



EASTERN LONG ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY – *From the Barrens to the Bays*
Formerly Moriches Bay Audubon, established 1967

The OSPREY

September/October 2012—Vol. XXXVII No. 5

Nature Walks/ Field Trips

John McNeil

With the cool weather right around the corner, the fall migration will follow. I know you hate to think that the Fall is coming, but we are planning to meet our early “snow birds” (and not the trailer driving kind) as they migrate south. On Sunday, September 16th, Carl Starace & Sally Swain will guide you into the North Fork Preserve for a walk along Long Island’s pristine property for some excellent birding. You never know what you might find. On Saturday September 22nd, I will guide you into Smith Point County Park to catch the air currents to observe raptors along our shoreline from the ranger station viewing platform and wilderness areas. In October, I have planned a Dune Road trip from Shinnecock east to catch some late migrants as they flutter along our coast. This is only the start of our fall and winter birding trips, please join our leaders as they guide you into the fall migration.

Saturday, Sept. 15th, @ 8:30 am

Smith Point County Park

Trip Leader: John McNeil

Meet at the far western end of the *Worlds Largest Parking Lot* at Smith Point Park. Please watch the weather and wear appropriate outerwear. Sometimes this has been the first cold walk of the season. Don’t forget to bring your binoculars and scopes. We will start at the upper deck of the Ranger Station and then hike out into the Wilderness Area. We will be watching for migrating songbirds, waterbirds and birds of prey.

continued - see page 2



Eastern Long Island Audubon Society

Invites you to attend the forty-fifth anniversary dinner

Celebrating Birding on Long Island

Stalking the Meat-Eater Bird: A Birder Tells All
Pam Salaway, author and storyteller,
will speak to the joys and wonders, and
often comical dimensions, of birding

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

Cocktail hour begins at 6:00 pm

CASA BASSO

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Cocktail Hour with cash bar, followed by a sit-down dinner

\$45.00 per person in advance or \$50 at the door

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entertaining prizes. You do not need to be there in order to win.*

If you have questions please call Evelyn at 631-727-0417 or Sally at 631-281-6008.

**Seed Sale is set for Saturday, November 10th from 9am to 3pm
at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Order forms are on the web site:
easternlongislandaudubon.org**

**Please place your seed orders by Oct. 24,
gift items, bird feeders and other items will be available at the sale.**

This is an exciting time of year to be out on the barrier beach so come on out! For more details, contact John at home 631.281.2623 or on the day of trip by cell at 631.219.8047 or by e-mail: birdwchr@gmail.com.

Sunday, Sept. 16th, @ 9:00 am

North Fork Preserve

Trip Leaders: Carl Starace & Sally Swain

Suffolk County recently acquired this pristine 300 acre property for parkland to be used for "passive recreation," such as hiking and birding. Most of our membership has not had a chance to explore this new parkland. Join Carl and Sally to catch migrants and see what The North Fork Preserve is about half a mile east of Palmer Vineyard on the north side of Sound Ave in Riverhead. Parking is on the grass on either side of the drive outside of the gate. For addition details, contact Carl at 631.281.8074 or e-mail him at castarace@gmail.com

Saturday, Oct. 20th, @ 8:00 am

Dune Road—Shinnecock to Moriches Inlet

Trip Leader: Eileen Schwinn

This will be an excellent time to bird along the barrier beach as the migration passes through our area. We will be looking for shorebirds, hawks and other land birds. Meet in the parking area on the west side of Shinnecock Inlet at 8:00 am. Contact Eileen via e-mail if you need addition details: beachmed@optonline.net.

Saturday, Nov. 17th @ 9:00 am

Jamesport State Park and Hallockville Farm Fields

Trip Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

The varied habitats of the farm fields, woods, ponds, and dunes on Long Island Sound provide a diversity of migrants and wintering birds. Bring binoculars for this 2-hour walk of spectacular views and good birding. For additional details call Hallockville at 631-298-5292. There is a \$5 charge for this walk benefiting the Hallockville Museum Farm.

Nature Programs/Meetings

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

Bob Adamo, Interim Program Chair

Monday, September 10 beginning at 7:15 pm

What the FraCK?

Roxanne Zimmer

New York is on the frontline of the controversy surrounding shale gas. Energy from this source is a double edged sword. Although a lucrative alternative to coal and other fossil fuels, accessing shale gas via hydraulic fracturing or fracking poses considerable environmental hazards. How has the gas industry been so successful in covering up these hazards including toxic waste disposal? What is the Long Island connection in this upstate debate?

