



The OSPREY

September/October 2010 — Vol. XXXV No. 5



Join Birds of Prey & Threatened Species at The ELIAS Annual Dinner

Wednesday, October 20th at The Vineyards in Aquebogue
Story on page 2

NATURE PROGRAMS

Program Chair, Bob Adamo

Monday, September 13, 2010

Birds of Long Island in their Habitats

Luke Ormand is a freelance amateur wildlife photographer who focuses on natural subjects of the East End. When he is not photographing birds, seals and plants he works as an Environmental Analyst for the Town of Brookhaven. He always seems to be on the spot and post the best photos of any unusual sightings on LI.

He has two blogs featuring his work:
www.WildLongIsland.blogspot.com and
www.BirdsOfLongIsland.blogspot.com.



LUKE ORMAND

Seaside Sparrow

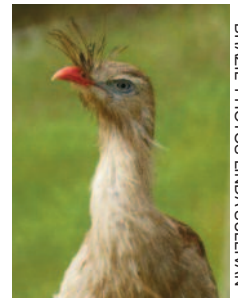
Monday October 4, 2010

Birding Brazil

Last October Dianne Taggart, Amy Halsted, Chris McCormick, and Linda Sullivan joined a Victor Emmanuel Nature Tour to Southeastern Brazil. The trip emphasized the many specialties of Espirto Santo, a state of Brazil. They flew from Sao Paulo to Rio de Janeiro and from Rio to Vitoria where they joined the leader, Andy Whittaker, and three additional trip participants.

Dianne Taggart and Linda Sullivan would like to invite you to join them for a visual presentation they have put together.

You may remember the article which appeared in the *Osprey* last year describing this trip. Come to the October meeting and let us share our trip with you through our pictures and video!



BRAZIL PHOTOS LINDA SULLIVAN



Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. There is a nature chat at 7:15 pm, a meeting at 7:30 and the speaker at 8:00 pm. All programs and field trips are free, and open to all.

FROM THE EDITOR:

This is the issue that is sent, not only to chapter members, but to all the members of The National Audubon Society who live in Eastern Long Island Audubon Society's area.

We hope you enjoy this issue and consider joining your local chapter. (The form to send in is on page 11.) By joining you will receive all six 6 issues of *The Osprey*, notifying you of all the ELIAS events with timely nature related articles.

ELIAS sponsors walks at least once a month and nature presentations generally on the first Monday of the month, unless it conflicts with a holiday.

When you join, if you supply an email address, you will be added to an email notification list for events and timely reminders.

All NAS and ELIAS members are invited to the annual dinner. This year the birds are coming too!

Enjoy the issue and Good Birding

Sally Newbert



The Vineyards in Aquebogue will be the site of our annual dinner.

Meet Birds of Prey & Threatened Species at The ELIAS Annual Dinner

The ELIAS Dinner Committee is in the midst of planning our annual dinner. This year it will be at The Vineyards in Aquebogue. Our guest speaker is Susan Krause from Sweetbriar Nature Center. She will be bringing several birds of prey and a Diamond-backed Terrapin. Right now she is planning on bringing a Red-tailed Hawk, a Peregrine Falcon, a Barred Owl, a Saw-whet Owl, a Barn Owl and the terrapin, a threatened species. All these animals are not releaseable.

Watch for your invitation and raffle book in September. The raffle prizes include: framed Dennis Puleston prints, *Nature Journals*, two estate tastings for four at Roanoke Vineyards, a loaf of bread each month for a year from Panera Bread, lunch for 2 at Johnny Chih in Westhampton Beach, tote bag with a surprise, a National Geographic Bird Guide, a membership in South Fork Natural History Museum, birding supplies from Talmage Farm & Garden Center, a gift certificate for a Briermere Pie, a gift certificate from Wild Bird Crossing in Bridgehampton, a birdfeeder & seed from Wild Birds Unlimited in Oakdale, meet & greet the bobcat at Quogue Wildlife Refuge, a guided tour of Dune Road by Eileen Schwinn, ELIAS president, a guided tour of Quogue Wildlife Refuge by Gigi Spates, QWR retired director, Dennis Puleston prints and a few surprises...

Breeding Bird Count

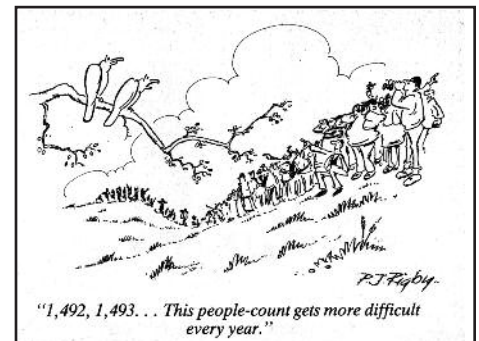
Eileen Schwinn

For over 40 years, Eastern Long Island Audubon Society (originally founded as Moriches Bay Audubon) has upheld the tradition of seeking out and recording the various species of birds which are found—and presumably breed—in our area during nesting season. The concept was to use the area of the Christmas Bird Count, and rather than the "snapshot" account of that survey, this warm-weather count was to encourage local birders to really search specific areas over a longer period of time. The 2010 BBC took place between June 12th and 27th. The habitat of this count consists of open ocean, bays, ponds, rivers, old woods, meadows, open agricultural fields, and some of the last remaining grasslands on Long Island. The birds seen reflect the diversity of our beautiful home!

