



# The OSPREY

Jan./Feb. 2012 — Vol. XXXVII No. 1

## Winter Birding

Eileen Schwinn

If your winter plans do not include a well-deserved vacation in a warm, southern climate, there are a few places which may warm your bird-loving heart – all here on the Eastern End of Long Island!

The very best part of Winter LI Birding is that it basically involves looking for and at DUCKS! They don't need to be seen just around dawn, they are frequently viewable from the comfort of your car, and – most importantly – they stay PUT! You can take your time, looking at the birds and looking at the field guide – it's those pesky females that give us the most problems. Where to bird? Patchogue Lakes – there are about four of them – each offers a different "stew" of birds. Southampton Lakes – Agawam, Cooper's Beach Lake and Old Towne. Frequently, different birds than the ones found in Patchogue for some reason. Alcott AKA Phillips Pond in East Quogue (along Montauk Highway) and Quogue Wildlife Refuge Ice Pond – surprisingly different population on almost every visit. Remember – ducks look at Long Island as their Florida – as long as the ponds and lakes remain open water! Some stay for a long weekend, others for the season.

Dune Road and EPCAL/Calverton's former Grumman facility – Raptors are the key species in both areas. Northern Harriers and owls – both Short-eared and Snowy – are frequently seen along a Dune Road in Winter. Best time of the day? Close to or just after sunset. Plus, the light is incredible then, there's no traffic and you get home in time for supper! EPCAL doesn't host the Short-eared owls as in years past, it seems, but a daytime visit affords Red-tailed Hawks, Kestrel, Northern Harriers like clockwork. Even better, Bluebirds, Meadowlarks, Horned Larks and Snow Bunting can almost be guaranteed. An occasional, stray sparrow often pops

up – usually Song or Savannah – but sometimes a really rare, lost sparrow drops in. Historically, EPCAL has recorded Bald Eagle sightings. This year? Maybe!

Morton NWR - Noyack/Southampton - Anyone out there who has NOT been here??? Well, get in your car TODAY and drive there with a coat pocket full of bird seed and suet. Yes, this is the place where you get to feed the birds right out of your hand. Chickadees, Titmouse, Downy Woodpeckers, and White-breasted Nuthatches will all greet you with hungry little beaks as soon as you exit the car! Go early, and go often! No matter how cool, jaded, or old you are – I don't know a single, solitary person who can walk out of there without a huge smile and warm heart! You can even keep your mittens on – the birds don't mind! One note – the Keepers of the Facility request that you don't dump seed anywhere – that is, bring

home what you haven't fed the birds. It seems vermin tend to LOVE those 5 pound bags of seed which are frequently left behind. And we're there to feed the birds, not the rats!

For those who are Hard Core – there's always Montauk or Orient Point! Cold, windy, and generally miserable – but, WOW, those birds!! Standing on the observation deck of the closed-in-winter restaurant and looking out at thousands and thousands and THOUSANDS of ocean loving birds is a Must Do at least once! And, the new and improved parking lot rest rooms at the Point are always open and HEATED – very, VERY important. Just to thaw out before the long drive home....

The Eastern End of Long Island is a birder's paradise, even in the short, dark days of winter - get out there and enjoy!

## Nature Program

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

**Monday, February 7 beginning at 7:15 pm**

### Birding by Car Presented by Ken Thompson

Ken Thompson will our first speaker this year. On February 6th, he will present a power point program **Birding by Car**. Every image was taken by Ken, from either inside the car or using the car as a blind and standing next to the car. Most of these shots were taken on Long Island, with few particularly good ones from the Metropolitan area, New York State his travels.

Ken is a member of Great South Bay Audubon Society. He has been birding for over 10 years, and now as a retiree he has become a even more active and serious birder. It was Ken who is responsible for giving most of the regions birding community the closest, and for many, their first look, at a Dovekie. Ken found this, the smallest of the alcides in a marina in Great River. This bird was not shy, with many of a birdrer, myself included, seeing from a distance of no more than six feet while standing on top of the dock. *oops, hope I didn't give away one of the programs goodies.* Bob Adamo

# Highlights from the Nature Walks

## Saturday, November 5 Smith Point County Park

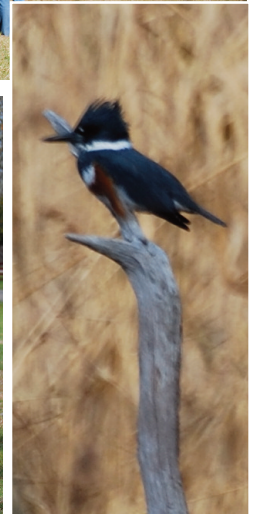
Lively ocean greeted us today, thick with Northern Gannets and Scoter flocks. Dozens of Long-tail Ducks passed by while a few more rested on the bay side. Best bird of the day was a bright Blue-headed Vireo along the ball-field fence-line. A lone sitting Merlin kept things quiet for a while, then a flock of Juncos erupted from the hedgerows accompanied by Field and Chipping Sparrows. Earlier in the day we watched about twenty Snow Buntings skim the primary dune, Three Horned Larks were also found in the parking lot. No sign of the seven Royal Terns I had seen on Thursday. *Good Autumn Birding, Carl Starace*