Monday, October 1 beginning at 7:15 am

Birding the Manu

Eric Salzman

The Manu Biosphere Reserve is a national park that runs from high in the Andes near Cuzco down past the junction of the Manu and Madre de Dios Rivers in the Amazonian lowlands of southeastern Peru. The reserve and park plus the surrounding areas constitute the largest protected area in the country and one of the major protected areas in South America, covering a huge variety of habitats with a cross-section of flora and fauna that includes more than 1000 species of birds. There are only a very limited number of ways to access this area. The Manu Road from Cuzco is a one-lane dirt road that travels from puna and paramo at 12,500 feet down through successive levels of cloud forest, ending in rain forest at the Madre de Dios River, a major tributary of the Amazon; from this point on it is necessary to travel by boat. Accessible from road and river are a small number of lodges on the edge of the reserve. Eric and Lorna Salzman spent three weeks at the Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge, the Hacienda Amazonia and the Manu Wildlife Center and saw over 525 species of birds including some of the most exotic and sought-after South American species.

Sunday, November 18th @ 9:00 am

Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk William Floyd Estate

Trip Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

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

December 2012

No field trips are scheduled. We hope members will participate in the Christmas Bird Counts. More information will be in the Nov/Dec Osprey with dates for the December counts and the Waterfowl Census in January.

Get Involved

**Would you like to submit
an article or a photo?**

We would like

**to hear from you. Contact:
eliasosprey@optonline.net.**

Red Knot B95 or The Moon Bird?

Byron Young

While planning a trip to the coast of Maine for September, I came across a note on Maine Birding the Net about a banded Red Knot affectionately called the Moon Bird.

Shorebird scientist Patricia Gonzlez of Argentina has been banding Red Knots for many years and the Moon Bird is one of her favorites. The Moon Bird was originally banded at age 2 in 1995 and today bears tag number B95. This Red Knot now at least 19 years old and has made at least 38 trans-hemispheric trips from Argentina to the Canadian arctic and back a straight line distance of about 9300 miles each way. This bird in its lifetime has flown the distance between the earth and the moon and is now on its way back. What is interesting when you think about the migrations of the Red Knot or any bird for that matter is that they do not fly in a straight line so the distances that they fly is even greater.

Red Knot B95 has been sighted only a few times in its travels but each time it adds a great deal of valuable information. It has been seen a few times in Tierra del Fuego by the research team, in Delaware Bay, and the Mingan Archipelago in Quebec Canada. The Mingan Archipelago in on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and appears to be a stop over point for returning Red Knots.

The latest observation of B95 was this spring in Delaware Bay by Dr. Gonzalez. She was spotting shorebirds from the deck of a house at Reeds Beach, N.J. when she spotted a Red Knot with an orange band. The orange band indicates that the bird was banded in Argentina. When she realized that this bird was B95 her hands began to shake and her heart began to beat faster. Collecting her camera she pressed it against the spotting scope snapping at least 10 photos of the bird hoping that one would catch the band number (photo above). The Moon Bird has been spotted numerous times during its life span, prior to this April in Delaware Bay it was observed in December 2011 in Ar-

gentina and prior to that during May 2009 in Delaware Bay.

If you want to read more about this celebrity bird look for a book by Phillip Hoose entitled *Moonbird: On the Wind with the Great Survivor B95* due out in July 2012.

What is interesting about this bird is its age (19 years), the distance it has migrated, and its ability to survive all of the pitfalls that great these migrating shorebirds. Given that most Red Knot only live for four or five years this bird is truly remarkable. One wonders how many offspring have been produced and whether they will carry the longevity gene of this parent.

On the local front, banded Red Knots have been observed at Pike's Beach and Cupsogue for the past several years. Most of the birds that I am aware of have been banded in either Argentina or Chile with the one exception being a bird Banded in Delaware Bay. If you spot a banded shore-



PHOTO: PATRICIA M. GONZALEZ

bird, especially a Red Knot, try to obtain a photograph of the bird with its band, number if possible for reporting.

It is very exciting to discover a banded bird and to aid in the scientific investigations surrounding the species. It is very interesting to communicate with the scientific team that banded the bird and to feel their excitement and passion for their work.

Be on the lookout for B95 or its friends in your travels around the flats of Moriches Bay this fall, you never know what you might find.



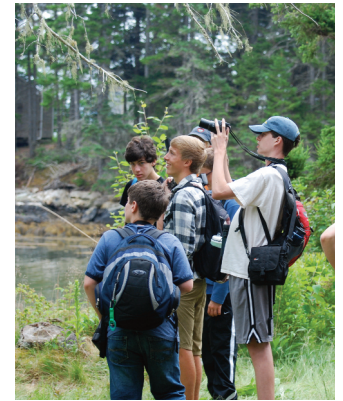
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Here I am with Julie Zickefoose and Mary Beth Wilson on Harbor Island, one of our day trips. In the middle are the Northern Parula fledglings and a group of teens watching the nest.

