



# THE OSPREY

May/June 2018 — Vol. XLIII, No. 3

## The Merry Month of May Spent in the Woods Seeking Elusive Warblers

**Sally Newbert**

What is a warbler or more precisely a wood warbler? Sibley's describes them as is "small active birds, with a short pointed bills. Many are brilliantly colored in yellow, green and blue, often with bold patterns. Many are solitary although they may form loose, mixed-species flocks in migration or in winter. They are almost never found in cohesive single-species flocks. They feed on small insects gleaned from leaves and twigs. A few will feed on berries and nectar. Songs are useful in identification, most species sing two distinct song types in different situations."

### Why do birders seek them out?

The first answer is that many of them are drop-dead gorgeous. If you get a Prothonotary Warbler in your binoculars you will not forget it. The difficulty is finding it and getting this bright, active bird in tree tops in your sights. Once you succeeded it will take your breath away. How could anything be so bright and be so hard to see all at the same time? In the spring the males are in their brightest plumage. All ready for the big dance and decked out in the bird version of a fancy tux with a distinctive song to go with it.

The first warbler I saw was on a walk with ELIAS to Hunters Garden which is not far from my house. It must have been the first spring after I moved here. The walk started at 7 or 8 am so I figured I could be back home by 10 am and no one would miss me. Of course I was wrong, but that's another story. I could not admit to the group that I had never seen a warbler, had no idea how to ID it or that it would

be so difficult to get in the binoculars. So quite a few sightings flew past me but I must have finely gotten a quick glimpse of one of them. Maybe it was the Scarlet Tanager. OK, not a warbler, but still an unforgettable bird. It sure is bright, and has a very loud and distinctive call plus they like Hunters Garden. Over the years, I have gotten better (ie better, not great) at spotting those devils high in the trees, or following directions if someone else has spotted them. I have learned to recognize some of the calls. This year, I am looking forward to being in the woods and hearing the loud call of the Ovenbird, as it screams through the forest with its call of *TEACHER, TEACHER*. This is a tough bird to see as it scurries around the forest floor. It is not one of the colorful warblers. It has a bold white eye ring, a crown stripe and distinct black streaks on its white breast. It gets its name from the nest it makes on the ground that looks like a Dutch oven. It does breed on Long Island along with 7 other wood warbler species. That gives us 8 Long Island warblers that are known to nest on Long Island. In addition to the Ovenbird, our local nesters are: Yellow, Blue-winged, Prairie, Pine, Black & White, the American Redstart, and the Common Yellowthroat. Each has their preferred habitat, distinctive behaviors and song. National Audubon is studying climate changes to see if the birds can adapt to the changes. As an example, there has been a pair of Yellow-throated Warblers that have spent the last two years between Bayard Cutting Arboretum and Connetquot River State Park. As the bird flies they are right across the highway from each other. There have been a few

reports that they are back this year. Maybe that would be ninth nester on LI.

To be different, the Myrtle Warbler (Yellow-rump or Butter Butt) spends the winter with us in the brushy dunes. This warbler is able to eat the bayberry or juniper berries in the winter and spring will find them taking off for northern nesting areas.

Now that we briefly covered the local warblers, the purpose of our many walks in May is to find the migrating warblers who make a brief appearance on Long Island if the conditions are right. If you are on ebird, this is your chance to up those numbers. I went to my ebird list and found that I have listed 25 warbler species. According to Dianne Taggart (LI Birding) there are 36 species that are possible to see on Long Island during migration. Sibley lists 46 in the Eastern Field Guide. So, personally, I still have a little work to do.

There are nine, *count um nine* walks scheduled for May to look for warblers. Most on Saturday or Sunday, but a few weekdays are covered too. I hope you can join one, or all of the walks as we learn and hunt for the illusive warblers. All are led by experienced birders.

Don't think we don't love the other birds too. We will be looking for all the spring migrants also, Tanagers, Vireos, Flycatchers and Woodpeckers.