## Saturday, November 19 – Jamesport State Park & Hallockville Farm Fields

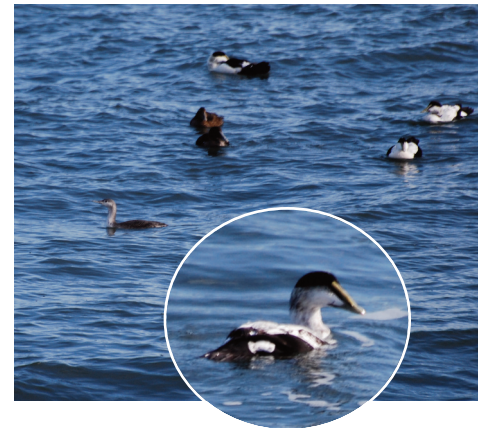


A Red-tailed Hawk flies over Jamesport State Park, a racoon leaves his print in the wet sand, and sparrows pop out of the hedgerow near Hallockville fields.

## Saturday, November 19 – Jamesport State Park & Hallockville Farm Fields



## Saturday, November 19 – Theodore Roosevelt County Park & Montauk



## Membership Corner

John McNeil

With the new postal regulations going into effect later on this month delays might occur, our newsletter can always be viewed around the first of the month on our web site if the mailed copy is late. In this way you will not miss field trips or coming meeting notices. Recently we have changed the way we mail our newsletter to the membership. We now have a commercial printer imprint the mailing labels onto the newsletter conforming to the latest postal regulations which speeds the processing and lowers our mailing cost.

When you renew your membership in ELIAS, please include your e-mail address. I will send a welcome letter thanking you for your continued support and add your name to our email list. If you elect not to include your email address, you can always check your address label to see if I have updated your membership. If you do not see an update, please contact me and will make all the necessary corrections so that you are properly credited.

Before closing, I have to extend an apology to all my feeder supporters. Do not fear I have not forgotten you. All your data is safe and I am in the process of doing some analysis and a report will be coming soon on the results.

*John*

## Thank you

**ELIAS would like to thank Eastport Feed and Bay Gardens both of East Moriches for their help with the ELIAS/Quogue Wildlife Refuge Seed sale.**

**It was a success with lots of support from the membership of both organizations.**

**Thanks to all who purchased seed, and birding supplies. to volunteers and Allyson & Dan Wilson who did the organizing.**

## Nature Walks

John McNeil

**Sat., Jan. 7th, 2012 @ 9:00am**

### Wintering Waterfowl around Patchogue Lakes

**Leader: John McNeil**

This half day trip will explore the lakes around Patchogue, where we hope to see Ring-neck Ducks, American Widgeon, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Ducks just to name a few. Will be also looking for an Eurasian Widgeon who makes an appearance every year or so to delight us all. Also, if we are lucky; maybe we will spot a Tufted Duck that was a regular visitor for years but has been absent for the last few years.

We will meet at 9 am at the Swan Lake Lodge on Swan Lake in East Patchogue. Contact me for trip details at 631.281.2623 or on the day of the trip, on my cell phone: 631.219.8947

**Sat., Feb. 4th, 2012 @ 6:30am**

### Teatown's Hudson River EagleFest 2012

**Leader: John McNeil**

We will be heading up along the Hudson River about 35 miles north of NYC (Westchester County) to see our nations symbol, the Bald Eagle. Teatown's Hudson River EagleFest 2012 will start at Croton Point Park then we will drive to various locations along the Hudson River for views of these beautiful birds perching either in trees or on the frozen ice of the Hudson River.

We will depart at 6:30 am from the east side of the old Home Depot (now Raymour & Flannigan & Shop Rite) parking lot on the Sunrise Highway at Route 112 in Patchogue and return to between 3 and 4 pm. The drive time is a little less than 2-hours and I want to be up at Croton Point Park before 9 am. We will leave promptly so do not

be late. Contact me at my home 631.281.2623 and on the day of the trip 631.219.8947 for additional information. You can check out the web site of the Teatown's Hudson River EagleFest 2012 at [www.teatown.org](http://www.teatown.org).