The Joy of Birding at Hog Island Audubon Camp

Sally Newbert

Sometime last winter I received a postcard from Hog Island describing the summer programs. A rainbow hung over the island. I thought that is really something I would love to do. So I hung the post card up above my desk. Then came the gloomy days of winter. At the January ELIAS Board meeting the discussion turned to the teenage campers that ELIAS sponsors. Well, someone asked, should we send adults? How could we do that? The subject of Hog Island came up. Suddenly, and so unlike me, I found myself saying, "I would love to go to Hog Island." The Board voted to give Tom Moran and me a partial scholarship to attend a week's program in Maine. It was just the incentive I needed. A little planning, a stop in Boston on the way up and back to see my daughter and family. My friend, Mary Beth Wilson, also a birder, was delighted to find I was going and quickly signed up too. So off we went.

Sunday afternoon, hungry, tired and a little nervous, we arrived and loaded our stuff (way too much) on to the Snow Goose III, a nice study lobster boat for the ride over to the island. It is a short ride, not more than a 5 or 10 minutes.

Monday morning the light streamed into the room and woke me up, early enough for the 6 am bird walk. Off we went into the woods for a short walk with Scott Weidensaul, the camp director for the week. We listened for the zoo, zee, zee zoo of the Black-throated Green Warbler, a regular nester on Hog Island. We walked

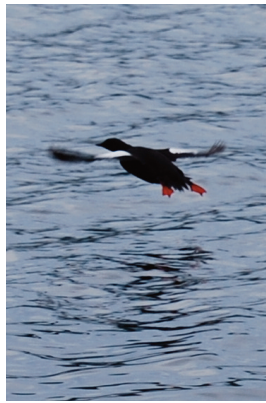
by a swampy area and admired the pitcher plants with their dark colored flowers. Then it was on to breakfast and coffee.

Under our window in the Port Hole, the name of our dorm, a crowd gathered almost every morning and afternoon. A pair of Northern Parula had built a very well disguised nest in the Old Man's Beard lichen that hung from a pine tree. At first you could only see the lichen moving and wiggling. Then the crowd gasped as the mother or father came and went to feed the babies. Over just a few days the nest went from wiggling to almost dissolving, revealing four Northern Parula chicks. Would the lichen in the pine tree that was disguising the nest hold? Would the babies be able to stay in the nest long enough? We watched and waited. Then one afternoon, the first baby fledged. *Ahh*, the rest followed within a few hours. Only 10 or 12 days in nest and the babies were off. Not a long time to grow up. What a thing to witness.

On our first day we took a short boat ride to see the island and surrounding area from the water. An Eagle nest with large chick was visible from the boat, Guillemots were a constant presence, a few Common Loons were also on the water. The Loons were either young birds, or unsuccessful nesters, they should have been on inland fresh water ponds at that time of year. We passed a favorite fishing spot for Great Blue Herons and learned a bit of the history of a ship, the Cora Cressly, that was disintegrating nearby. That afternoon, the rain had taken over,

boat trips cancelled, but ignoring the rain, off we went for a walk in the woods to the Bingham and Writer's Cottages. There Scott Weidensaul told us the story of the two cottages. It was here that Austin Dickenson, Emily Dickenson's brother, carried on a raging affair with Mable Loomis Todd, the island's owner. Both were married to other people. In a twist of fate, after Austin's death, it was in the writer's cottage that Mable Loomis Todd edited the poems of Emily Dickenson and made them into the versions we know today. Sorry no pictures of the cottages, it was too wet to take the camera. Friends of Hog Island are in the process of restoring the cottages.

On Tuesday it was time for some mainland birding. Off to McCurdy Pond Road for warblers and Great Salt Bay Farm Wildlife Preserve in Damariscotta where the field was filled with Bobolinks, a life bird for me. There were also beautiful Cedar Waxwings. We spent the afternoon on the Snow Goose III going out to Eastern Egg Rock Island where the Puffins live. This is the colony that Steven Kress began restoring in the 1970s. I have to admit this was the most disappointing part of camp. We did not have any close views of the Puffins. I got a few shots of flying puffins, but nothing even remotely satisfactory. We did not land on the island, which can be a difficult feat and is not attempted with campers. There are interns who work with Steve Kress who do live on the island and are supplied by the Hog Island staff. The interns do a variety of research projects with the Puffins and other nesting



Dr. Sara Morris and her daughter dressed for Guillemot Appreciation Day, red/orange crocs complete the outfit. One of the honorees, a Guillemots flies by the boat. Here I am again with Scott Weidensaul at the early morning bird banding session. The Snow Goose III takes the group ashore for some land birding.

birds on Eastern Egg Rock. Common Terns, Roseate Terns, Arctic Terns, and Laughing Gulls all roost or nest on the island. From the boat we watched Great Blue Herons flying to their roosts and admired the many seals that were hauled out on the rock islands. Razorbills, Great and Double-crested Cormorants, and Common Eider also call these rocks home.