This year's survey saw 9 teams record 127 species of birds, and total 4732 individuals! The most common bird seen was Canada

Goose (408 individuals), followed by Common Grackle (356), Red-winged Blackbird (241), American Robin (220), and Gray Catbird (207). Solo birds, which may have been part of a nesting pair (or just a late migrant or lone individual) consisted of Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, White winged Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Dunlin, Royal Tern, Black-billed Cuckoo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Palm Warbler, and Savannah Sparrow. Some of these birds are difficult to see, and are more easily identified by their call. Once nesting has occurred, fewer birds are vocal. We hope that there are more of these birds around, and are most likely sitting on the nest!

Surprisingly high numbers—at least to the counters in the field—were Turkey Vulture (15) and Grasshopper Sparrows (32). Sadly, some birds of note were not reported: Red-headed Woodpecker, Wood



"1,492, 1,493... This people-count gets more difficult every year."

Duck, and Northern Bobwhite. It is impossible to draw any conclusions on population changes based on one year's numbers, but over time, the trends of birds becomes apparent. That's the reason for this and every bird count.

Thanks to Kevin Nolan, Jack Finkenberg, Bob Gerds, Jim Osterlund, Alice Osterlund, Dan Wilson, Allyson Wilson, Eric Salzman, Eileen Schwinn, Gigi Spates, Beth Gustin, Jay Kuhlman, MaryLaura Lamont, John McNeil, Tom Moran, and Joel Horman for all their time and hard work. Please think about offering your time next year—the birds and counters will appreciate it!

Fall Field Trip Schedule

John McNeil, Field Trip Chairman.

With the Fall Season right around the corner, our feathered friends will follow. With that thought, I have outlined an exciting fall birding schedule that will be enjoyed by all. In September, we will catch the air currents as we observe raptors along our shoreline from the Fire Island Hawk Watch stand at East End of Robert Moses. Then, in October, Carl Starace will lead us on what has been a fantastic walk in the wilderness areas of Smith Point County Park. In November, MaryLaura Lamont will guide us through Jamesport State Park and then the next day, the William Floyd Estate in Mastic to catch some lingering migrants.

December, I have not planned a field trip because of Christmas Bird Counts, but in early January of next year will again visit the Lakes around Patchogue. In February we will once again venture to Croton Point on the Hudson for the annual "Hudson River Eagle Fest," to observe Bald Eagles that migrate down from the north, watching them perch in the trees and on the ice. Then later on that month we will visit Montauk Point and watch our winter visitors from the farthest point of Long Island.

I have outlined an excellent field trip schedule for the coming winter months and I hope it will excite the casual as well as the seasoned veteran birder. Come join our field trip leaders as they guide you along this most enjoyable and relaxing hobby of ours.

Saturday September 18th Meet @ 7:30am

Fire Island Hawk Watch and the East End of Robert Moses

Leader: John McNeil

Around this time of year, Ospreys, Cooper's Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Sharp-shinned hawks and American Kestrel are just some of the raptors that can pass the Fire Island Hawk Watch station at the East End of Robert Moses near the Fire Island

Lighthouse. Come join John McNeil, your trip leader, to observe these and many other species that pass this great observation station during the morning hours. Meet in the east end of the parking lot at what was the Home Depot Store, along the Sunrise Highway at Route 112 in Patchogue. We will leave the parking lot at 7:30 am. Bring some snacks and a thermos full of your favorite hot beverage because it might be chilly.

For more details, contact your trip leader John McNeil at birdwchr@gmail.com or on the day of the field trip, mobile telephone is 631.219.8947. or at home 631.281.2623 before the trip.

Saturday October 23th @ 9:00am Smith Point County Park Walk

Leader: Carl Starace

Participants will meet at the far western end of the *Worlds Largest Parking Lot* at 9 am. Please watch the weather and wear appropriate outer wear and don't forget to bring your binoculars and scopes. We will proceed to the Ranger Station for viewing from the upper decks and then hike out into the Wilderness Areas heading west to Old Inlet and back to the Ranger Station, observing migrating songbirds, waterbirds and birds of prey. This is an exciting time of year to be on the barrier beach so come on out! For more details, contact your trip leader Carl Starace at 631.281.8074 or e-mail him at castarace@optonline.net

Saturday November 20th @ 9:00am

Hallockville Farm and Jamesport State Park Walk

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

The varied habitats of farm fields, woods, ponds, and dunes on Long Island Sound provide a diversity of migrant and wintering bird residents. Bring binocs for this 2 mile walk of spectacular views and good birding. A \$5.00 fee goes toward Hallockville's educational programs. Meet in

the parking lot of Hallockville Museum Farm on Sound Ave. in Riverhead. Call Hallockville at 631.298.5292 or trip leader MaryLaura Lamont at 631.722.5542 for details.

Sunday November 21 @ 9:00am

Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk

The William Floyd Estate in Mastic is 613 acres of mowed fields, woods, creeks, and salt marshes. Roundtrip walk of 3 miles will turn up wintering hawks, ducks, sparrows, and perhaps Bluebirds. Bring binocs and meet in the parking lot of the Estate. Main Entrance is 245 Park Dr., Mastic. Call trip leader MaryLaura Lamont at the Estate at 631.399.2030 for details.

