



THE **OSPREY**

July/August 2017 — Vol. XLII, No. 4

Speakers coming to ELIAS Meetings

Monday, July 10, 2017, at 7:15 pm

Long Island Wildlife Photography

Michael Busch

Did you know that there is a group of 7,800 people sharing over 86,000 photos of beautiful Long Island's nature? Come see some of those amazing pictures and meet Michael Busch, administrator of the Facebook page 'Long Island Wildlife Photography'. Mike is also owner of 'Great South Bay Images', publisher & editor of 'Fire Island and Beyond' website, and director of the group 'Save The Great South Bay'. He will talk about capturing nature in motion, drone videography and ethical birding/photography practices. Come join us for a beautiful slide show and great conversation!

Monday, August 7, 2017, at 7:15 pm

Nature Center 2.0 being planned for Brookhaven's Washington Lodge

Rebecca Muellers

The Art & Nature Group has secured the Washington Lodge mansion to open the Center for Environmental Education & Discovery or CEED... a new concept nature center and nature retreat center! Come learn all about it as President, Rebecca Muellers fills in the details of their plan and all the ways it will help take nature stewardship to the next level on Long Island. 

Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge, 3 Old Country Road, Quogue, NY. Directions are on the website. easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org. Meetings are open to the public, there is no charge.

Summer Bird Walks

SUNDAY, July 16, Meet at 8 am

Dune Road Exploration

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Meet at TIANA BEACH BAY SIDE PARKING LOT, in Hampton Bays. Since Super Storm Sandy, the Tiana Beach bay side has been a very welcome stop for resident birds, as well as early southward-bound migrating shore birds. Join us for a long stay at low tide, and perhaps, an exploration along other Hot Spots of Dune Road. Bring sunscreen, water, and a hat (although there is a covered pavilion to view from, if necessary). Town of Southampton Temporary Parking Permits will be available to non-residents. For more information, please contact Eileen Schwinn at beachmed@optonline.net or call: 516-662-7751 the day of the Field Trip. Rain or shine!

WEDNESDAY, August 16, Meet at 8 am

Cupsogue Mud & Sand Flats

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Meet at the WESTERN END OF THE CUPSOGUE PARKING LOT, Westhampton Dunes. A refreshing walk of about a mile, along the sand road, then shoreline, of this lovely Suffolk County Park will bring us to an easy crossing to the popular hang-out of gulls, terns and shorebirds. A rail or two, and possibly all the "local" heron species are likely to be seen, as well as the marshland sparrows, along the way. Be prepared to walk in the shallow water to the Island. Barefoot is fine, although hot sand to the shore is likely to be encountered! Bring water, a light snack (if you wish), plenty of sun block, a hat, and perhaps insect repellent - we will be arriving at the crossing point prior to dead low tide at 10:30 am. We will bird the flats, and return before the tide get too high. Apologies for this being a mid-week walk - the tidal pattern for this August prevents a weekend visit. There is an entrance fee for Cupsogue, however, arrival prior to 8:00 am will probably allow you to bypass paying anything! Contact Eileen Schwinn at beachmed@optonline.net for more information. Call: 516-662-7751 the day of the Field Trip. Rain or shine - but canceled if a thunder storm! 

Keep October 18 open for the ELIAS Annual Dinner!

The President's Corner

Bird Watching: Good for Your Health!

Byron Young

A recent study by the British Trust for Ornithology and the University of Queensland found that birding benefits a person's mental health. It did not seem to matter if the birds were observed in their natural habitat or in the shrubs and trees around the home. Nor did it matter if people lived in urban or more rural suburban areas. The study found that people who spent time outside were less anxious or depressed than those who did not. If anyone wants to read the full study I can forward it to you. It is guaranteed to cure insomnia with its highly technical language and heavy doses of mathematical formulas.

I am not sure how much of the shrub and tree watching has helped my mental state when trying to find some rascally bird playing hide and seek with me. However, I guess it can't be all bad because I keep going back, which may be another problem!

One interesting finding was that afternoon birding was found to be more beneficial than early morning birding. While I do not subscribe fully to that theory I think that any time you can spend outside is time well spent and a benefit to one's well being.

Let's see if I can simplify the thesis, "Birding for your health." According to an Article in *Birds and Blooms* magazine, lists the following benefits:

1. Birding Makes You Happy

Simply looking out your window at a bird or your back yard will make you happy and eventually lure you outside. Once outside and moving around, breathing fresh air you tend to take deeper breaths, which transports more oxygen to the cells of your body. This increased oxygen level makes us more alert and our mood will likely become elevated. Just a half hour outside in the sun, we soak up almost a whole day's requirement of vitamin D. Vitamin D is important to our physical health and also helps to alleviate anxiety and depression.