If you still can't get enough Cornell Bird Academy offers an online course on Warbler Identification as part of their Be a Better Birder Series. 

## The President's Corner

# Spring Buffet!

### Byron Young

Trust by the time you are reading this that spring will have revealed itself and we are enjoying some warmer weather. The spring of 2018 entered the scene disguised as winter. After a long winter we were not ready for this rude entry into spring. However, I think we humans rely too much on the weather reports when we should pay more attention to what is happening around us.

Right on schedule the winter waterfowl began to move away from our local waterways, the first flocks of Robins and Red-winged Blackbirds began to show up. Birders began to report the arrival of the Woodcock performing their mating dance. The local spawning runs of alewife began to show up in the Peconic Estuary and right behind them was the first Osprey on March 17.

Since the middle of March I have been watching as the numbers of Osprey and Great Egrets increase around the Peconic River spawning run of alewives. My favorite spot is on the Woodhull Dam. It is always exciting to sit and watch these birds capture their prey. The Great Egret slowly walks along the edge of the stream until an unsuspecting alewife comes into range of this long necked bird. After spearing its prey the Egret walks ashore to the small island in the pool. There it fusses with its meal until it is turned head first and swallowed whole.

The Osprey on the other hand will perch on a branch above the pool, bobbing its head until it selects a likely target. Once a target is found, the bird freezes until it drops off its perch, plunging into the pool and generally exits with its prey. In some cases an Osprey will capture two fish, one in each talon. The Osprey also utilizes their open water aerial approach at the pool below the Woodhull Dam dive bombing their prey from above. It is quite surprising to be watching a perched Osprey and have another bird dive bomb the pool.

The Osprey that frequent the pool are quite vocal when a neighbor encroaches on its fishing spot. Some birds spend as much time watching for intruders as they do fish. As a casual observer, I think these birds should just keep the buffet line moving and stop complaining when someone else wants to join in the fun. However, that is just me, there might be more going on here than meets the eye.

So far this spring I have seen as many as nine Osprey feeding around the pool below Woodhull Dam at one time. What I have found amazing is the adaptations that these birds have made to catch alewives from the wooded section of stream below the Dam. We have all witnessed an Osprey hovering over open water and then plunging into the bay to catch a fish. The birds do use this technique in the small pool at Woodhull Dam. They also have the ability to perch directly over the pool in a cherry tree and then drop into the pool from above. The adaptation that has come about is the ability to perch in a tree along the banks of this tiny stream and capture fish in the shallows and then fly out through the trees.

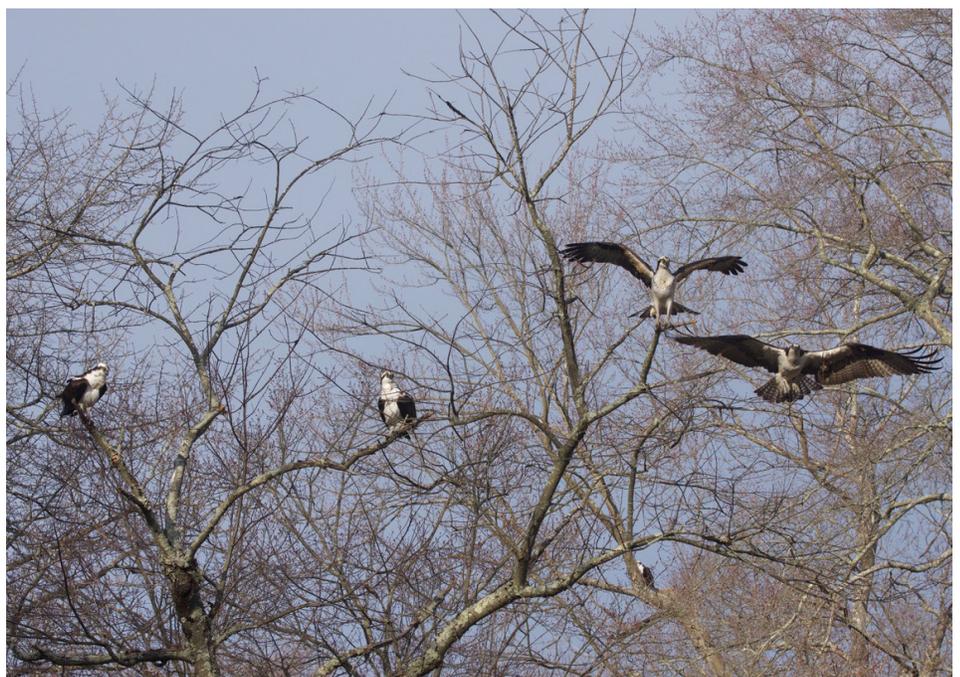
Once the alewife complete their spawning run and return to the ocean the Osprey