**Sat., Feb. 18th, 2012 @ 9:00am**

### Montauk Point Bird Walk

**Leader: Carl Starace**

Please join your field trip leader Carl Starace for an exhilarating trip around the Montauk Peninsula in search of wintering waterfowl and pelagic birds. Huge numbers of scoters and eiders are always present at this time. Others might include Razorbill's, Thick-billed Murre, Dovekie, Black-legged Kittiwake, Red-necked Grebe, and Eared Grebe. Remember to watch for the days's weather and dress appropriately. Meet at the Concession building at Montauk State Park at 9 am. For additional trip details, contact Carl, his email is [castarace@gmail.com](mailto:castarace@gmail.com) or his home telephone: 631.281.8074.

**Sat., March 3rd, 2012 @ 8:00am**

### The South Lakes & Ponds heading to Robert Moses State Park

**Leader: John McNeil**

You never know what we have missed during the winter months or some early Spring arrival might have stopped for a rest heading north. So let's explore the south shore lakes heading west to Robert Moses State Park and check things out. Let's meet at the east side of the old Home Depot (now Raymour & Flannigan & Shop Rite) parking lot on the Sunrise Highway at Route 112 in Patchogue. We will leave the parking lot at 8:00 am for this adventure. For more details, contact John at his home 631.281.2623 or on his cell phone on the day of the bird outing at 631.219.8947.



## Dreaming of Those Crazy Days of Summer Days

By the time you receive this there will still be a little time to have a teen apply for a camp scholarship offered by ELIAS. By Jan. 12 we need to get the application. Check the web site for the application. Or call Evelyn at 631-727-0417. If you fondly remember your camp days **registration is open for the 2012 Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine**

This are nine sessions of about a week each. There are programs adults, teens and families at the historic Audubon Camp in Maine on Hog Island. Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul, Steve Kress, Lang Elliott, Don Kroodsmas, Bill Thompson III and many more expert ornithologists, naturalists, educators and authors will be in residence during the 2012 sessions.

Hog Island Audubon Camp is run by the Seabird Restoration Program (Project Puffin) of the National Audubon Society. All summer programs include field trips to nearby Eastern Egg Rock, where Dr. Steve Kress and his team of biologists have successfully restored an island colony of At-

lantic Puffins, and Roseate, Arctic and Common Terns. Immerse yourself in the joy of birding with expert-led workshops, lively evening presentations, saltwater birding tours and trips to diverse habitats on the Maine coast. Roger Tory Peterson was the camp's first birding instructor in 1936 and many of America's finest naturalists, including Rachel Carson, have spent time on the 330-acre wildlife sanctuary, located in mid-coast Maine.

Participants live in restored wooden buildings dating back to the early 1900's and are treated to three fabulous meals each day, prepared by chef extraordinaire Janii Laberge.

For more information or to enroll, visit <http://hogisland.audubon.org> or call (607) 257-7308 x 14. Or contact Erica Marx, registrar, at [hogisland@audubon.org](mailto:hogisland@audubon.org).

## Limericks Mike Higgiston

*A little fun submitted by Mike Higgiston. Enjoy all you birders.*

Our president for life Eileen  
Whose birding obsession was mean  
She hoped for a snipe  
But she didn't gripe  
When her sight for a snipe went unseen.

A long time birder named Bob  
Went to see warblers with a mob  
But the warbler named hermit was exactly  
that  
And wouldn't respond to a chat  
Which only brought Bob to a sob.

Our editor-birder Sally  
Visited the Rio Grande Valley  
She hoped for a kite  
And she tried all her might  
And may have seen it had she not dallied.

There once was a birder named Mike  
Who liked to go on a hike  
He went to see birds around  
In places where they abound  
And they abounded the most at Pike's.

A birder named MaryLaura  
Avoided people who were borers  
To bird was her thing  
And she loved to ring  
Up, any new birds that she sora.

A lithe birder named Pat  
Loved birding more than her cat  
She thought it would fit  
To do the Big Sit  
But she tired and did the Big Sat.

Traveling birder Eric  
Seeks birds everywhere, even in Merrick  
He's birded all over  
From Peru to Dover  
But really Long Island is his bailiwick.

Parks Commissioner Annie Mac  
Lives nearby in the outback  
She really like coots  
As much as her old boots  
And runs her domain with much tact.

Webmaster Supreme Diane  
Is Long island Birds biggest fan  
She always includes  
Sightings and news  
Of birds seen hither and yan.

### Dear ELIAS Members,

I would like to thank you for giving me the amazing opportunity to attend DEC Summer Camp. During my stay at Camp DeBruce I made many friends, memories and had a million new experiences. We learned everything from what lives under rocks in ponds to how bats can see at night.

Camp DeBruce was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I have been thinking about reapplying for summer camp this year. Thank you ELIAS for the amazing experience.