This while not as technically oriented as their search conducted by the folks in England corroborates their observations.

2. You make friends bird watching

This can be as simple as meeting people while birding alone or spending time with a specific group of people birding.

3. Birding keeps you physical active

Birding can be as relaxing or as invigorating as you choose to make it. Some might like to sit in a comfy chair in the back yard watching the birds that come for a visit. Others may want to slog through a marsh looking for shorebirds or hike one of the many trails that can be found around Long Island, logging miles while carrying all kinds of birding gear.

4. Birding takes you places

Then there are those birders who want to take their birding activity to a new level by traveling to far away places seeking to advance their life lists. When my wife and I travel I always pack a set of binoculars, and a local field guide to the native birds. I can always find a park or nature center to get out early and find some new species of bird or visit with old feathered friends who are also visiting the same local. This provides me with physical and mental exercise.

5. Birding feeds the brain

Since medical science has not found a cure for the aging process one must seek activities that stimulate the brain. Birding accomplishes that task quite nicely. We can always learn more about our feathered friends, their habits and habitats. Who hasn't had to relearn the sounds of our spring warblers as they hide from us among the fresh spring leaves singing for a mate. The search for identifying marks for the bird that will not sit still in the shrubs or tree tops and then searching through your electronic applications or if you are old school, like me, search through your field guide of the day. I know I am just a curmudgeon who won't join the electronic age.

6. Bird watching leads to new experiences

For those of us so inclined, birding is an active quest that invigorates the body and mind. Those benefits go almost unnoticed while we are focused on finding the birds, animals or simply nature. Birding can be a casual or serious as one chooses to make it.

Once outside and looking around, it is almost impossible to not notice other interesting sights, sounds and objects. It could be a butterfly, and intriguing mushroom, plant, animal, insect that will distract you. It is OK to be distracted – the birds won't mind.

So I encourage everyone seek the benefits of participating in an outdoor activity whether it be your backyard, a local park or refuge, or some far off place. I know I always feel better upon returning from a trip outside looking for birds or other cooperative creatures. Even when they do not cooperate I feel better for having spent some time outside. We do not have to be like Henry David Thoreau who felt the need to walk four hours a day to "preserve his health and spirits." However, in Thoreau's time walking was a primary mode of transportation, I wonder if he would walk that far now but that is a topic for another time.

Good Birding! 🦅



Reporting a bird band

Byron Young

Recently I encountered a banded Piping Plover at Pike's Beach in Westhampton Dunes. This is not the first banded shorebird that I have encountered in this area. Since I have encountered several banded birds I have the appropriate websites bookmarked on my computer. This makes it easier to submit information on the banded bird.

I thought that it might be a good idea to provide some summary of the steps necessary to report a banded or tagged bird and to indicate what some of the bands or tags might look like. First let's look at the tag or band types:

1. Leg bands are the most common type of band employed by researchers. The most common of these bands is a metal or colored plastic band that fits around the leg. While the band may be visible to a birder the legend on the band is not and generally requires that the bird be in hand. Neck Bands or Collars are used on large waterfowl such as goose and swan populations. Collars can usually be read from a distance with the aid of binoculars or a spotting scope. This allows the researcher or others to identify an individual bird using the combination of collar color, code number, and the code on the collar.
2. Nasal markers have limited use and are generally used by researcher in a specific study are.
3. Dyes are used to mark birds when temporary marks are required.
4. Colored leg bands and flags are generally used to coordinated international studies. Shorebird researchers use a flag type leg band with the legend printed on the flag. In the case of shorebirds if one is close enough and has good optics the legend can be read. I try to capture a photographic image of the band that helps to insure that the legend can be read. This is the band that we are most likely to encounter on Long Island when observing shorebirds.
5. Wing tags are shapes of vinyl attached over the leading edge of the wing. The tags can come in many colors and

usually have a code printed that can be easily read.

6. There are other less common types of tags however, they are not widely used so are not reported here.

What should you do when sighting a banded bird?

1. Carefully note the color and position of each band (left or right leg, upper or lower leg) and be aware that the lower leg can have two bands, stacked on top of one another. Be sure to note which one is on top. One band should be metal (aluminum) USFWS band.
2. Record the alpha-numeric code if you can read it. Taking a few photographs of the bird with its bands that can be enhanced at home may help determine the code if any exists.
3. Note the location in as much detail as possible. Use GPS coordinates if you can.
4. Do not harass the bird to obtain every piece of information, obtain what you can.
5. Report your observation through the link below:

The link to the USGS website for bird banding reports is (www.reportband.gov). Follow the steps on this webpage to report you observations. While is nice to report complete information, please report what you can as it will help the researchers investigating our migratory friends.