Additional Field Trips Planned

December 2009

No Field Trips planned because of Christmas Bird Counts

January 9th 2011

Lakes around Patchogue

February 2011

Hudson River Eagle Fest

Montauk Point

March 2011

Jamaica Bay

April 2011

Orient Point

Shu Swam Preserve and Muttontown

May 2011

William Floyd Estate, Mastic

Terrell River County Park

Central Park NYC – mid week

Hunters Garden

Maple Swamp – mid week

Hempstead Lake State Park – mid-week

Alley Pond, Forest Park and Jamaica Bay

June 2011

Doodletown Road,

Bear Mountain State Park

Joy of Birding at Audubon Camp on Hog Island, Maine

Myron Mendelson

As a neophyte to birding I was very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to attend a course over five days at the Audubon Camp in Hog Island Maine. The course as the title of this essay is called is "Joy Of Birding".

All the campers arrived on Sunday afternoon in June of this year, and were taken with all their gear by boat to the island.



"Rustic, but fun," said ELIAS member, Myron Mendelson as he enjoyed his Puffin cake at the last night of camp.

An orientation was held and we were introduced to the staff, and we introduced ourselves to all assembled, where we were from, our experience in birding and if we had been to Hog Island before, and quite a few had been. We then were given our building and room assignments. We got acquainted with our roommate(s) and headed for dinner. The first evening's program was on the History of Hog Island and Project Puffin.

For the next four days at 5:45 am we had our early morning bird walk and or bird banding. After breakfast we were broken into 4 color teams for the rest of our time there. On Monday two teams did a shakedown cruise of the waters around Hog Island and some of the other islands in the area. The other two teams did *Introduction to birding*. Half way thru the morning we switched courses.

Lunch was at 12:30 pm and then we had

the afternoon courses such as a trip by boat to Wreck Island to see the colony of Great Blue Herons or a 2 1/2 mile hike thru Hog Island. At dinner each night Dr. Steve Kress, the director of Hog Island and Project Puffin, shared his thoughts on the day. After dinner we had our evening programs which usually started with a short topic on ornithology, then the nightly bird check list and the evenings main program consisting of *Bird Art & The Evolution of Field Guides*. Another topic was

The Art of Pishing (making bird calls with your mouth), the course given by the well known birder and author Pete Dunne. Pete is a fantastic "PISHER". The days were long and sleep was much appreciated. The lobster boats and their diesel engines started at 4:30 am and you could not escape the noise.

For the next three days the morning and afternoon schedules included boat rides out to Eastern Egg Rock Island where we saw the Puffins and seals, a trip inland to a blueberry farm,

the Medomak Bird Hike (in the rain), workshops on "gardening for birds", "bird feeding basics" and "birds of Maine". Our group had a total of 57 species.

The last evening we had a farewell dinner with soup, salad, lobster with all the trimmings and a surprise desert was an individual little cake in the shape of an Atlantic Puffin (see photo).

It was a wonderful experience even though as a senior the climbing on the large rocks on the coast of Wreck Island were a bit difficult to the point that some of the staff had to help me. They were great. When I arrived home and told my family about my experiences they were quite proud of me. Even to the point that a week or so later my daughter-in-law presented me with a tee shirt that had a bird on it and below said "#1 Pisher.



What a Difference a Martin Can Make

Larry Penny

More birds are flying south than north at this time. Shorebirds that breed in the boreal north are finishing up and the adults and young are beginning the long trip back to winter headquarters. Great Blue Herons and Common Loons will be following on their heels, summer is not that far from being functionally over as far as the birds are concerned. Locally, Piping Plover fledglings are gathering at the edge of sandbars as are newly fledged terns.

In a couple of weeks the Tree Swallows will be gathering in large flocks and meandering south, stopping here and there along the edges of Long Island bays, creeks and the ocean, lining up by the hundreds on utility pole wires, leaving to feed, returning to rest. You'll see a flock all balled up in a tight formation, the tell-tale sign of a Sharpie or Merlin in pursuit.

Tree Swallows, Bank Swallows and Barn Swallows are common breeders, and every once in awhile we find a pair of Rough-wings in a hole somewhere. The swallow that is, perhaps, the most uncommon among the others is the Purple Martin. In East Hampton where I work there are a handful of Purple Martin boxes up on tall poles, as many are occupied by House Sparrows and Tree Sparrows as by Purple Martins. In all my years here I have never found a pair of Purple Martins breeding in a tree cavity or other hole, although, I imagine, some have done so and some still do now and then.

I would conjecture that Purple Martins have gone the way of Long Island Ospreys, the last Osprey nest in East Hampton in a tree that was occupied and produced young blew down in a windstorm in 1995. Ever since then, every productive Osprey nest was one situated on a platform, utility pole, or radio tower. Dowling College has a few long-standing atop its classroom buildings. It won't be long before the tree nest as far as Ospreys go will be a thing of the past.