*From James, Center Moriches*

## Acorns, the staff of life for many critters are in short supply this year.

Larry Penny

It's not a good year for acorns on the South Fork of Long Island. And thus it could be a difficult year for acorn eaters, in particular, the wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, blue jays, white footed mice, chipmunks and gray squirrels. The acorns that were produced from scarlet, black, red and white oaks this year started out in the spring of 2010. It was a very wet spring, a record amount rain fell in March. There were very few oak leaf predators in the way of gypsy moth caterpillars and cankerworms. Nonetheless, very few acorns ripened to maturity, which in some way may have been related to Hurricane Irene which passed through in the last week of August.

The chipmunks were active right up until the last week of November. The above-average temperatures in October and November were partly to blame for their tardy undergrounding. But, also, food may have been so sparse that they needed the extra time above ground to harvest what they could, even though it might be enough to get them comfortably through the winter, especially, if the winter is anything like last year's when snow stayed on the ground for two months before the late thaw.

Gray squirrels took a big hit on the highways this fall which is what happens when the acorn crop is spotty. On some days in October and November driving back and forth to work between Noyac and East Hampton, I counted as many as four fresh road kill squirrels. There was never a day when there wasn't at least one to be sighted. On the few days that I drove the other way, between Noyac and Riverhead, I also recorded at least one road kill squirrel, generally in the hamlets of North Sea and Tuckahoe. In the 31 years that I have been recording road kills on Long Island, gray squirrels have always been the most frequent, ahead of cottontails, opossums, raccoons, chipmunks and deer, but in bad acorn years the number of gray squirrel road kills exceeds all of those others taken together.

Most bird feeders aren't put into produc-

tion until it gets cold, say in November, and with passing each year more and more of them are of the keep-out-the-squirrels kind. Turkeys and deer also like to be fed during the winter, and while some feeding stations are amenable to their needs, most aren't. They also get by on buds, shrub berries and other stuff dur-

***Oaks are fickle,  
as are many other local  
nut-bearing trees such  
as hickories, beeches  
and walnuts.***

ing the non-growing season; you will often find the deer, and, at times, too the turkeys, grazing in the rye grass covered farm fields side-by-side with Canada Geese.

Nonetheless, the turkeys will scratch every bit of leaf litter on the forest floor trying to find acorns and, perhaps, torpid earthworms, bugs and beetles, during a bad acorn year.

Blue jays are very rarely barred from feeding stations, they can get by more easily than the others. If they run low on food they can fly tens of miles to find other sources. Deer are not like caribou, they pretty much stick to a home territory as do turkeys. White-footed mice are small enough and good climbers to frequently solve their needs during shortages of outside food stuffs by moving into houses and other buildings for the duration of the winter. I expect that I will find that to be the case in my Noyac home come January and February.

Oaks are fickle, as are many other local nut-bearing trees such as hickories, beeches and walnuts. Even when growing conditions are excellent and predation by insects is very low, they can be very be-

grudging in terms of fruit production. If every year was a good nut year, populations of the nut eaters would swell to outlandish numbers setting a given nut-dependent species up for a big crash in the near future.

Let's keep track next year. Instead of averaging nearly two fawns per doe, we might see one or fewer. Turkey production might be down for the first time in many a year. To make it worse, red fox numbers have been slowly climbing. We might see a bumper crop of them in 1912. Almost all wildlife and fish populations throughout the world have always been up-and-down phenomena. Only in chicken houses and livestock farms are the numbers apt to stay the same year after year.

**Editor's Note:** I read about the dearth of acorns in *The New York Times* and they answered a question I had. Why does it matter if we have less acorns? Strangely, one reason is the crash in mouse and small animal populations. How so? Ticks feed extensively on these small creatures which to some extent keeps them away from people. So you may have to be even more careful in your yard.

Then, thanks to Gigi Spates, I heard about a product called Damminix. It looks something like the tube from a roll of paper towels, it is stuffed with permethrin-impregnated cotton. (Permethrin is a common synthetic insecticide.) White-footed mice, frequently the carrier of the lyme disease spirochete, gather the treated cotton to line their nests. Ticks that get on the mice are killed by the pesticide in the cotton. This interrupts the cycle and stops the passage of the spirochets to other mammals like deer, dogs, cats and us!

As always, carefully read the directions as to when and where to place the tubes.

If you give it a try please get in touch and tell us what you think.