As a reward you will receive a certificate providing you with the details telling you where the reported bird was banded. Since I became more active on the birding front I have reported on several banded Red Knots from Argentina and Chile, several Canada Geese from Quebec and a Ring-billed Gull from central Massachusetts. I am now waiting to see where the recently reported Piping Plover was banded. I suspect that it may be a local bird banded by the team from Virginia Tech University. They have been working on Long Island for the past several years.

If anyone has any questions please feel free to reach out to us for help. 🐦

A banded Piping Plover. Photo by Byron Young



A Long Island Spring... Where'd you go, what did you see?

On Saturday, May 6th, twelve early birders enjoyed **Central Park's Ramble**. We spent hours birding in winding paved paths. Eventually the sun came out and we ended the day with over 40 species including 11 species of warblers. Highlights included Black-throated Green and Blue, Worm-eating and Magnolia Warblers, Swainson's Thrush and Scarlet Tanager. Northern Waterthrush and Wood Thrush songs serenaded us throughout the morning on our walk. —Katie Kleinpeter, leader



At the DEC Property

DEC Property, Rocky Point, May 10

Bob Adamo led this trip to the DEC Property in Rocky Point. Our highlight was a Black-billed Cuckoo who sat for quite some time. We also found an active group of Blue-winged Warblers. Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Orioles and an Ovenbird were also seen. *Sally Newbert*



Black-billed Cuckoo at Rocky Point, photo by Bob Gunning



A few birders braved the rain and wind at The William Floyd Estate, a Little Blue Heron flew out to the marsh after this picture was taken. Another surprise was a pair of nesting Gadwall in the tidal pond.

William Floyd Estate, May 13

A small group came to this rainy and windy walk at the William Floyd Estate in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day. MaryLaura Lamont led the group around the Estate. We were able to record 45 species despite the weather. The highlight, a Little Blue Heron flying out of the marsh. — *Sally Newbert*

Hunters Garden, May 17 by Eric Salzman

There were warblers singing by my front door when I stepped out at 6:30 am but I didn't bother to figure out what they were because Eileen Schwinn was coming by to pick me up. Today was ELIAS' annual visit to Hunter's Garden, our local mecca for warblers. After all, we had a Cape May there only two days ago so obviously the joint would be jumping.

Alas, that wasn't the case at all. With a lot of effort, the crowd of perhaps 20 eager birders turned up a couple of Blackpolls, a Black-and-White, a Parula and, best of all, a Worm-Eating Warbler (which I never saw). Did someone see a Black-throated Green? If so, it wasn't me. All the other warblers — Pine, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat — were locals as were the many other colorful or musical birds on site: Scarlet Tanagers (male and female; the female low down gathering nesting



Birders scouring the trees for warblers in Hunters Garden

material), Baltimore Orioles (including a young first-year male in female-type plumage but making grown-up male sounds), singing Veery and singing Hermit Thrush, at least one pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, many singing Red-eyed Vireos and a single non-singing Warbler Vireo. Also at least three flycatchers (Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood-pewee and Great Crested) and a flock of some two dozen Cedar Waxwings. A striking bird was a fly-over calling Raven. Another was a calling Yellow-billed Cuckoo hanging out with -- at least according to some of the group -- a Black-billed Cuckoo.

The trip to Hunter's Garden on May 17 had a surprise a week after the trip. The biggest big deal of the day was this young SUMMER TANAGER, photographed by Vincent Cagno, a relatively new (but sharp) E. Quogue birder. What makes it a Summer Tanager? The big bill for one and the lack of dark wings; also the light-colored upper bill and the slightly crested appearance. I thought I heard someone call out Summer Tanager but I never did see the bird; fortunately, Vincent got it on camera. The first-year males, of which this is a fine example, often have a more splotchy plumage but you can see traces of the yellow first-year plumage on this bird and the on-going molt into adult costume can start with the head.



The surprise came a week later, when Vincent Cagno showed this picture to Eileen Schwinn, what did everyone miss — a Summer Tanager! How did all those birders miss that. Photo: Vincent Cagno.



A Spotted Sandpiper landed right in front of us as we stood on the observation platform. Photo: Sally Newbert

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge

John McNeil led this trip. We meandered around the refuge without any weather issues. As we enjoyed the observation deck, the Barn Swallows, Yellow Warblers, Red-wing Blackbirds came by. We were surprised and delighted when a Spotted Sandpiper landed in front of us. We had a possible Connecticut Warbler by the second overlook, but could not get a really good look at it. We went on to the blind overlooking the river where a Green Heron landed. A snake crossed the creek and I, for one, quickly retreated as it came ashore. — Sally Newbert



A wet day found us at Quogue Wildlife Refuge for an abbreviated walk.