Wednesday was Guillemot Appreciation Day. It was our day to learn about the local residents, ok, a little corny, but fun. What was that on all the leaders feet? Everyone was given red/orange felt Guillemot feet to wear in whatever fashion they could imagine, on ID badges, on hats, in your hair. Why was there a piece of red licorice on everyone plate at lunch? That was to remind us that the favorite food of the Guillemot was red sand eels. (I never saw one of those, I guess they are under the water). Sara Morris, a professor from Canisius, and her daughter and a few others dressed as Guillemots with white patches and black outfits. Red/orange crocs completed the outfit.

Wednesday and Thursday morning I found the most pleasant way to start the day. Sara Morris, professor and bird bander gave a bird banding demonstration outside the dining hall. Coffee and birding in the cool morning. How nice. Mist nets were set up to capture some birds. The one bird they caught the first morning was a Song Sparrow. Sara showed us the different size bands and discussed the process. She was able to blow on the bird's chest to show us the brood patch, a featherless patch that allows the bird to keep the

eggs and young birds warm. She also held the bird up to each person's ear for them to hear the heart beat. It is like a cat's purr. As she held the bird up to people's ears, you could see the look of delight overtake them. Because it was a female, they let her go quickly. The task of letting it go went to one of the teen campers, whose face lit up as she held the little bird and let her go back to her family. No birds were caught the second morning, but when they did this with the Covids, a Black-throated Blue was caught. Lucky them!

I was a member of the adult group, but at the same time, there was a group of teens, at another program taking place at the same time. Usually they had their own activities. We did all eat together and share some activities. I think these teens, nicknamed, the Corvids added a little spice to our week.

Winding up the week was a trip to the mainland, following a trail set up by Roger Tory Peterson in a residential but bird-friendly community with a fresh water beaver pond. The whole group participated, but split into smaller groups going in different directions. We were rewarded with surprisingly great views of a Bay-breasted Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat and Swamp Sparrow. Osprey and Eagles were calling overhead. Butterflies included a White Admiral, and an Eastern Swallowtail. A dragon fly looking like an old fashioned biplane was quite a fabulous looking.

The afternoon was spent at a choice of workshops. I had the pleasure of going to hear Julie Zickefoose describe her life

with children, dog, garden and birds on an Ohio farm. Then Sara Morris gave a workshop on brown birds. We divided into teams and compared field guides in print, and on electronic devices. To find the bird. Peterson's guide won in my book. Embarrassingly my partner inadvertently pressed the sound button on the iPad and disrupted the class as the Veery called out its name.

The camp wrapped up with a lobster feast with cream puffs for dessert and a wonderful, amusing talk by Bill Thompson III, publisher of *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

Let me backtrack a bit and mention that the faculty was unbelievably great. Scott Weidensaul, author of more than two dozen books headed the camp this week's The Joy of Birding program. His newest book: *The First Frontier: The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery and Endurance in Early America* is coming out soon. Bill Thompson III and his wife, Julie Zickefoose were also there and gave programs on birding optics, (ok, he told me I should go to tripod hell or something to that effect). He gave a program on digiscoping that described a new device that quickly attaches an iPhone to a scope to make digiscoping extremely easy and quick. (Maybe I can get myself out of tripod hell). Julie talked about the birds she has helped and gardening with native plants. Julie, aka Zick, highlighted several nightly lectures. Both Bill and Julie are authors, publishers and in a musical group called The Rain Crows. "Would you go back?" asked Mary Beth on the way home. "In a heartbeat" I answered.