Sally Newbert



# Wintering Ducks on Long Island

Here is a list of ducks you have a good chance of seeing on Long Island:

- American Black Duck
- American Widgeon
- Black Scoter
- Blue-wing Teal
- Bufflehead
- Canvasback
- Common Eider
- Common Goldeneye
- Common Merganser
- Eurasian Widgeon
- Gadwall
- Greater Scaup
- Green-wing Teal
- Harlequin Duck
- Hooded Merganser
- Lesser Scaup
- Long-tailed Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Shoveler
- Nothern Pintail
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Ruddy Duck
- Surf Scoter
- White-winged Scoter
- Wood Duck

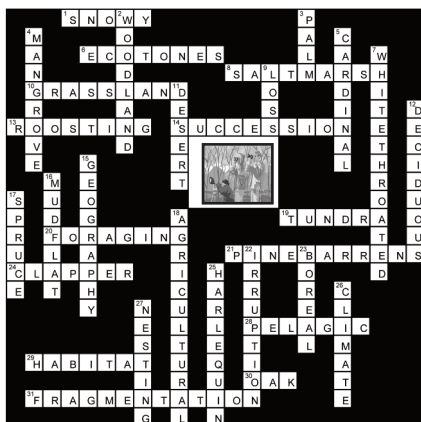
**Seen occasionally:**

- King Eider
- Tufted Duck

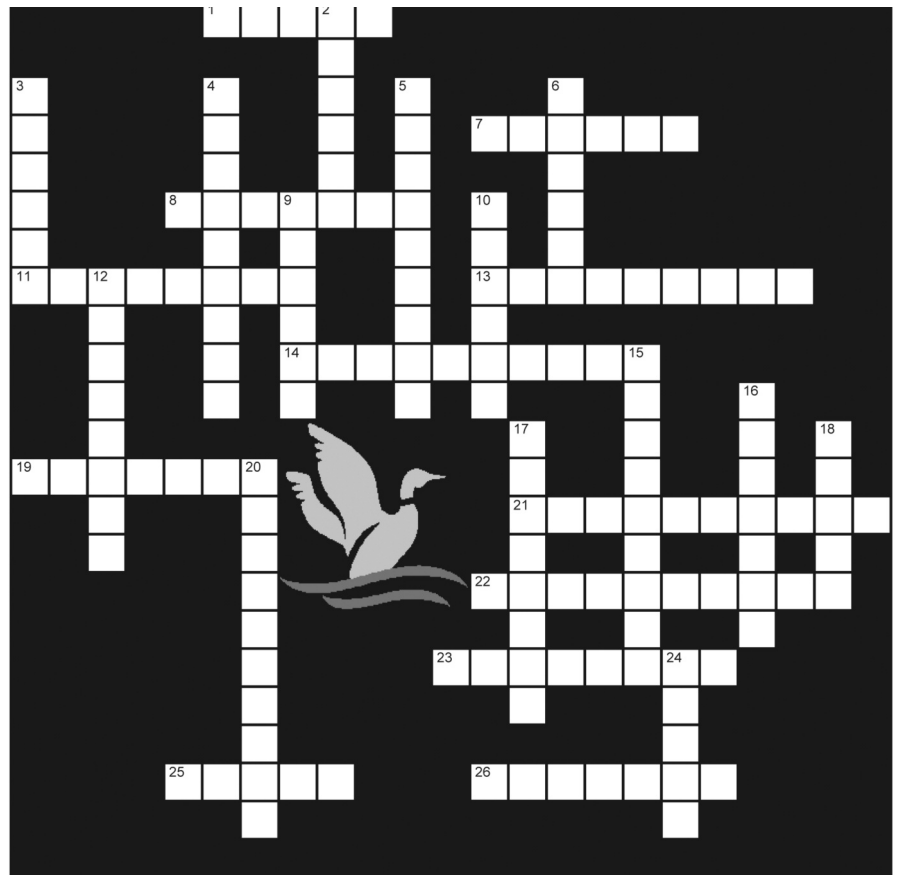


**Answers to last issue's puzzle**

**Habitat**



**Winter Waterfowl by Tom Moran**



**Across**

1. Greater \_\_\_\_-fronted Goose, although this is the only wild orange footed goose in our area, its named for the color of its face
7. Ring-\_\_\_\_ shouldn't this be Ring-billed?!
8. Gray duck with black rump
11. Surface feeding ducks, often feed up-ended
13. Common \_\_\_\_\_, has long, slender bill with sharp points for gripping small fish
14. Most ducks eat both plants and animals
19. Northern \_\_\_\_\_, not to be confused with a Long- tailed Duck
21. Duck with large bonnet-like white patch on its head
22. A duck for Goya to paint on?
23. Northern \_\_\_\_\_, duck with a long, broad bill for sifting muddy water, yum!
25. Type of water preferred by ducks for breeding
26. The Scaup with the rounder head

**Down**

2. A swan of the high Artic
3. This Merganser can wear his up or down
4. Many ducks lay their eggs in other birds' nests to be raised by these foster parents
5. Not so much named for clownish behavior but because of the bird's colors
6. Surf \_\_\_\_\_, has a hard, stout bill to pull shellfish from underwater rocks
9. American \_\_\_\_\_, white forehead with dominant green eye patch
10. Goldeneye with large white face patch
12. Swans ride high in the water, divers ride low, how a duck floats is called this
15. Type of duck subfamily, Ruddy Ducks, for example
16. The Lucille Ball of ducks
17. Duck that has become extinct in modern times, last recorded in 1878
18. Scoter with a "butter nose"
20. Vocal sea duck, *ow-owdle-ow*
24. Either King or Common