Quogue Wildlife Refuge, May 25

A rainy, dreary morning dawned for our trip to Quogue Wildlife Refuge led by Byron Young and Eileen Schwinn but a few birders came and opted for a fairly quick trip. As Eric Saltzman tells it:

The highlight of this morning's ELIAS walk was a flock of Rough-winged Swallows hunting low over the cove near the main entrance. I say 'so to speak' because this was a rainy and sometime blustery day that had few highlights in either the figurative or literal sense of the word. They all appeared as smallish brown birds, white underneath and with a squared-off tail; the tail, the method of flying and the occasional calls all made for an easy ID. In any case, Rough-wings typically migrate late in the season and in flocks; I have seen them before in numbers feeding over fresh water ponds like the Quogue Ice Pond. How they found any flying insects to feed on in this weather is a mystery but find them they did!

One other good bird of the morning was emitting a raspy warble from high in the trees bordering the pond. At first I thought it was a Warbling Vireo but it turned out to be an Orchard Oriole which, like the Summer Tanager pictured above, was a first-year male. These orioles have a typical first-year plumage: yellow-green with a black bib. I think that they can breed in this plumage but this bird has yet to learn the sweeter notes of his more talented elders. — Eric Saltzman

SoFo, June 3 by Eric Saltzman

The walk in Vineyard Field in back of the South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo) and co-sponsored by both SoFo and ELIAS (Eastern Long Island Audubon Society) pulled a good crowd and showed



A male and female Purple Martin part of a growing colony at SoFo. Photo: Bob Gunning.

a lot of birds, particularly in the early part of the walk. Vineyard Field has largely been cleared of invasive vegetation by the Friends of the Long Island Greenbelt and has taken on the character of a true LI grassland with bush habitat, water holes and surrounding woodland as well. This habitat, increasingly rare on Eastern LI, has nesting birds that need this kind of savanna habitat and that have become increasingly rare elsewhere.

The star attraction here is the Indigo Bunting which has at least 4 or 5 territories around the field, each one complete with singing male, generally perched high at the edge of the woods. This species does not have a very impressive song but that is more than made up for by his stunning looks -- all shining indigo blue. Another success story here is the Orchard Oriole which can be seen and heard all around the field edges. Baltimore Orioles love this habitat as well and were present in amazing numbers. Both orioles have striking songs and we actually found nests of both species: the well-known hanging nest of the Baltimore and the more traditional -- but tightly woven -- cup nest of the Orchard.

Other birds that like this habitat include Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat and Blue-winged Warbler. Heard (but not seen) specialties included Warbling Vireo. A big miss was Eastern Bluebird which seems to have had all its nest boxes usurped by Tree Swallows and Wrens.

Eric Saltzman writes a blog about the birds he encounters, particularly in the marsh that is on his property in East Quogue. If you would like to receive it, please send him an email at es@ericsaltzman.com.

From the **Birdist's Rules Of Birding:**

Birdist Rule #95:

Learn the Red-Eyed Vireo's Song and Level-Up Your Birding

By Nicholas Lund for Audubon

Once you've learned the Red-eyed Vireo's call, you'll realize that one is never far away—and that they never stop singing. Knowing this species opens the door to a whole new world of birds.

By mid-June, migration is over. It's time to appreciate the birds that have settled in for the summer. You now have the luxury of spending some extended time with the birds breeding nearby, so use this time to take your songbird identification skills up a notch, onto a more nuanced but no-less-remarkable family: the vireos.

Warblers and vireos have a lot in common: They're both small passerines—the term used to describe birds whose feet are designed for perching as opposed to, say, swimming or walking—that hunt for insects. Like many warblers, vireos generally feed high in tree canopies or in tangled thickets, making it harder to get a clear look. Vireos are a bit more of a challenge to identify than warblers. Few vireos are as spectacularly colored. Differentiating between the 15 regularly occurring American vireos relies on details of eye stripes, "spectacles," wing bars, and plumage color. Oh, and voice. Definitely voice. But we'll get to that.

There's one species that opens the door to the rest of the vireos. Actually, it doesn't just open the door—it kicks the door open. This is a bird that's not only common throughout its large range, but it also most graciously and almost constantly makes its presence known through a repetitive and easily remembered song.

Whether you realized it, you most certainly heard this vireo ambassador if you did any spring-migration birding in the eastern two-thirds of the United States. It's our friend, the Red-eyed Vireo.

Vireos are generally split into two types from an identification standpoint: those whose most prominent feature is a set of

spectacles, or contrasting feathers around the eye, like in the Blue-headed Vireo; and those vireos whose most obvious field mark is a prominent line through the eye, like our Red-eyed. Red-eyed vireos breed throughout much of the United States, from Florida up through New England.