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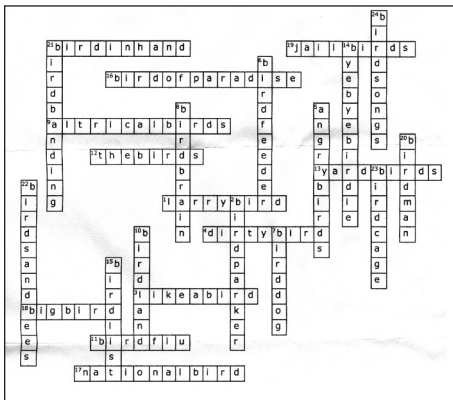
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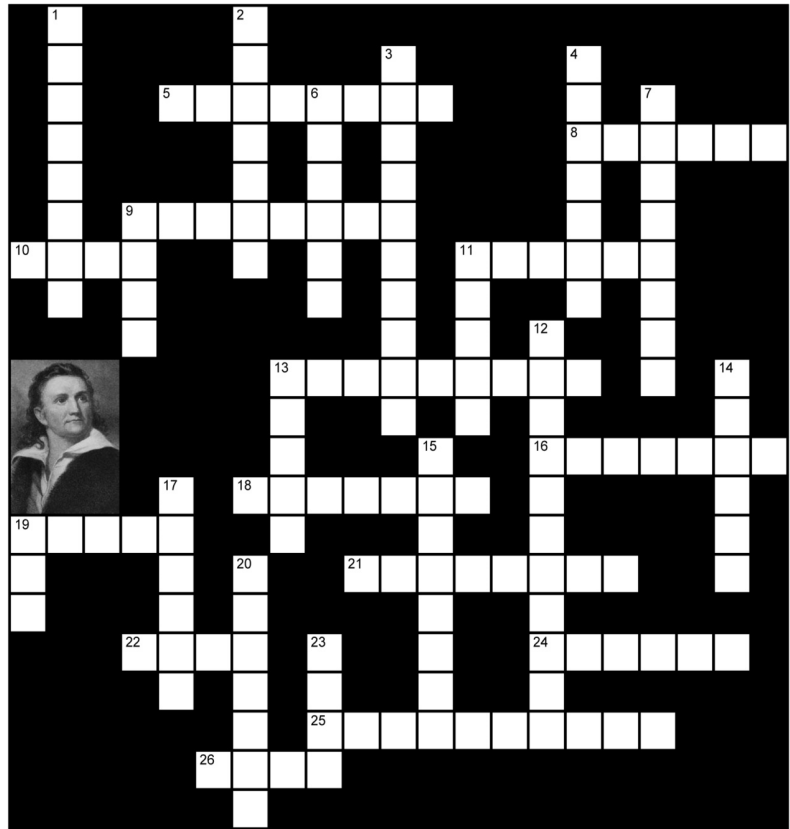
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Answers to last issue's puzzle
Avian Creatures
by Guest Contributor, Don Spates



Famous Birders by Tom Moran



Across

- 5 Agatha _____, famous author who was a birder, she wouldn't need Poirot to help her make a field ID
- 8 Steve _____, played the corporate executive birder in the movie *The Big Year*, he actually is a birder, and a wild and crazy guy!
- 9 _____ Flyway, a migratory path we live near
- 10 Shedding old feathers
- 11 Scottish immigrant who was favored over Audubon by the Philadelphia Academy of Science
- 13 In the Northern Hemisphere, the southern movement of birds, should be well under way
- 16 Supercilium to a bird
- 18 American _____, small hunter at EPCAL
- 19 Peter _____, founder of the World Series of birding and director of the Cape May Bird Observatory
- 21 Ken _____ low budget Big Year competitor
- 22 George Grinnell's middle name!
- 24 His field guide, released in 2000, was the fastest selling field guide to date
- 25 Pennsylvania author of *Living on the Wind* and *Of a Feather*
- 26 _____ Mountain, a good place to watch the hawk migration, just past the Tappan Zee Bridge

Down

- 1 Roger Tory _____ created the modern field guide
- 2 Naturalist William "Billy" took a five year walk in the southeast starting in 1773 discovering many new species
- 3 Common birding accessory
- 4 Internal _____, theorized mechanism that helps birds migrate
- 6 Three types of these sea ducks should be arriving for the winter
- 7 Founder of first Audubon Society
- 9 Alaskan island known for Asian rarities, essential for a big year
- 11 Early painter of American birds, grandfather of first child born in America, Elizabeth Dare
- 12 State park location parking lot number 5, a good place to watch the hawk migration on Long Island
- 13 James _____ Vardaman's appropriate middle name as the first big budget Big Year birder
- 14 American Golden _____, can be seen on the sod farms about now
- 15 A downward shaped bill, like on a whimbrel
- 17 Most common bird of prey migrant seen on Long Island (2010 Fire Island Hawk Watch data)
- 19 Chemical that threatened many species including the Osprey
- 20 Sent to the United States to avoid being drafted into Napoleon's army, failed businessman turned ornithologist
- 23 _____ Mountain, preserved by Rosalie Edge to stop birds of prey from being hunted there



Marbled Godwit *Limosa Fedoa*

Carl Starace

The Latin word, *Limosa* mean “muddy” for the habitat Godwits use. The Latin word, *Fedoa*, is a term whose meaning has been lost in time. “Marbled” comes from the mottled coloration to its upper-sides. It has a long, well-proportioned body, legs and bill, with a slim neck and earthy colors. The Marbled Godwit is a great looking shorebird. It is, along with the American Oystercatcher, and the Long-billed Curlew (a bird that once used our shorelines in migration) the largest of the North American shorebirds.