## Winter Wren

*Troglodytes Troglodytes*

Carl Starace

This minute, (Kinglet sized), woodland wren is the smallest of North America's nine wren species. The world contains 59 wren species in total and all of these are in the Western Hemisphere. Most live in Central and South America. Colombia alone has 25 species. The Winter Wren's family name is *Troglodytidae* which is derived from a Greek word meaning, "diver into holes, cave, (cavity), dweller." This wren is the only one found as far north as Alaska. It is from there that the Winter Wren is thought to have spread into Europe, eventually going as far south as North Africa. This Wren thus became the Old World's sole wren species and over there it is known only as, "Wren".

**Distribution:** The Winter Wren is a breeder from that far flung isle known as Newfoundland, across eastern Canada to British Columbia and north along Alaska's south coast to the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. In the U.S. it breeds across most of N.Y., New England, New Jersey, northern Pennsylvania, and west along the Appalachians down into Georgia. Westward it is found in Michigan, Wisconsin, northern Minnesota, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and down into Central California. Wintering populations are to be found from southern New England to northern Florida, further west in Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and east/central Texas. A few are also to be found in the southwestern states.

**Habitat:** The Winter Wren's main habitat is mature coniferous forest particularly in the wet places such as bogs, around ponds and lakesides. During winters cold blasts and bright still days you are most likely to find this wren around brush piles, within damp, fallen timbers and well aged stumps searching for some tasty morsel.

**Behavior:** Yes, its tiny, but also full bodied, plump really, with a bill almost needlelike and dark. Its darker than the more common House Wren, its colored a

dark brown with a slight contrast between upper and lower parts. Its tail sets it apart with its stubby, up turned permanence. The belly and flanks have dark narrow barring. A last indicator is its pale tan supercillium (eyeline).

**Behavior:** It moves mostly low to ground, hopping, probing soft wood, perching ever so briefly in perusal or song.

**Food:** Food items include ants, spiders, caterpillars, wood borers, sawflies, leaf beetles, and occasionally the berries of the Red Cedar.

**Vocalizations:** Loud rising/falling warbles and trills. The call is a double noted, "chimp- chimp".

I close with a wonderful quote by a Robert Lynd, an Englishman, who was quite enamored of this little wren.

From *Solomon in All His Glory* - "Amid the dreariness of dell and thornbush, the song of the wren hidden in the wet branches seems all the more triumphant. It is a song brilliant as a rainbow in a wet sky- brilliant as a dance of rainbows, There is a shameless optimism in it that clothes the bare hedges with something better than leaves. There is no other resident bird so incapable of melancholy. The Robin is often pensive, as it looks down at us from the apple tree as though he sympathized with us. But the Wren never sings except to say that it is the best of all possible worlds."

*Good Birding in the new year. Carl*



# The New York State Ornithological Society Meeting

Bob Adamo

On the weekend of September 23rd to 25th, the New York State Ornithological Association held its 64th Annual Meeting, at the Circle Lodge on Sylvan Lake in Hopewell Junction, NY. Our intrepid host was the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club of Dutchess County which was founded in 1958. Their willingness to take on all the hard work associated with planning and executing this endeavor was certainly appreciated, by NYSOA's officers and board members, right on down to everyone in attendance at this most rustic of venues. The enthusiasm of the host club members was infectious, even during the rainy moments at the start of the weekend.

As ELIAS's permanent delegate, I have attended many of NYSOA's Annual Meetings but it's been a very long time since attending with another ELIAS delegate – it was delightful to have Tom Moran, our treasurer, along this year... hopefully, the first of many similar trips.

The official reason for the annual meeting per NYSOA's Bylaws is to elect officers each year, board members every two years and members of certain committees each year. Bylaw changes can also be voted on at the meeting, after being approved by the NYSOA board.

Other activities during this weekend included: field trips on Friday afternoon, Saturday morning and afternoon, as well as Sunday morning; workshops on Friday night; poster sessions on Friday and Saturday; business meeting on Saturday morning; and a Banquet with Keynote Speaker on Saturday evening.

With heavy rain on Friday as we left Long Island, Tom and I didn't make either of the Friday afternoon early-bird field trips. We also didn't get to look at the poster sessions until Saturday. The posters consisted of fourteen interesting and informative exhibits. The exhibits included: *Dynamic Goal-related, Site-specific Management of*

*Phragmites* presented by Krik Kliviat from Hudsonian Ltd. of Annandale, NY. With phragmites such a Long Island staple, that one caught our eye.