The Red-eyed Vireo has a white belly and a greenish back—better to blend in with the leaves in which it searches for insect prey—with a slate cap and two dark gray lines running from the bill through the eye and over the eyebrow. If you are lucky enough to get close, prolonged looks, the blood-red eye that gives this species its name is evident, but it's by no means the best field mark. It's pretty dark, and is very hard to see in anything but really good light. So, don't stress on that part.

To be quite frank, it's not the most exciting bird to look at. And that's if you can even spy it up there in the canopy. But you don't need to see a Red-eyed Vireo to know it's there. That's because this species is one of the few that sings all day long.

No matter how hot it is, no matter how few other birds are singing, Red-eyed Vireos will still be at it. During the breeding season, from about April through July, they'll start singing before dawn and can continue without stopping into the afternoon. They are often the only bird you'll hear singing, especially in the middle of the day.

This constant singing might be the Red-eyed Vireo's most remarkable feature.

Believe me, you won't miss the song. Learn it and a Red-eyed Vireo will never be that far away.

Thankfully, it's an easy song to learn. Red-eyed Vireos repeatedly sing loud, clear phrases of two or three notes. Phonetic or mnemonic representation is popular, and many people seem to add their own lyrics to the Red-eyed song. Kenn Kaufman describes it on Audubon's free bird guide as sounding like the bird is repeatedly asking and answering its own question. In her famous 1899 work *Birds Through an Opera-Glass*, Francis Merriam explained that "in rhythm, it is something like he-ha-wha or ha-ha-wha, or, again ha-ha-whip in rising inflecting, and he-ha-whee in falling cadence." In the 1903 book *Color Key to North American Birds*, Frank Chapman described the song as "a

broken, rambling, recitative 'you see it—you know it—do you hear me?—do you believe it?'" And David Sibley described it in his *Guide to Birds* as a "Song of simple, hurried, whistled phrases here-I-am, in-the-tree, look-up, at-the-top . . ."

Whatever works for you to remember the song, do it, because you'll need it when you want to learn the other vireos. Lots of other vireo songs are remembered by how they relate to the standard Red-eyed. Are the phrases sharper and more abrupt? Is the song higher-pitched and a touch slower? Could be a Philadelphia Vireo. Same repeated phrasing but slower, slurrer, and usually two-noted? Might have a Yellow-throated Vireo.

Yep, learn the Red-eyed Vireo and you've entered a whole new arena of advanced birding. The species is a generous teacher, giving you near-constant auditory lessons throughout spring and into the summer. Spring migration might be over, but the work of learning bird identification continues. Remember, it's just a few short months before all those spring migrants—the tanagers, the grosbeaks, the warblers, Red-eyeds, and a whole bunch of other vireo species—might be passing back through your local patch as they head south. Be ready for them.

SAVE THE DATE **for the ELIAS Annual Dinner**

Wednesday, October 18, 2017
at 6 pm

More information to come
in September/October Osprey.

If you would like to
donate a raffle prize or
an item for the Chinese Auction
please call Ridgie Barnett,

(631) 288-3628 or
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Sally Newbert at
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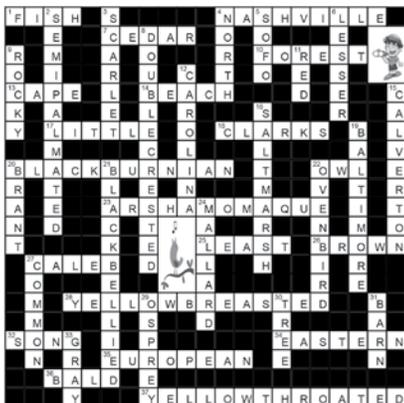
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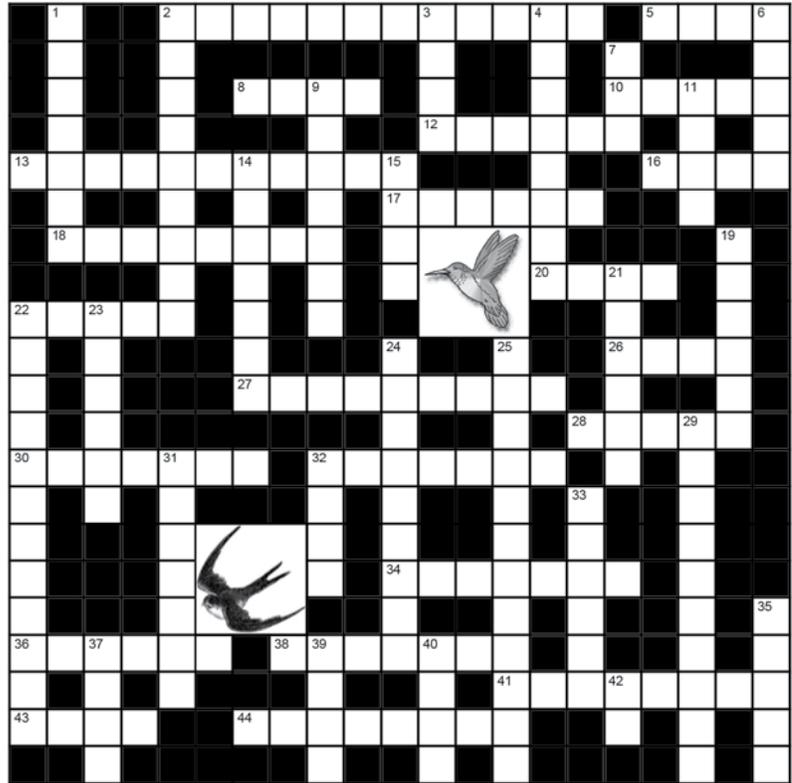
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**Answers to last issue's puzzle
Springtime Birds & Places**
by Tom Moran