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Purple Martins seek out Purple Martins boxes with multiple apartments in lieu of natural nesting cavities. The most successful Purple Martins colony on the South Fork is situated on the edge of Fort Pond in Montauk on a residential parcel owned by Elke Grimm. Elke has multiple boxes that can be lowered for cleaning and raised back up in a matter of minutes. She is meticulous in the way she takes care of them, they are never neglected, they know and trust her, the adults return every year like clockwork. Elke's boxes fledge 30 to 50 Purple Martins every summer.

They take all matter of flying insects including the most pestiferous ones like mosquitoes and biting flies. While I was on hand observing them, they were taking yellow jackets and wasps, they are not particular in their dietary wants. When we humans spend so much time concerned with "well balanced diets" and try to get as much greens and fruits as meats and potatoes, the Purple Martin does fine on a diet consisting of 99% insects.

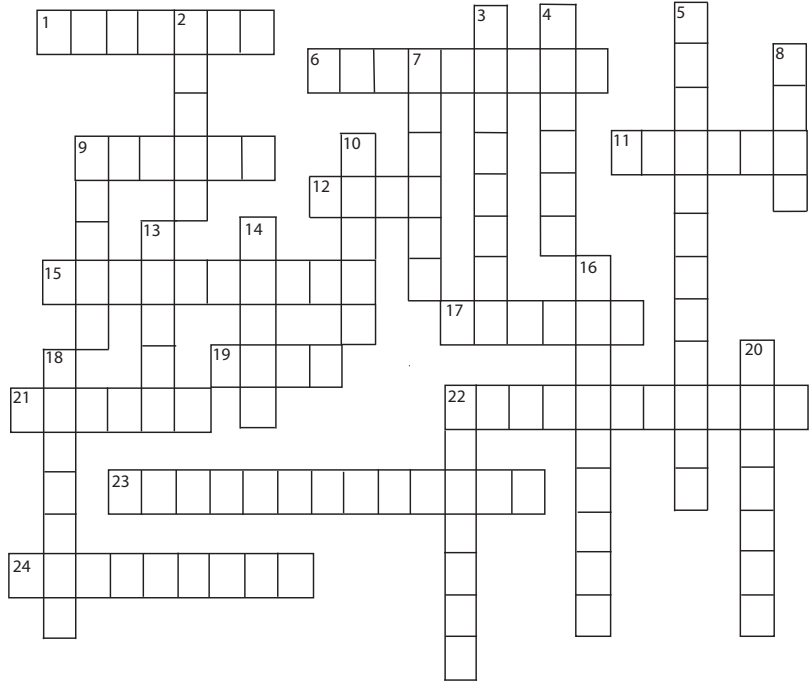
Arriving at the end of April and remaining into the beginning of September, Elke's Purple Martins spend more time in the air during the day than perching. Obviously, it takes a lot of insects to keep them in the air for hours while raising young. As most birds are, they are dedicated parents and keep at it until the young Martins leave their apartments and begin flying and hawking flies on their own.

It is said that early Americans put up gourds for Purple Martins and Swallows to nest in and that the practice of Martins breeding in close proximity to humans is as old as the hills. Lots of people have purchased Martin boxes, put them up, only to discover that they produce lots of House Sparrows, very few Martins. Elke has hit on the right formula with her houses, but the main two reasons for her success are that they are near on the edge of a permanent pond, the second largest on Long Island, and that she is there day in and day out to look after them during the breeding season.

The people who live in her neighborhood are mighty thankful, they can sit out on their decks at night without being bitten to death.



Birds of Prey, Fall Migration Tom Moran



ACROSS

- 1. Popular place in NJ for bird watching in general but also for birds of prey (two words)
- 6. A hawk common locally with surprising low counts during migration (two words)
- 9. aka Buzzard Hawks
- 11. Underwing "wrist" location, coloration here can sometimes help identification
- 12. _____ Mountain, famous bird of prey migration spot in PA
- 15. Name of the family of long-tailed woodland hawks
- 17. A broadly defined migratory route, the birds of prey we watch are using the Atlantic one
- 19. To rise in a circular motion with wings outstretched
- 21. Type of eagle often confused with an immature Bald
- 22. Small buteo, size of crow, tail banded, wings mostly white with black trailing edge
- 23. Common hawk in Florida, uncommon locally (two words)
- 24. The outermost feathers of a wing, link a "hand"

DOWN

- 2. Robert _____ Moses SP where at parking lot 5 in the fall is a hawk watch platform
- 3. Wings held above the plane of the body, like a V
- 4. Most common falcon seen migrating on Long Island
- 5. Small hawk with a squared off tail (two words)
- 7. Unsteady flight is a clue to identification of this type of vulture
- 8. An uptick in counts will occur after the passage or this type of fall weather front
- 9. Vulture not recorded on Fire Island watch but seen on our Feb. Montauk field trip
- 10. _____ Hawk, aka Northern Harrier
- 13. Geographic feature that when arranged north south assist migrating hawks
- 14. To dive with folded wings usually after prey
- 16. Looks like a flying board but this one is all about the field markings (two words)
- 18. A flying T hawk, straight edged wings and a rounded tail are helpful identification tips
- 20. Small falcon that hovers for prey
- 22. From the _____ to the Bay, part of the ELIAS logo

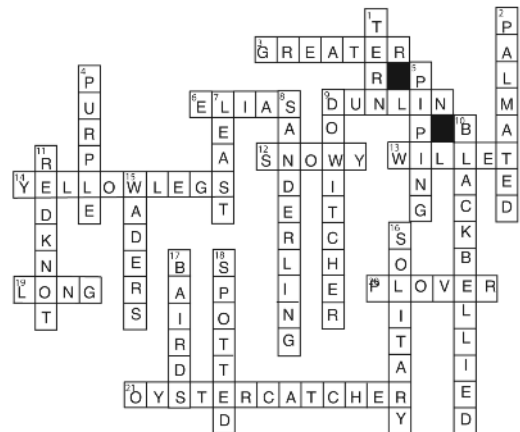
Answers will be in the next issue.