We did attend two of the five concurrently running workshops offered on Friday night. It made for some tough decisions. We elected to pass on the two camera and one butterfly presentations, choosing instead the *eBird—Your Ticket to Seeing More Birds and Becoming a Better Birder* given by Chris Wood. Chris is the *eBird* and Neotropical Birds teacher at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. *eBird* is a massive, growing data base, with birders from all over the world adding data on a daily basis. This in turn, helps protect birds and habitats. Anyone can join and contribute to *eBird*. In addition to your posts helping the aforementioned causes, you personally can benefit from this stockpile of avian records.

The second workshop we attended, *Finding and Identifying Gulls in New York State*, was given by S. Mitra, PhD from the Biology Dept. of the College of Staten Island, and the editor of *The Kingbird*, NYSOA's quarterly birding publication. Through the use of very pointed images, along with his knowledgeable and probing narrative, many of us were able to leave this session feeling more confident, with the sure to come, tough gull identification.

Saturday morning, for Tom and I, started with an early breakfast, before going on the early morning delegate's field trip to Nuclear Lake. There were a fair number of birds, but we had to work at staying dry. The early morning trip is designed to allow the delegates to get in a little birding and still be on time for the start of the business meeting at 9 am...it works, most of the time!

Two of the seven other field trips offered on Saturday were for non-delegates, and folks not attending the Paper Sessions.

One hike went to Buttercup Sanctuary, it was led by Alan Peterson and included the headwaters of Wappingers Creek. Chet Vincent led a walk around the FDR Estate in Hyde Park, where you can get the best of both birding and history.

On Sunday morning, there were three field trips planned. Each went in a different direction to suit attendees' travel needs. To the west, Bashakill Marsh. To the north, Thompson Pond. The planned trip to the south, Croton Point was unexpectedly cancelled.

Carena Pooth, with her usual charm and efficiency, presided over her last business meeting as President. She will continue to be a valuable asset to NYSOA as a member of its Board of Directors. The election of officers, board members and committee members were as follows: Gail Kirch, President; Katheyn Schneider, Vice-President; Joan Collins, Recording Secretary; Andrew Mason, Treasurer; Michael De Sha, Corresponding Secretary. Elected Directors to a two-year term were: Timothy Baird, Carena Pooth and Anges Wilson. The Nominating Committee for 2012 will be Joan Collins (Chair), Bill Ostrander and Bob Adamo. The NYSOA Auditing Committee were all reelected: Irving Cantor, (Chair), John Cairns and Peter Capainolo.

Awards voted on were: The Lillian Stoner Award (for college and high school students) to pay for their expenses to attend NYSOA's Annual Meeting) went to Greg Lawrence, nominated by the NYS Young Birder's Club and Alexandra Hall, nominated by the Linnaean Society. The John J. Elliot Award, for the best written article submitted to *The Kingbird* and *NY Birders*, went to John Confer for his Avian Response to Shrubland Restoration in the Forested Landscape of Sterling Forest State Park, NY. I'm sure you remember John's wonderful presentation on the California Condor at ELIAS's recent dinner. Fi-



nally Phyliss Jones was awarded the Gordon M. Meade Award for her years of outstanding service to NYSOA – this award is not given out every year, and only when it is truly deserved.\*

NYSOA's membership rose 5% over last year, from 523 to 560, the Bedford Audubon Society the lone new member club. All three categories of the NYSYBC increased, as the Young Birders grew from 22 to 36, the supporting adults from 20 to 23, and the sponsor clubs increasing from 17 to 18, ELIAS continues in this category.

The official NYS Bird list also grew with the addition of Hermit Warbler, Common Ground Dove, and Black-bellied Whistling Duck. The New York State Avian Records Committee is also considering the inclusion of the Hooded Crow and Hooded Gull. The Conservation Committee Report touched on many on-going issues including the Calverton Grasslands, Plum Island, and hydro-fracking for natural gas in NYS. In addition the proposed staff cuts in the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) was discussed.

The paper sessions consisted of eight 20-minute presentations on specific studies, mostly by professionals who tried to make their disciplines understandable and interesting. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the following papers: *Why do adult song birds add new brain cells to their brain?* by Fernano Nottebohm, Director of Rockefeller University Field Research Station; *Assessment of Grand Lakes Coastal Wetland Health through Bird and Amphibian Monitor* by John A. Bateman and Gregory J. Lawrence from the Dept. of Environmental Science and Biology at the College of Brockport in Brockport NY; *Veery Singing Ecology: How Predation and Competition Influence Singing Behavior* by Kara L. Bellinsky; ...