Summertime Places & Birds Tom Moran



Across

- 2 A good place to get spring warblers in Sullivan Co., includes 3 letter abbr. for it's status
- 5 Sparrow that is a common backyard bird
- 8 Ruddy _____
- 10 Bald or Golden
- 12 _____-throated Warbler, seen at Bayard Cutting Arboretum this spring
- 13 Ruby-throated, maybe even Rufous this summer?
- 16 _____ Owl or Swallow
- 17 _____ Tern, maybe at Cupsogue?
- 18 _____ Starling
- 20 Common or Red-throated
- 22 _____ Wren, seen at Orient Point, 2012
- 26 White-faced _____, maybe it will be seen again at Captree Island this July
- 27 Theodore _____, Nature Center at Jones Beach
- 28 _____ Egret or Owl
- 30 White or Brown
- 32 _____'s Sparrow, a rare sighting regularly seen this spring with a Dickcissel at Shawangunk Grassland
- 34 _____ Wilson Campground in the Catskills
- 36 _____ Lake, ADK
- 38 _____ Tern, seen along Jones Beach in 2011
- 41 _____ Oystercatcher
- 43 _____ Rd, Cupsogue at one end Shinnecock at the other
- 44 Long, curved bill on this shorebird, makes it a special sighting

Down

- 1 Black is uncommon on LI, but Turkey increasingly common
- 2 Oriole named for the English family's heraldic colors that his bird shares
- 3 Lilium, single of lillies?
- 4 Town Shawangunk Grasslands is located in
- 6 _____ Heron
- 7 _____ York, sounds so nice, they named it 2x
- 9 _____ Swift, the flying cigar with apparently non-synchronized wing beats
- 11 _____ Cheeked Thrush, or _____ Catbird
- 14 _____ Yellowlegs
- 15 _____-eyed Junco
- 19 Common version of 26
- 21 _____ Point, Harlequin Ducks enjoy the rough surf and rocks there in the winter
- 22 _____ Plover or Sandpiper
- 23 _____ Notch, a dramatic cut in the Catskill Mtns, look for Peregrines on the cliff
- 24 _____ Grebe, uncommon, seen this winter at Montauk
- 25 _____ Bog, ADK
- 29 Less common of 26 Across
- 31 _____ Rail
- 32 Red-tailed, Roughlegged, for example
- 33 _____ Blue Heron, don't mistake the immature for a Snowy Egret
- 35 _____ Beach, West End 3 is best!
- 37 Warbler or Grosbeak
- 39 Clapper _____
- 40 Horned _____
- 42 Abbreviation for Route



Introducing the All About Birds Pocket Guide Series

Get to know the birds in your yard with handy fold-outs from the Cornell Lab

Ithaca, N.Y.-- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has just launched its All About Birds Pocket Guide Series, 15 new birding titles published in collaboration with Waterford Press.

All 15 guides are available now for \$9.95 directly through CornellLabPG.com, or at bookstores and other retailers.

Watching birds is one of the fastest growing hobbies in North America. The pocket guide series helps people enhance their enjoyment of birds by learning more about them. Complete with detailed

species information, photos, illustrations, and maps, these titles cover a wide range of topics for everyone who is curious about birds—from Birding 101 to Nests & Eggs of North American Backyard Birds.

“Birds are so beautiful and ubiquitous that millions of people are hooked on watching birds and asking all kinds of questions about what they’re seeing,” said Miyoko Chu, senior director of Communications at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

“These guides get to the heart of those

questions by revealing how to attract diverse birds to your yard, how to identify birds by sight and sound, and how to witness them raising their families—sometimes right in your own backyard.”

There are regional guides for bird identification and guides that explain how to choose a bird feeder or birdhouse and plant a garden for birds. All the guides are laminated for durability.

Proceeds help support the Cornell Lab’s nonprofit mission to improve the understanding and protection of birds.