Description: The Marbled Godwit is large, 18” in length with a 30” wingspan, weighing in at 13 ounces. This Godwit is larger than our Eastern Willet and somewhat larger than the Western Willet. It is close in size to the Whimbrel, a curlew. The Marbled’s head is small, neck long, body full, with a very long mostly pink bill that is slightly upturned. It is quite a plain looking bird. In all plumages there is little contrast in color between its upper and lower parts. Its appearance is buffy brown. Breeding adults are finely speckled cinnamon/black on their upperparts. Their underparts are lightly barred. Non-breeding birds have no barring. In flight the tail and underwings show a salmon color.

Behavior: Marbleds will feed in flocks across tidal mudflats. They will take several steps than probe. They mostly stand with the bill pointing downwards, unlike either the Willet or Whimbrel. They like feeding in water, sometimes up to their

bellies, even swimming at times. Roosting takes place on higher ground with other large waders, even gulls. In flight its long legs trail behind the tail. The Godwit moves speedily with shallow wingbeats. When flying in flocks they will form a V.

Food: Godwits seek out mollusks, crustaceans and worms, all of which they will work with skill up their long bill. When on the prairie grasslands they will feast on grasshoppers and other kinds of insects. They will also eat tubers and various seeds from the edges of ponds and estuaries.

Vocalization: The call most often given as it flies is a nasal “rech”, or “kerwek”. Also a long, loud, “reh karehah, karehah, karehah, heh heh, heh.”

Distribution: Marbleds breed on the prairie grasses of Canada’s provinces and in Central Montana, most of North Dakota, northern and central South Dakota, northern Minnesota, and the lower Alaskan Peninsula. Wintering birds are found along California’s coast, the Salton Sea, and down into Central America. Further east they run from Florida’s west coast along the Gulf to the Yucatan. A few birds inhabit the winter shores of the mid-Atlantic down to south Florida.

Where to find locally: My first was seen on the mussel beds just west of Ponquogue Bridge in May. They can usually be found most readily from mid-August on into early autumn at both Pikes Beach and Cup-sogue County Park, the mudflats in West-hampton Dunes.

Good September Birding. Carl

From our outgoing President Eileen Schwinn

Eileen Schwinn

A couple of years ago, I became interested in birds. Mildly interested – a purpose and reason to go on long walks, with my friend, in my neighborhood. I enrolled in a beginning birding class through an adult education program, and attended a couple of meetings of the local bird-watcher’s club. The next thing I knew, I was approached to take a more active position in the club, maybe become an officer. The current president was moving to Florida, and, with an option to pass if it wasn’t a good fit, I was asked to take the leadership role. Fast forward seven years.

Over the years, I’ve come to love the birds, to love the places birds hang out, and more importantly, to love the people who hang out with the birds. From each and every person connected with ELIAS, I’ve learned things that will stay with me forever. This group of people has become some of my dearest friends, and they will remain so in the years ahead. And it’s from these friends, I’ve learned it’s OK to move on and let someone else have the chair I’ve sat in over the past seven years.

Byron Young has graciously agreed to be President of Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, a role he not only had a valuable background in, but a wonderful enthusiasm for! Retired from the DEC, Byron has a keen awareness of so much that will be a real asset to our club. And, he is a genuinely nice guy!

It was a good fit then, and it’s gonna be a good fit now for Byron!!

Enjoy, Stay Well, and Good Birding!



Adventures in the field



At Tiana Beach (left) and in the field at SoFo watching the Indigo Buntings.



July 14 — Dune Road

Sally Newbert

There is usually some interesting birding along Dune Road. Eileen Schwinn, the leader, met the group at Shinnecock Inlet. We quickly went on to Road I which overlooked a tidal pond just loaded with so many Great and Snowy Egrets it was hard to keep count, they were even roosting in bushes further away. As we watched the egrets,



who came peeking out of the marshes, but a Clapper Rail. Oh my, what a good find so early in the day. We proceeded on to the Ponquogue Bridge and the bay side of Tiana Beach and enjoyed the Willets, Osprey, and friends. Our final stop was along Triton Lane where we spotted our second Clapper Rail of the day. Then, walking to the ocean side we were able to see the nesting Least Tern colony. The sand colored babies were hard to pick out with their fluffy feathers almost matching the sand. The best way to find them was to watch for the parents who flew in fairly constantly to feed a small fish to the little chicks. Keeping our distance, Eileen put the chicks in the scope which elicited

much oohing and aahing, making the day a memorable one.