and Great Egrets return to the bay in search of prey. This early spring bounty provides these early migrants with a ready supply of food as they prepare for their nesting season. It is intriguing to me how these various circles of life intersect and then move on. I suspect that there is more going on here than meets the eye regarding the timing of the alewives arrival on their spawning ground coupled with the arrival of the Osprey and Egrets shortly thereafter.

Such events are wonderful interactions between species, including the human observers, as we move between seasons. It is always exhilarating to spend time with these birds and fish. In fact, if pressed, I would have to admit that the return of the alewives, Osprey and Great Egrets are my first clue that spring is approaching and not the weather (the cold winds, the rain or the late winter snow).

Now that spring is official here, according to the alewives, Osprey and Great Egrets it is time to get outside and enjoy the upcoming spring migration of our other feather friends.

*Great Spring Birding!* 



*A few of the newly arrived Osprey fishing at Woodhull Dam. Photo by Byron Young.*

# Come to the May & June Meetings

Monday, May 7, 2018 at 7:15 pm

## Scopes, Binocs, and An Evening Walk

Come join ELIAS for an evening walk around Quogue Wildlife Refuge! May is the perfect time to see our spring arrivals. We can expect to see Osprey, swallows, blackbirds, ducks, and a warbler or two. We may even see an Oriole and bats, or hear Whip-poor-will!

Then, we will head indoors for an informal, hands-on talk about birding equipment. Board members will bring their binoculars, scopes, field guides, etc. Everyone will get a chance to try them out and ask questions.

We will plan to start the walk at 7:15 pm to get the most daylight. Dress for the weather, and you may need bug-spray or a flashlight.



Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge  
3 Old Country Road, Quogue, NY

Directions are on the website.  
[easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org](http://easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org).

Meetings are open to the public, there is no charge.

Monday, June 4 2018 at 7:15 pm

## Finding & Identifying Shorebirds, Terns, & other Coastal Birds on Long Island

Shai Mitra

The month of June has an undeserved reputation as a slow time for non-breeding species, but it occupies the middle of an exceptionally dynamic period of bird occurrence on Long Island. Because of its geographic position and its diversity of habitats Long Island routinely hosts many species of interesting and unfamiliar coastal species during the early summer. This talk will focus on how to find and identify shorebirds, terns, and pelagic birds from land, and on techniques whereby birders can deepen their appreciation of all birds and sharpen their insights into avian ecology by looking for seasonal movements at unexpected times and in unexpected places.

Shai Mitra has studied birds in the northeastern United States and around the world for more than 35 years. He received a BA in Biology from Cornell University in 1989 and a PhD in Evolutionary Biology from the University of Chicago in 1996. From 1996-2000 he operated a major bird-banding station at the Fire Island Lighthouse, on the South Shore of Long Island. Currently, he is an Assistant Professor of Biology at the College of Staten Island, with research interests in the areas of avian ecology, evolution, and conservation. Shai is Editor of *The Kingbird*, the quarterly publication of the New York State Ornithological Association; co-compiler of bird records for the New York City and Long Island region; Chair of the Rhode Island Avian Records Committee; and co-compiler of the Captree Christmas Bird Count and two other CBCs on Long Island and Rhode Island. 