Answers to last issue's puzzle

At the Beach

Tom Moran

If you missed it, or want another look at the clues the Osprey is archived on the web site. www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org



Exploring Cuba with the Yale Alumni Chorus

Kathleen Heenan

Early this summer I travelled with the Yale Alumni Chorus (YAC) to Havana Cuba. Our cultural mission was to sing for and with the Cubans.

Their music is quite wonderful with its Spanish melodies and African beat. Their young chorus singers not only sang beautifully, but also blended their voices in a rich sound.

In the city of Matanzas, on the coast an hour east of Havana, we rehearsed with, listened to and performed with the Coro de Camara de Matanzas in a building described as a library. The large windows had no glass (the infrastructure in Cuba is falling apart). Birds flew near the ceiling high over our heads. As the singers sang a haunting rendition of shenandoah, Tree Swallows, Antillean Palm-swifts, some with nests at the top of the pillars, flew high above us. Outside in the square was a Kingbird.

In April, at a rehearsal, a bird watching trip was mentioned as a possibility. I agreed to contact Karen

Purcell at the Cornell Ornithological Lab whom I had previously met on a couple of trips to the Lab to inquire about birding guides in Havana. I had met Karen on a couple of trips to the Lab in connection with my volunteer

teaching in NYC public schools with the NYS Audubon's For the Birds program. Karen sent my inquiry about a guide on to a Cuban student at the Lab who told me that the hot spots for birding near Havana were Sierra del Rosario, Sierra la Guira y Humedales de Zapata (home of the Bee Hummingbird, the world's smallest bird which is about the size of a dime). He cau-

tioned me to bring plenty of bug spray and gave me the names and email addresses of two guides who were with the Museo De Historia de Ciencias and the Instituto de Ecología Y Sistemática. They responded via email

immediately offering to take us birding. However trying to contact them in Havana proved unavailing because of poor telephone and internet service.

However another YAC member suc-

ceeded in arranging a birding expedition on a free morning just a day before we returned to the US. Our guide, Renier, met us at our hotel in Vedado, three miles outside of Havana. At 6 am eleven of us boarded a bus with binoculars and either *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba* by Orlando Garrido or *Field Guide to the Birds of the West Indies* by James Bond (no relation to

that guy in the movies). The hotel gave us a box of food for breakfast. We headed to Sierra del Rosario about an hour northwest of Havana in an area called Pinar del Rio, which had once been a coffee plantation, but after the revolution was planted with pine trees and designated a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

At the entrance to this area we met a second guide, Otelmis, who works and lives there as a naturalist. The two guides suggested we would see at least 20 species on our walk. Within ten minutes we heard and saw the Cuban Trogon (the Cuban national bird) perched on a tree branch singing for us. A few minutes later our guide Renier heard a Cuban Tody and Otelmis spotted him low in the bushes. Both are tropical birds, endemic to Cuba, with bright colors of green, red, blue, and yellow. We also saw a number of Red-legged Thrushes and a Yellow-headed Warbler. We saw many thrushes on our visit to Ernest Hemingway's Finca Villa Viga in San Francisco de Paula.

Then we were off to the dirt trails, climbing up and

down the hills, where we saw many birds none of us had ever seen in the States. The guides identified many by their calls and gave us a short lesson on the health benefits of various plants (most medicines, prescription drugs etc. are not available in Cuba hence the importance of natural remedies). They also pointed out a toxic plant with the sawtooth leaves. My favorite plant was a small sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*) that curls its fern-like leaves when you touch it.

After about two hours we walked through a campground. As the campers awoke we were checking out the Greater Antillean Grackles, Tawny-Shouldered Blackbirds, and Cuban Blackbirds. Over by the river we got a fleeting glance ("Oh, it just flew!") at a Cuban Green Woodpecker, or carpintero in Spanish. Then came the scary part, crossing the river by side-step-



ALL PHOTOS DAVID LAUTER, AN LA TIMES EDITOR



Top: A parade welcomes the Chorus.

Middle: The birding group, Kathleen Heenan is in the first row, second from the right.

Left, a precarious crossing.

ceeded in arranging a birding expedition on a free morning just a day before we returned to the US. Our guide, Renier, met us at our hotel in Vedado, three miles outside of Havana. At 6 am eleven of us boarded a bus with binoculars and either *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba* by Orlando Garrido or *Field Guide to the Birds of the West Indies* by James Bond (no relation to

ping across a 30-foot log eight feet above the river. No one fell in and we continued on our way to more birds and the coffee/beverage house above the river damned up make a lake. Cuban coffee is out of this world, but, alas, the coffee maker was broken. Upon our return to our hotel I took my half eaten snack box off the bus. A very thin woman rushed up to me asking for it.

