily covers them over. This helps to conceal the eggs from predators and also might help to regulate the temperature of the eggs. On hot days, the parents will sit in water to soak their feathers and use these wet feathers to keep eggs or chicks cool in the nest. The chicks leave the nest only a day after hatching but do not become independent of their parents for about 30 days. Both male and female incubate the eggs. The Egyptian Plover has very bold patterns of black, white, gray/blue and tawny feathers. Their plumage pattern makes them easy to identify.

Our next stop was the Bobiri Forest Reserve, a butterfly sanctuary near the city of Kumasi. This was something new for me. I was totally fascinated. Both our young guide Andrews and our British travel companion Peter were right at home in this environment. We saw so many different colors and sizes and shapes! Simply amazing! I did my best to try to capture these delicate creatures in photos.

Our last bird and butterfly site was the Atewa Range, also in the Kumasi area. This involved an all day hike up to the top of the mountain range in pursuit of the Blue-headed Bee-eater. We managed to get spectacular views of a pair, hawking but-

terflies in the brilliant sunlight. We also delighted in seeing Yellow-throated Cuckoo, White-crested Hornbill, Black-throated Coucal, African Palm Swift, Black Kite, African Hobby, Black Winged Red Bishop, Golden Backed Weaver, Copper Sunbird, Fanti Saw-wing, Bearded Barbet and a Fire-bellied Woodpecker.

Ghana was an exciting destination. We endured very hot and humid conditions, several long and difficult hikes and bus rides, strange food menus and a wide range of hotel accommodations. We were rewarded with more bird and butterfly species than I have ever encountered on any adventure. We saw the varied lifestyles of the West African nation of Ghana, saw the fascinating Baobob trees, visited Elmina Castle to learn about the early slave trade and even visited the Ghanaian equivalent of Home Depot!

For me, nature is always beautiful, fascinating and somewhat familiar. The peoples and culture of an area are unfamiliar and intriguing. A trip that encompasses our natural world and also a nation's culture is a powerful one.



The Yellow-headed Picathartes below, is an ancient bird, is edemic to one remote area of West Africa. After a long hike and a three hour wait, the bird finally made its appearance and was cooperative enough to allow photos.



Pied Kingfisher makes a dramatic dive after its prey.

Village Weavers, male (left) and female (right) are building their woven nests.



Changing Avian Populations

Larry Penny

Some might say it's global warming, but the number of breeding birds extending their range northward to Long Island and beyond is more than a mere coincidence.

When I was a boy growing up in Mattituck on the North Fork in the 1940s and 1950s there were very few egrets around. We were told that this scarcity had to do with the shooting of egrets in the 1800s and early 1900s for their feathers which were in high demand for the women's hats. Whatever the reason, in the 1950s the two white egret species began appearing on the North Fork in greater and greater numbers.

I went into the US Army in 1958. By that time egrets were common enough, but a lot of birds that are now here each spring and summer were not to be seen, at least not on the North Fork. When I came back to the East Coast in 1961 several new birds were added to my list. Among the new songbirds were Mockingbirds and Cardinals. They were becoming almost as common as Robins. I went back to the West Coast and found that the Mockingbirds were becoming as common in California as they were in the South. Brown Pelicans, which were quite scarce, because they suffered from the fragile egg disease caused by DDT getting high in the food chain.

When I came back to the East Coast, this time, to the South Fork, in 1974, I was made aware that several more birds had extended their range north to Long Island in my absence and were now regulars. These included several water and shore birds: Oystercatchers, Willets, Glossy Ibis, Little Blue Heron and Louisiana Heron.

A few years later, Red-bellied Woodpeckers established themselves and were soon rivaling Downy Woodpeckers and Flickers in abundance. Then came the Tufted Titmice. There is hardly a residential acre around that doesn't have a pair of Tufted Titmice nesting on it.

Ospreys also down due to the DDT, were being displaced by the Double-crested

Cormorants who began taking over the Osprey's feeding territories. The Osprey population began to rebuild after the DDT was banned nationwide in 1972. The Cormorants were spared the food-chain poisoning effects and are still nesting here in droves on Gardiner's and Fisher's Islands. They had established nesting rookeries on an island in Lake Erie, several years earlier.


In the late 1990s Pat Lindsey discovered Cerulean Warblers nesting at the tops of black locusts in the Grace Estate nature preserve in East Hampton. Around the same time Eric Salzman was pinning down Black-throated Green Warbler nests in white pines in the same area. Chuck Will's-widows had begun nesting in Springs and Amagansett in the 1980s and by the late-1990s one heard on a quiet June night as many Chucks singing as Whippoorwills. Not necessarily because the Chucks had become that common, but because the Whippoorwill population waned down to a precious few pairs, at least in East Hampton and Montauk.

Lately, the Peregrine Falcon has been nesting on Long Island on tallish buildings in Nassau County, while the Turkey Vulture started nesting in Montauk only three

years ago. Brown Pelicans have become regular summer visitors, but not yet breeders, while Blue Grosbeaks have started to become more and more common, especially around golf courses and in old field areas.

The house finch was not around Mattituck in my youth, but by the 1980s had become quite common. It was mistakenly introduced when some imported ones were released in Brooklyn. Another bird, the Wild Turkey, that is now common throughout the South Fork made its first appearance, I should say reappearance, on the East End in the early 1990s was also an introduced species. It had been extirpated from Long Island in the early 19th century.

Two birds that used to be quite common on Long Island up until the late 19th century, the Heath Hen and Passenger Pigeon will never grace our area ever again, they're both extinct. Another bird not uncommon to Long Island in the 1700s and early 1800s, the Labrador Duck was shot into extinction three-quarters of the way through the 19th century.

So there you have it. The avifauna is in constant change. Here today, gone tomorrow, on its way in, on its way out. 

Teens Helping an Avian Population A New Osprey Pole is installed

An environmental group from Hampton Bays High School called HOPE built and installed an Osprey nest pole on Dune Road between the Ponquogue Bridge and Shinnecock Inlet (on the bay side). They are trying to put a remote video camera in place for a live feed, and hoping for a resident family.

ELIAS helped support their efforts with a donation. Nice Job!





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Gigi Spates 631-765-1436

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Webmaster: Annette Oliveira 631-833-4451

Newsletter Editor & Publicity:
Sally Newbert 631-281-6008
eliasosprey@optonline.net

Mark Your Calendars

Mon., July 11 **Nature Program:**
A Walk Around Quogue Wildlife Refuge (see p. 1)

Sat., July 23 **Field Trip: Pikes Beach**
Leader: Eileen Schwinn (see p. 1)

Mon., August 1 **Nature Program:**
Exploring the Everglades (see p. 1)

Sat., August 20 **Field Trip:**
Westhampton Dunes Beach Bird Walk
Leader: Carl Starace (see p. 1)

Mon., Sept 12 **Nature Program:**
Visiting Jamaica with Eric Salzman (see p. 1)

If there are any changes in programming,
it will be announced on the website and on Facebook.
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