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# Take a Walk and Enjoy the Spring!

**Tuesday, May 1, meet at 7:30 am**

## Rocky Point DEC Property (Area 26)

**Leader: Bob Adamo**

Bob Adamo will lead this quest for some of our "Flying Friends". Meet at the east most parking lot for the DEC property located on the south side of the Route 25A Bypass, about 1/8 mile west of the fork you would take to get to the Route 25A Business district. Traveling from the east, this turn-off is just after the intersections of first, Randall Rd. and then, Ridge Rd. Coming from the west, the parking lot is the 2nd one you come to after having turned onto the bypass from Route 25A — a tad past "McDonalds". Any questions, call or email Bob at radamao4691@gmail.com or call (631) 905-7360 cell, (631) 369-1958 home.

**Saturday, May 5, 2018**

## Central Park's Ramble

**Leader: Katie Kleinpeter**

Located in the heart of Central Park, The Ramble is a destination not to be missed during spring migration! Join Katie on the LIRR train leaving from the HICKSVILLE train station at 6:11 a.m. or meet her in the city at West 72nd and Central Park West at 7:30 a.m. There will be opportunities for coffee, food and bathrooms at The Boathouse in the park. We can plan on taking a 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. train home, but you can leave earlier or stay longer if you wish! (There are no trains at Ronkonkoma due to track work.) In addition to buying a train ticket, you will need to purchase 2 rides for the MetroCard/Subway.

Please email Katie at katiekleinpeter@gmail.com so she knows to look out for you. She will provide her phone number for the day of the field trip and other last minute details.

**Sunday, May 6 at 9:00 am**

## Barrier Beach Birding at Smith Point, Fire Island

**Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

We will observe various species of shorebirds and terns, find some pelagic Gannets and land birds as well during peak migration season on the barrier beach of Fire Island. We will walk down to the New Inlet and back so a round trip walk of 3 miles will occur. Bring binoculars and sunscreen! Call (631) 399-2030.



**Wednesday, May 9 at 8 am**

## Manorville Hills

**Byron Young**

The entrance to Manorville Hills State Park is located on Captain Daniel Roe Hwy (Route 111) in Manorville. A wilderness area used by hikers, bikers and birders. It is part of the Pine Barrens. It is also a stop off point for warblers on the way north. We are hoping to find a few of them at this new stop on our May walks.

**Saturday, May 12 at 9:00 am**

## Birding the William Floyd Estate on International Migratory Bird Day

**Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

The woods, fields, creeks and bay, all habitats found on the historic grounds of the old William Floyd Estate, offer opportunities for observing a rich and diverse display of birds. We should see a good variety of migrating neotropical species such as warblers, vireos, thrush, grosbeaks, and tanagers to name a few. Round trip walk about 3-4 miles. Call (631) 399-2030 for more info.

**Wednesday, May 16, 2018, meet at 8:30 am**

## North Fork Preserve

**Leader: Eileen Schwinn**

Vernal ponds, meadows and wooded areas attract a variety of visiting migrants and nesting birds, in addition to raptors, and thrushes. Each day is different during migration season.

The entrance to North Fork Preserve is on Sound Avenue, just east of Church Lane in Riverhead. Follow the driveway to the parking area by the former hunting lodge. Dress for ticks, however, we will be on mowed paths for most of the walk.

**Saturday, May 19 at 9:00 am**

## Birding the Fields, Woods and Bluffs of Hallockville Museum Farm and Hallock State Park

**Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

This walk begins at Hallockville Museum Farm. Please park there. Diversity of habitats at the Hallockville Farm complex along Long Island Sound produces good bird sightings from warblers, swallows, vultures to kingbirds and Osprey. Program sponsored by Hallockville Museum Farm. There is an \$8.00 fee which goes to their educational programs. Call (631) 298-5292 to register.