I had always wanted to go to Cuba. Perhaps it was from seeing *Guys and Dolls*, or perhaps it was the time warp or the forbiddenness of it that attracted me but also I had heard how superb the birding is in this country whose infrastructure has stood still for 52 years. Now I have been to Cuba and have sung and danced there and birded in one of their hot spots. I feel very fortunate.

We saw 22 species, as promised – at a bargain price of CUC 38, probably about \$35 in US currency.

The detailed list was compiled mostly by our YAC treasurer and birder, Bill Couchman, from Chicago.



	English Name	Scientific Name	Endemic to Cuba	Not Found in US	Reported By	Location
1.	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>			Holloway	Havana
2	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>			Couchmans	Veradero Beach
3	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>			Couchmans	Sierra de Rosario
4	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>			Couchmans	Matanzas
5	Green Heron	<i>Butorides irescens</i>			Couchmans	Matanzas
6	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>			Couchmans	Matanzas
7	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
8	Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
9	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>			Couchmans	Havana
10	Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>			Couchmans	Havana
11	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>			Couchmans	Matanzas
12	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>			Couchmans	Jose Marti airport
13	White-crowned Pigeon	<i>Columba leucocephala</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
14	Common Ground-dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>			Couchmans	Hotel Nacional
15	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
16	Antillean Palm-swift	<i>Tachornis phenicobia</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
17	Cuban Emerald (Hummingbird)	<i>Chlorostilbon ricordii</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
18	Cuban Trogon	<i>Pirotelus temnurus</i>	X	X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
19	Cuban Tody	<i>Todus mujiticolor</i>	X	X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
20	Cuban Green Woodpecker	<i>Xiphidiopicus percussus</i>	X		Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
21	LaSagra's Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus sagrae</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
22	Gray Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
23	Loggerhead Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
24	Black-whiskered Vireo	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
25	Cuban Martin	<i>Progne cryptoleuca</i>		X	Couchmans	Veradero Beach
26	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachineta bicolor</i>			Matanzas concert	Matanzas
27	Red-legged Thrush	<i>Turdus plumbeus</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
28	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>			Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
29	Yellow-headed Warbler	<i>Teretistris fernandinae</i>	X	X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
30	Red-legged Honeycreeper	<i>Spindalis zena</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
31	Cuban Bullfinch	<i>Melopyrrha nigra</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
32	Yellow-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris olivacea</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
33	Tawny-shouldered Blackbird	<i>Agelaius humeralis</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
34	Cuban Blackbird	<i>Dives atrovioletacea</i>	X	X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosario
35	Greater Antillean Grackle	<i>Quiscalus niger</i>		X	Bird Tour	Sierra de Rosari
36	Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>		X	Couchmans	Sierra de Rosario
37	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			Couchmans	Jose Marti airport

Our Two Night Herons

**Black-crowned (*Nycticorax Nycticorax*)
and Yellow-crowned (*Nyctanassa Violaceo*)**

Carl Starace

The two night herons on Long Island are from the family Ardiidae, (from the Latin word 'ardea', meaning heron. There are 63 species of heron worldwide. The Black-crowned is present all across the U.S. and southern Canada. In the Americas its range extends as far south as Argentina. It is also found in parts of Africa and the Far East. The Black-crowned was the first heron species I really took note of. One evening soon after moving into a new residence in West Islip in 1960 we noticed several odd sounding bird calls coming from the tops of one of the tall Norway Spruces. We eventually got good looks at a whole flock of BC Night Herons that had chosen our yard as a winter roost. This roost, at times numbering close to 2 dozen birds, of herons has continued yearly beyond our 40 years in residence. Each fall we looked forward to their arrival and all of us well knew the "quok", or "wok", calls they emit when landing in our trees in the wee hours and taking off again at dusk for their evening meals. The Black-crowned Night Heron is a medium sized heron that in adult plumage is pale gray with white face, a jet black cap and back. Immatures are more gray brown above, with broad, light brown streaks down their fronts and large white spots along their wing coverts. The legs of both may be yellowish or greenish. The eyes are red or orangy. The adult's bill is black, but a first summer bird's bill is black on top, pale yellow below while the immatures is all yellowish. There are 2 to 3 long narrow white plumes extending out from the top of an adult bird's head. This bird's thickset body is usually hunched over whether on a perch or standing awaiting prey on the edges of freshwater stream or saltwater bay. Black-crowns may nest and/or feed with other heron species. They do prefer the safety of bay/river islands or swamplands for nesting purposes. Their diet is quite diverse and includes: herring, shad, minnows, shiners, carp, chub, pickerel, frogs, salamanders, crayfish, blue crabs, fiddlers, shrimp, squid, and finally, the

young of both gulls and terns. Quite the menu! Although it is called, "night heron," the Black-crowned can be found well before dusk prowling its feeding grounds, sometimes standing motionless for long periods before thrusting its formidable bill forward to catch a tasty morsel. To spot this heron locally try Dune Road from the bay front by the commercial fishing docks west towards Ponquogue Bridge and beyond.