- 1) Backyard Birds of Eastern/Central North America
- 2) Backyard Birds of Western North America
- 3) Feeder Birds of the Northeast
- 4) Feeder Birds of the Northwest
- 5) Feeder Birds of the Southeast
- 6) Feeder Birds of the Southwest
- 7) Feeder Birds of Southern California
- 8) Feeder Birds of Texas
- 9) Feeder Birds of the Midwest
- 10) Hummingbirds of North America
- 11) Gardening for Birds
- 12) Right Bird, Right House
- 13) Nests and Eggs
- 14) Birding 101
- 15) Bird Feeders and Food

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Tom and Eileen's Excellent Adventure

First of all, we saw the Target Birds!

Eileen Schwinn

Now, here's the story: In early June a pretty rare Henslow's Sparrow was being reported in Ulster County ç at Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge, to be exact. Shortly after the bird's discovery, a male Dickcissel was heard and seen a few feet away from the Henslow's. Both species are more likely to be found in the grasslands in the middle of the US, and the Henslow's – although more likely to be found breeding in the Syracuse/Rochester and western parts of NYS – is considered a Near Threatened species, due to declining habitats.

A last minute texting and agreement, found Tom Moran (ELIAS Treasurer) and I leaving Eastern LI at 6:30 am on a Saturday. No pre-dawn dash necessary – the birds had reliably been seen mid-day and all afternoon for the previous four or five days. HOWEVER, no need to dilly-dally, because with birds, YA NEVER KNOW WHEN THEY'RE GONNA FLY AWAY!

After a three and half hour drive, we arrived in the rolling foothills of the Catskill Mountains, and found the relatively newly designated Shawangunk NWR – a former airport which has basically been turned into a magnificent grassland habitat! Upon exiting the car, the first person we saw was Jim Clinton, Jr – a long-time ELIAS member who now lives with his family in Kingston, NY. His dad, Jim, was one of the most steadfast birders on eastern Long Island, and Jim, Jr

certainly followed in his footsteps! With excellent directions, Tom and I were on the birds after a short 15 minute walk along the recently mowed path, which, for some odd reason, both the Henslow's and the Dickcissel elected to call their summer "Home". Each bird was found no more than 25 feet from the "path", singing away at the top of their lungs, and giving excellent views to all the adoring throngs! And I mean throngs – a steady stream of birders, 1 to 4 at a time, could be found walking the distance from the parking lot to the Southern Blind, which was set up in the midst of the grasslands. High fives and sharing of scopes and telling "civilians" out for a day's walk in the field, just what was going on – a wonderful day! OK, ok – here are the photos – and again, check them out on the ELIAS web page to get an idea of just how different these Little Brown Jobs actually are!

As added bonuses, we had numerous Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlark, and Savannah Sparrows seen and heard. The ride home took a bit longer, but thankfully, no major traffic issues. Some of our 7 hours-trapped-in-a-car-together conversations wandered to the wish that our own, local grassland habitat – EPCAL in Calverton – would be well served to be embraced by the State and National powers-that-be, and be turned into a field of flowers, and nesting birds, just like this former airport field was. Wishful thinking..... but who knows???



Henslow's Sparrow



Dickcissel



Female Bobolink, with food for her young (left) Tom Moran along the grassland path, with the "Gunks" in the far distance (odd mountain landscape for which the region is named)



ELIAS Mourns the death of Andy Murphy

A long-time member, former ELIAS Board member and frequent participant in many of our ELIAS events, Andy Murphy passed away on May 30th, he was 92. His obituary appeared in the Southampton Press.

Here some of the ELIAS members that knew him reminisce.

Andy might best be remembered for his willingness to drive ANYWHERE off-road, and his frequent contributions to making member's meeting "lively".

May Andy rest in peace, in heaven and surrounded by birds.

Eileen Schwinn

I, too, was greatly saddened to learn of Andy's passing. He had been a good friend through ELIAS for many years. I remember particularly his fund raising and organizational efforts as we worked so hard to restore the Kaler's Pond Nature Center and reach out to the community. He was a devoted birder, often going out on his own rather than sticking just to where the field trip was heading. And he loved to share his sightings and photos. ELIAS has lost a true colleague.

Al Scherzer

For many years Andy organized our mailings for the annual dinner when the post office had very complicated requirements of filing by zip codes, etc. He used to drive us crazy but because Andy was so serious and determined to get it right, and ultimately together we got the job done. Some of those traits of his at the mailings were what made him a good birder. I for one have missed his ways as he pulled back from our club. And I miss him now.