A reporter and photographer from the *NY Post* joined this walk. They were working on a story about day trips from Manhattan.

August 4 — SOFO

Eric Salzman'

The South Fork Natural History Society (SOFO) and Eastern Long Island Audubon Society (ELIAS) held an historic joint walk at the SOFO Museum and I had the privilege of leading the walk around Vineyard Field — the large recovering pasture or meadow in back of the museum on the Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike. It was very well attended with perhaps two dozen participants. Among them were Eileen Schwinn, president of ELIAS, Dai Dayton, president of the Friends of the LI Greenbelt (which manages the field), Frank Quevedo, director of SOFO, and my daughter Eva Salzman, a poet who often writes about natural history on Eastern LI.

This area specializes in birds that like to live at the edge or ecotone between woodlands and open meadows. The optimum time for a visit is probably early to mid-spring when migrants are passing

through and the local birds are all singing. By early August, many birds have shut down for the season.

There was one major exception and it is one of our most sought-after birds and still a fairly uncommon species around here: the Indigo Bunting. Some buntings are inconspicuous sparrow-like birds but that's not the Indigo Bunting. The male of the species is a spectacular blue of a deep indigo color that, in the right light, can seem to shimmer (ironically, the female is one of the plainest of birds and the males lose their spectacular plumage in migration and winter). Since the males only hold this plumage in breeding season and since the Vineyard Field was full of singing birds — more Indigo Buntings than I have ever seen in a single place — it would seem to be the case that Indigo Bunting breeding season in Bridgehampton is not yet over!

Did we see any female Indigo Buntings? Any youngsters? Nests? Of course not. But it was a remarkable show of male Indigo Buntingness: perhaps a dozen or more displaying and singing both in the trees around the edges and on the top of small bushes in the meadow. Sometimes there were chases that looked like territorial disputes. How territorial is the Indigo



First stop along Dune Road included a spectacular number of Great and Snowy Egrets. A Clapper Rail made a brief appearance at two stops.



JOHN HEIDECKER

On the flats at Cupsogue

Bunting? It's a good question worthy of further investigation. In any case, the singing males were always perched high or in the open, anxious to broadcast their vocal and visual assets to the world. I don't know of another place on Long Island where it is possible to see these birds so easily and dramatically. The whole field was like an exploded lek — a field of display for male birds.

There were other birds of course. Green Heron and Purple Martin flying overhead, Eastern Kingbird in the meadow, Barn Swallows around the buildings (with active nests and second broods under the eaves), Carolina Wrens singing away here and there, House Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, lots of Catbirds, Mockingbirds, Cardinals. Among the area's specialties that were missed: Orchard Oriole, Blue-winged Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird (huh?), Tree Swallow, and Eastern Bluebird, all of which were here earlier in the season. Next time!

P.S.: Summer is an optimum time for butterflies and dragonflies in a meadow like this one with several wet spots. Among the dragonflies I could identify Halloween Pennant, Banded Pennant and a whitetail (Common Whitetail according to Frank Quevedo). A great place to study the insects of summer.

If you would like to receive Eric's Blog, send your email to: es@eric-salzman.com. The Blog is also available on LIBirding.com.

August 25 — Cupsogue

Eric Salzman'

Cupsogue by the Moriches Inlet is a county park at the west end of Dune Road made up of dunes, marshes, mud & sand flats, islands, ocean and bay. It is one of the finest spots on the East End for shorebirds and waterbirds. There are basically two ways to get to the best birding spots. One goes directly from the parking lot through the salt marsh (a muddy trek). The other, adopted for this walk, is to head a short distance west on the sand road at the far end of the parking lot and then follow a trail down the dunes to the bay edge. When you reach the bay (actually the shore of an inlet between the salt marshes and a couple of large spoil islands), you work your way east, wading across a small stream or two and then the channel itself to reach the flats surrounding the island where many of the birds hang out. This is best accomplished at low tide and the tide was indeed low at about 9:30 on the 25th.

Probably the #1 sighting (or perhaps the #1, 2 & 3 sightings) were of Whimbrels: two flying over the parking lot at our 7:30 am arrival, a single bird in the water near the marshes and another single bird, this one calling and flying low directly overhead as we made our way back along the shore. Another excellent sighting was a probable Long-billed Dowitcher — a large, fairly bright and well-marked singleton with a very long bill.

Also seen: a small flock of about a dozen Red Knots, small numbers of Black Skimmers and Royal Terns, two Black Terns over the marsh in front of the island, numbers of Common Terns and good views of a Clapper Rail taking a bath in a pool at the edge of the marsh along with three immature Yellow-crowned Night Herons catching crabs and several Saltmarsh Sparrows hopping and darting about.