THE YELLOW CROWNED NIGHT HERON—Our other local night heron is nowhere near as numerous here as the Black-crowned. Recent data on nesting pairs of Night Herons across Long Island, including New York Harbor, put the number at close to a thousand for the Black-crowned but a barely 20 pairs for the Yellow-crowned. The Yellow-crowned breeds from coastal Connecticut to Florida and all along the Gulf Coast. It is common year round in the tropics. Its preferred habitats are barrier islands, mangroves and coastal marshes but it can also be found along inland lakes and rivers. In size it is similar to the Black-crowned but with a longer neck, legs and slightly larger head. Its bill is all black, long and straight. Adults are overall a slate gray. The dark head and nape have a contrasting white cap and a wide white cheek stripe. This makes it the more striking looking of our 2 night herons. Immature birds have dull brownish wings and back with tiny white spots. It's front has narrow brown streaks on a white background. The Yellow-crowned may feed at all hours of the day and like the Black-crowned has much in the way of patience in the pursuit of a meal. The diet is also varied and includes: crabs, crayfish, frogs, mussels, small snakes, lizards and aquatic insects. Unlike other heron family members it takes few fish. The Yellow-crowned's call is a, "kawk", or "kaow" and it is higher in tone than the Black-crowned's. Its East End haunts are there for all those who care to seek it .

Good Birding to you all.

Carl Starace



SALLY NEWBERT

The Yellow-crowned (top) and Black-crowned heron (below), both photos taken along Dune Road.



SALLY NEWBERT

From the field...

Pike's Beach July 17, 2010
from Eric Salzman's Blog

This morning's ELIAS walk was at Pike's Beach—the bayside beach and peninsula that was formed by The Perfect Storm and other hurricanes. It became accessible only with the establishment of the village of Westhampton Dunes and the filling of the inlets by the US Corps of Engineers. This area, in eastern shadow of Moriches Inlet and Cupsogue Beach, has been fairly consistently the best accessible area for shorebirds, both common and rare, on Eastern LI (whether considered by itself or together with Cupsogue County Park a short distance away).

The outstanding sighting this morning was the two Roseate Terns seen flying overhead. A few pairs of Roseates are still apparently breeding on Moriches and Shinnecock Bays but their numbers are certainly low. Additionally a single Royal Tern was seen this morning perched on one of the many sand flats exposed at low tide (the second of the year for me and the forerunner of more to come).

Two notable species that were seen in fair numbers were Glossy Ibis (many, flying overhead) and Black Skimmer (a fair number of sightings of individuals working the bay shore in classic Skimmer style). Piping Plovers were in some numbers, many of them young of the year, confirming this area's prominence as the Piping Plover capital of the East End. In the migrant category, there were a few Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, fair numbers of Short-billed Dowitchers and Red Knots, many dozens of Least Sandpipers and hundreds of Semipalmated. Additionally there were a few Ruddy Turnstones and a Yellowlegs, probably Greater. Many Snowy Egrets (outnumbering the Great Egrets). Also the other local breeders: Mute Swans, Canada Geese, Willets, Am Oystercatchers, Common and Least Terns, Laughing Gull and the usual Double-crested Cormorants, Black-backed and Herring Gulls.

On the ocean early in the morning, there

were a couple of sub-adult Gannets and a large shearwater too far away to ID as to species. The Hudsonian Godwit was reported again at Cupsogue.

The Islands of Moriches Inlet, Cupsogue County Park
August 7, 2010
from Eric Salzman's Blog

As the weather changed and the mugginess of recent days melted away into a brilliant morning, Eileen Schwinn, a last-minute replacement for John McNeil, led the walk. There were many good birds on this walk but the most unexpected was virtually the first bird of the event. As we gathered at the trail head in the dunes high above the marsh, a large raptor with extremely broad, straight-edged,



MATT MCCLUSKY

rectangular wings came soaring, with just a

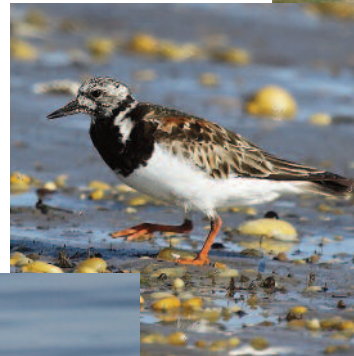
bit of flapping, low over the marsh and actually below us. From behind and above this bird showed only dark brown coloration. Size and the lack of a white rump ruled out a Harrier. Only

when the bird banked did it reveal white in places where only a Bald Eagle would show white. It was a 2nd or 3rd year *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* and the first I have ever seen from above!

The large crowd that assembled for this walk was there, not for the unlikely sight of a Bald Eagle (exciting as that was), but for the reported Marbled Godwits. And indeed there were two birds of this species—possibly juveniles, working distant shoreline. They were accompanied by Black Skimmers, Common Terns, at least



SALLY NEWBERT



MATT MCCLUSKY

one Forster's Tern and a variety of other shore birds (Short-billed Dowitchers, Ruddy Turnstones, Semipalmated Sandpipers and Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, Greater & Lesser Yellowlegs, Sanderlings).