Gigi Spates

I did not know him very well, but remember a rather grand arrival by boat to our annual Cupsoque trip. Then I ran into him at the North Fork Preserve when I was looking for Bobolink. I was warned to be careful and not to speak to anyone I met when out birding alone. I



Andy Murphy, center, at the 2006 Annual Dinner, with Kevin McAllister, the speaker on the left, and Peg Caraher, ELIAS past president on the right. Photo by Sue Little.

was carefully trying to avoid a car that had been driving around the Preserve but then I turned a corner and there was the car, with you guessed it, Andy inside. Not only did I speak to him, I happily jumped in the car with him. He was happy to show me where the Bobolinks were. Although I had walked the field, the birds were less spooked with the car as a blind. Sadly that field has become too overgrown and the habitat changed, so there are no more Bobolinks there. I believe that was the last place on Long Island that they were nesting.

Sally Newbert

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Wind farms are hardly the bird slayers they're made out to be. Here's why

Simon Chapman

**Emeritus Professor in Public Health,
University of Sydney**

**Originally published on
*The Conversation***

People who oppose wind farms often claim wind turbine blades kill large numbers of birds, often referring to them as “bird choppers”. And claims of dangers to iconic or rare birds, especially raptors, have attracted a lot of attention.

Wind turbine blades do indeed kill birds and bats, but their contribution to total bird deaths is extremely low, as these three studies show.

A 2009 study using US and European data on bird deaths estimated the number of birds killed per unit of power generated by wind, fossil fuel and nuclear power systems.

It concluded: *wind farms and nuclear power stations are responsible each for between 0.3 and 0.4 fatalities per gigawatt-hour (GWh) of electricity while fossil-fuelled power stations are responsible for about 5.2 fatalities per GWh.*

That's nearly 15 times more. From this, the author estimated: *wind farms killed approximately seven thousand birds in the United States in 2006 but nuclear plants killed about 327,000 and fossil-fuelled power plants 14.5 million.*

In other words, for every one bird killed by a wind turbine, nuclear and fossil fuel powered plants killed 2,118 birds.

A Spanish study involved daily inspections of the ground around 20 wind farms with 252 turbines from 2005 to 2008. It found 596 dead birds.

The turbines in the sample had been working for different times during the study period (between 11 and 34 months), with the average annual number of fatalities per turbine being just 1.33. The authors noted this was one of the highest collision rates reported in the world research literature.

Raptor collisions accounted for 36% of total bird deaths (214 deaths), most of which were griffon vultures (138 birds, 23% of total mortality). The study area was in the southernmost area of Spain near Gibraltar, which is a migratory zone for birds from Morocco into Spain.

Perhaps the most comprehensive report was published in the journal *Avian Conservation and Ecology* in 2013 by scientists from Canada's Environment Canada, Wildlife Research Division.

Their report looked at causes of human-related bird deaths for all of Canada, drawing together data from many diverse sources.

The table below shows selected causes of bird death out of an annual total of 186,429,553 estimated deaths caused by human activity.

Mark Duchamp, the president of Save the Eagles International is probably the most prominent person to speak out about bird deaths at wind farms. He says: *The average per turbine comes down to 333 to 1,000 deaths annually which is a far cry from the 2-4 birds claimed by the American wind industry or the 400,000 birds a year estimated by the American Bird Conservancy for the whole of the United States, which has about twice as many turbines as Spain.*

Such claims from wind farm critics generally allude to massive national conspiracies to cover up the true size of the deaths.

And in Australia?

In Australia in 2006 a proposal for a 52-turbine wind farm plan on Victoria's south-east coast at Bald Hills (now completed) was overruled by the then federal environment minister Ian Campbell.

He cited concerns about the future of the endangered orange-bellied parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*), a migratory bird said to be at risk of extinction within 50 years. The Tarwin Valley Coastal Guardians, an anti wind farm group

that had been opposing the proposed development.

Interest groups have regularly cited this endangered bird when trying to halt a range of developments.

These include a chemical storage facility and a boating marina. The proposed Westernport marina in Victoria happened to also be near an important wetland. But a professor in biodiversity and sustainability wrote: *the parrot copped the blame, even though it had not been seen there for 25 years.*

Victoria's planning minister at the time, Rob Hulls, described the Bald Hills decision as blatantly political, arguing the federal conservative government had been lobbied by fossil fuel interests to curtail renewable energy developments. Hulls said there had been: *some historical sightings, and also some potential foraging sites between 10 and 35 kilometres from the Bald Hills wind farm site that may or may not have been used by the orange-bellied parrot.*

Perhaps the final word on this topic should go to the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It built a wind turbine at its Bedfordshire headquarters to reduce its carbon emissions (and in doing so, aims to minimise species loss due to climate change). It recognised that wind power is far more beneficial to birds than it is harmful.

Simon Chapman and Fiona Crichton's book, Wind Turbine Syndrome: a communicated disease, will be published by Sydney University Press later this year.

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