The variety of shore birds included Red Knots, Oystercatchers, a few Willets (including at least one Western Willet), Semipalmated, Piping and Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones, at least one Short-billed Dowitcher, Sanderlings, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs (with the latter seemingly outnumbering the former!).

There were several Osprey including one active nest and all four common gull species were present (Great Black-backed, Herring, Laughing and Ring-billed). An odd observation was that of a Ring-bill flying backwards (!) across the surface of the water apparently tracking bait fish. It's sometimes said that hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backward but this gull apparently failed to get that information.

There were many Snowy Egrets including one doing a veritable solo dance in the water, an activity more commonly associated with Reddish Egrets. What exactly is the bird doing? Presumably stirring up bait fish in some fashion.

Taken from Eric Salzman's Blog.



Open Mouths just beyond the window

Betty Wybenga

Several yards and a window pane separate our kitchen table from the sights and sounds of an ongoing spectacular spring and summer show. Bird feeders, two baths, a dead birch tree, high and low shrubs and a pine tree provide the setting for the nurseries and feeding center for many of the birds listed in our monthly reports.

Parenting is at an optimum: constant tireless flights from seeds and other feeder tidbits to nests by either parent in the Downy and Red-bellied Woodpecker family. The reds, blues and yellows of the Cardinals, Bluejays, and finches flash by, as well as the persistent “more seed” chatter of the Chickadees and Titmouse. Open mouths demand more and more from their parents on the feeder, while pointedly a Downy parent with several open mouths waiting appeared to show these fledglings how to extend the body forward in order to feed from the food block. On several days a Brown Thrasher was ground feeding and then in a few quiet moments appeared with an almost chick-sized fledgling which settled in a sunny spot and waited while the parent did some low flying and creative searching to appease the open mouth.

Our immediate outdoors are insect free (no mosquitoes) and recently while reading on the nearby verandah a family of five wrens flitted by and then flew off in what I regarded as a fitting thank you fly by! And the show goes on with more sightings from our feeder survey list.



BETTY WYBENGA

Feeder Survey begins in October

John McNeil

The Survey will be conducted the first full week of the month starting on Sunday and ending the following Sunday. This survey takes place from October to June.

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.

Father's Day at the feeder – a male Downy Woodpecker tries to teach his fledgling chick the art of eating from the suet feeder.



Survey Dates:

Sun., Oct. 7 to Sun., Oct. 14

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Phone _____

_____ Mourning Dove

_____ Northern Cardinal

_____ Blue Jay

_____ House Finch

_____ Black-capped Chickadee

_____ Tufted Titmouse

_____ Downy Woodpecker

_____ White-throated Sparrow

_____ Dark-eyed Junco

_____ House Sparrow

_____ White-breasted Nuthatch

_____ Song Sparrow

_____ Red-bellied Woodpecker

_____ American Crow

_____ European Starling

_____ Common Grackle

_____ Carolina Wren

_____ Northern Mockingbird

_____ American Goldfinch

_____ Red-winged Blackbird

_____ Hairy Woodpecker

_____ Common Flicker

_____ Rufous-sided Towhee

_____ American Robin

_____ Brown-headed Cowbird

_____ Sharp-shinned Hawk

_____ Rock Dove (pigeon)

_____ Gray Catbird

_____ Yellow-rumped Warbler

_____ Red-breasted Nuthatch

Other _____



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Mark Your Calendars

Monday, Sept. 10

Meet at 7:15 pm

Nature Program (see page 2)

What the FraCK? Learn about the threat to NYS.

Roxanne Zimmer

Saturday, Sept. 15

Meet at 8:30 am

Nature Walk (see page 1)

Smith Point County Park, John McNeil, Leader

Sunday, Sept. 16

Meet at 9 am

Nature Walk (see page 1)

North Fork Preserve, Carl Starace & Sally Swain, Leaders

Monday, Oct. 1

Meet at 7:15 pm

Nature Program (see page 2)

Birding the Manu, Peru with Eric Salzman

Wed. Oct. 17

Celebrating Birding Dinner at Casa Basso (see page 1)

Saturday, Oct. 20

Meet at 7:30 am

Nature Walk (see page 2)

Dune Road-Shinnecok to Moriches Inlet, Eileen Schwinn, Leader

Saturday, Nov. 17

Meet at 9:00 am

Nature Walk (see page 2)

Jamesport State Park & Hallockville Farm Fields

MaryLaura Lamont, Leader

Sat., Nov. 10

Seed Sale at Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Gift items will be available. Please place your seed orders by Oct. 24, order forms are on the website.

Sunday, Nov. 18

Meet at 9:00 am

Nature Walk (see page 2)

Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk, William Floyd Estate

MaryLaura Lamont, Leader

All programs are open to all.

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