As we worked our way along the shore, the bulk of the birds remained in view right in front of us. By wading out into the water and looking back we could scan the flocks and, surprisingly, the birds did not flush. Instead of pushing ahead and trying to wade across to the island (which would have flushed the lot) we decided to drive to the county overlook in Westhampton Dunes. This is a recently erected wooden deck with a view of a large sand flat island just off the bay shore. The island land was packed with birds including—two Marbled Godwits! Were these the same birds we had just seen at Cupsogue or are there multiple numbers of this species. The flat was also full of Royal Terns, and out just paddling around in the bay a Common Eider.



MATT MCCLUSKY

Window - 0 The Bird - WON!!

Eileen Schwinn


This past late October, while sitting at my computer checking my email, I heard a sadly familiar thunk against a window, followed by the doubly sad “dunk” of something falling on our deck. I quickly walked outside to find my first-of-season-in-the-yard White-throated Sparrow lying belly up where he landed. Still alive, I recalled a recent conversation with my friend, Joan, a birder in Connecticut. Her method of window collision rescue came to mind. I picked the bird up—felt his heart beating a-mile-a-minute. I started speaking softly to him, while cupping him in my hands. After about 10 minutes, I could feel his heart rate slowly returning to what I thought was normal—couldn't feel it POUNDING away as it was when I first picked him up. His eyes were closing—my first thought—uh, oh... But the lids were fluttering, like they do during sleep (at least human sleep, having never really seen a bird sleep!) A few minutes later, I started thinking, well, maybe this bird's had neck injury... gotta test that.....So I opened my hand and gently moved him from one hand to the other—Good—eyes opened up, and the feet and legs were reaching down to touch my palm. OK, let's just stand here a couple more minutes and see what happens... Stand in the sunshine—keeps us both warmer—move him around a little. By rotating my body and hand, he was keeping his vision focused on one spot (not on me) but was able to have his body move 180 degrees (again, his head was focused in one direction) OK, that's a good sign, right? Now what? Open palm, will he fly? No. Drop hand slightly, will he fly? No. Ok, now it's 25 minutes or so after I picked him up, I'm starting to get cold, and I'm starting to think I may have to pee (alright, too much information...) I'm starting to wonder NOW what am I going to do???? Put him on my shoulder and start gnarling like a pirate? Few more minutes pass... I gotta do something...so I set him down, in the sunlight AWAY from the window he initially flew into, and stepped back. He sat there (at least upright, and didn't topple over as I worried about). I took a step closer. He hopped away a little from me. I

took another step, he took another little hop. One more step from me, he hop, hop, hopped off the deck, onto the dirt beneath the shrubs. And sat there. I pushed the branches aside, and he hopped a little away again, but not out into the open. I shook the shrub a little, he moved a little,

then a lot and hopped under another bigger shrub. And then I left. Will he recover a little more? Will he fly to join his pals, the ones I heard calling while I held this little guy in my hands? Will he “make it”? Who knows. Will he remember that our paths crossed? That—I doubt. But I know I will—for a very long time.

New York State Young Birders Club Field Trip

Robert Adamo

 On Sunday, July 18 ELIAS sponsored New York State Young Birders Club Field Trip to Cupsogue County Park in Westhampton Dunes.

ELIAS is one of the NYSYBC Partner Organizations. As a liaison to the YBC from both ELIAS and New York State Ornithologic Society I joined 6 young birders and 5 adults who accompanied them. I had a “ball!” We were treated to a splendid day, filled with neat birds, good weather and fine fellowship.

I assisted the very knowledgeable and intrepid Doug Gochfeld who was responsible for finding most of the “good” birds, which included a Sandwich Tern—a “state bird” for all who saw it!

Before today (in theory) and now (in practice), I can readily urge all NYSOA's member clubs, who are not NYSYBC Partner Organizations and those adults (20 or older), who are not YBC Supporting Adults, to get on board...it will keep you “young”!

For more information on the club check out: www.nysyoungbirders.org.

Many thanks to Benjamin Van Doren who submitted some wonderful photos from the trip.



BENJAMIN VAN DOREN



BENJAMIN VAN DOREN



BENJAMIN VAN DOREN

Top: Oystercatcher, middle: Black Skimmer and a Piping Plover.

Kaler's Pond Update

Jay Kuhlman

We had a good summer for our young children's program—about 15 attended the Thursday and Friday sessions. The heat has been hard on attendance with people staying in.

Also it makes keeping the butterfly garden growing difficult.

We are planning our Fall Festival for late September or early October. Further details will be on the web site.

The nature center will go back to weekend hours in the fall.



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Mark Your Calendars

- Mon., Sept. 13** **Nature Program: Birds of Long Island in Their Habitats by Luke Ormand (see pg.1)**
- Sat., Sept 18** **Field Trip: Fire Island Hawk Watch & the East End of Robert Moses SP (see pg. 3)**
- Mon., Oct. 4** **Nature Program: Birding Brazil by Linda Sullivan & Dianne Taggart (see pg. 1)**
- Wed. Oct. 20** **Annual Dinner at The Vineyards Caterers**
- Sat., Oct. 23** **Field Trip: Smith Point County Park (see pg. 3)**
- Sat., Nov. 20** **Field Trip: Hallockville Farm & Jamesport SP (see pg. 3)**
- Sun., Nov. 21** **Field Trip: The William Floyd Estate (see pg. 3)**

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



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