*Study of Primary Projections in Austral Migration* by Jacob Drucker and Lia Fried, past officers of the NYSYBC and freshman at

Hampshire College and Oberlin College respectively; *Patterns of Bird-window Collisions in an Urban Landscape* by S.B. Hage, Bl.J. Cosentino, K.J. McKay, C.D. Monson, W.M. Zuurdeeg, and B.L. Blevins; *Stop-over Habitats for Migrating Songbirds in Lake Ontario Basin* by David Klein of The Nature Conservancy; *Meteorological Topographical and Behavioral Correlate of Diurnal Morning Flight Migration in the Northeastern United States* by Benjamin Van Doren, Past President, NYSYBC, and senior at White Plains High School.

The Saturday night banquet was fun! Good food, great table company, and a terrific guest speaker. The noted author and naturalist, Scott Weidensaul, was our speaker. Among his many books are: *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, a Pulitzer Prize Finalist, *The Ghost with Trembling Wings*; and *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding*. He is also an active field researcher with a focus on bird migration. In addition to banding raptors during their southward travels in the fall, he is part of a continental study dealing with the fast changing migration routes and wintering ranges of some western species of hummingbirds in their push eastward. The Rufous, Black-chinned and Caliope are being seen more frequently outside their traditional range. Scott also serves on the boards of several conservation organizations including The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Audubon Pennsylvania. The evening's presentation by this renaissance man, *Messing Around with Birds (for Fun and Science)*, both entertained and enriched the membership and guests.

The host and location of next year's annual meeting has not been solidified yet, clubs from the Elmira area are showing some interest. For the past decade finding hosts for our annual meetings has been a significant problem — hourfully this trend will end. NYSOA's board is trying to encourage member clubs to have the confidence

level needed to give it a go. The NYSOA board offers their collective experience, as well as financial help to any host club in need of operating capital to get the process rolling, and/or sustain the operations until the registration fees, etc. start coming in.

Our ride home, spent discussing the many and varied activities of the weekend was, otherwise, thankfully uneventful.

\*Note: The awards are presented at the Banquet Dinner when the full membership can participate in recognizing and congratulating the awardees.

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# Feeder Survey

**John McNeil**

The Survey will be conducted the first full 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.

**There are three ways to participate:**

**1. Mail the survey to:**

**Feeder Survey c/o John McNeil**  
168 Lexington Road  
Shirley, NY 11967

**2. Send your information via the internet**

go to:  
**easternlongislandaudubon.org**  
and

- 1) Click on: Chapter Projects
- 2) Click on: Feeder Statistics
- 3) Click on: To submit via the internet and follow the prompts

**3. Email the results to:**  
**birdwchr@gmail.com**

**Survey Dates:**

**Sun., Jan. 1 to Jan., Jan. 7, 2012**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Survey Dates:**

**Sun., Feb. 5 to Sun., Feb. 11**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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



*In clear view now, and looking very precarious, last summer's Oriole nest is still hanging like a christmas ornament from a back yard tree. Not even Irene took it down!*

*If you would like to submit a photo of bird(s) at your feeder, please send them to: [eliasosprey@optonline.net](mailto:eliasosprey@optonline.net).*

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*please email*

**[birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com)**

*to be added. You will receive reminders of programs, and program changes, or cancellations. This is only an ELIAS list.*

## Chapter Renewal & Membership

For \$15 a year, you will receive 6 copies of this newsletter. You will 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 \_\_\_\_\_

*Please be sure to include your email. You will receive an email confirmation, a pdf of the first newsletter and occasional important updates and program updates. Although we try not to cancel or change event dates and times, it does happen. This list is not shared.*

Make check payable to:

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and mail to:

ELIAS Membership, PO Box 206,  
East Quogue, NY 11942-0206

# The **OSP**REY

Published by:

**Eastern Long Island Audubon Society**

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East Quogue, NY 11942-0206

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If your membership is about to expire  
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on page 11 to keep your membership current.**

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### Membership, Mailing, Field Trips & Feeder Stats:

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Sally Newbert 631-281-6008

[eliasosprey@optonline.net](mailto:eliasosprey@optonline.net)

## Mark Your Calendars

Sat., January 7, 2012

### Nature Walk

**Wintering Waterfowl: Patchogue Lakes**

**John McNeil, leader (see page 3)**

Sat., February 4

### Nature Walk & Day Trip

**Teatown's Hudson River EagleFest 2012**

**John McNeil, leader (see page 3)**

Mon., February 7

### Nature Program

***Birding by Car* A presentation by Ken Thompson (see page 1)**

Sat., February 18

### Nature Walk

**Montauk Point Bird Walk**

**Carl Starace, leader (see page 3)**

Sat., March 3

### Nature Walk

**The South Lakes and Ponds Heading to Robert Moses State Park**

**John McNeil, leader (see page 3)**

**There is no meeting scheduled for January.**

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

**If you are on our email list you will receive email reminders and  
any last minute program changes. Join ELIAS on Facebook, click on like.**

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