*An immature Barn Swallow checks out visitors to its habitat.*

**Sunday, May 20 at 7:30 am**

## Quogue Wildlife Refuge

**Leader: Eileen Schwinn**

Beginning at 7:30 am, we will meet in the parking lot of the Refuge, and walk the approximately one mile loop around the Ice Pond. Various warbler-loving habitats — pine woods, open fields, and tangled understory — will be explored. In past years, this hidden gem has had Mourning Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and even Yellow-throated Warbler, along with the expected nesting warblers and song birds! Almost guaranteed to be tick-free (the Wildlife staff makes sure the trails are wide and brush-free), this spot is a real winner! Contact Eileen at beachmed@optonline.net for more information.

**Thursday, May 24 at 8 am**

## Hunters Garden, Eastport

**Leader: Eileen Schwinn**

Located on the west side of Route 51 in Northampton (border of Brookhaven and Southampton Townships, just north of Sunrise Highway), Hunters Garden is a DEC managed area which is truly unique. Vernal ponds and dirt trails lead us in a rather hilly section of the South Shore. Cuckoo, Scarlet Tanager, Vireos, Wood and Hermit Thrush, Gnatcatchers, as well as many warblers, are likely to be seen. Dress for ticks, and bring a snack/water. We will meet at the clearing at the end of the dirt road (which will, hopefully, have an open yellow gate), approximately one mile from the Route 51 "entrance". Contact Eileen at beachmed@optonline.net for more information.

**Saturday, June 2 at SoFo - Meet at 8 am**

## Eric Salzman Memorial Walk at South Fork Natural History Museum

**Leader: Eileen Schwinn**

*Cosponsored by the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society (ELIAS) and the South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo)*

On this joint walk we will explore the avian life of the meadow behind the South Fork Natural History Museum and remember Eric Salzman who led this walk for many years. We will miss his keen ear to ID the bird songs. This walk will provide an opportunity to see and—especially—hear some of our locally breeding birds. The two-hour walk will be followed by a short introduction to the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society. Light refreshments will be served.

There is no charge for this event, but advance reservations are required. Please call SoFo at (631) 537-9735 for reservations and directions to the Museum, if you need them.



## The Horseshoe Crab Management in New York

**Byron Young**

With moderating weather conditions, several natural events of interest to birders and others begin to converge. The annual spawning movement of the Horseshoe Crab and the arrival of migrating shorebirds. Several species of shorebirds have already begun their spring migrations northward to nesting grounds. However, the majority of our shorebirds arrive during mid-May through mid-June to feast upon Horseshoe Crab eggs.

Horseshoe Crabs are a marine arthropod found along the Atlantic coast from northern Maine to the Yucatan Peninsula and the Gulf of Mexico. The Delaware Bay supports the largest spawning population in the world. Adult crabs either remain in estuaries or migrate to the continental shelf during the winter months. Horseshoe Crab spawning migrations begin in the spring with warming water temperatures, generally peaking on Long Island around the full and new moons in May and June. Spawning usually occurs with a high tide during those moon phases. Horseshoe Crab adults prefer sandy beach areas within bays and coves that are protected from heavy surf. The eggs are laid in clusters or nest sites along the beach. Females lay approximately 90,000 eggs per year in several different egg clusters.

These eggs play an important ecological role in the food web for migrating shorebirds especially the Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, Semi-palmated Sandpiper and many others found along our shores in the spring. The Delaware Bay Estuary is a famous primary stop-over feeding location for shorebirds but Long Island also supports migrating shorebirds which congregate at beaches with high Horseshoe Crab nesting activity.

Horseshoe Crabs provide for an interesting mix of marine resource management issues along the Atlantic coast. In addition to their role as a food source for migrating shorebirds, Horseshoe Crabs provide bait for commercial American Eel, Conch and Killifish fisheries along the coast. Their unique blood is also used by the biomedical industry to produce *Limulus Amoebocyte Lysate (LAL)*, which is used for the detection of endotoxin in the quality assurance of injectable drugs and medical devices. The challenge for fisheries managers is to manage these diverse needs, while conserving the resource for future generations.

*Continued on page 7*

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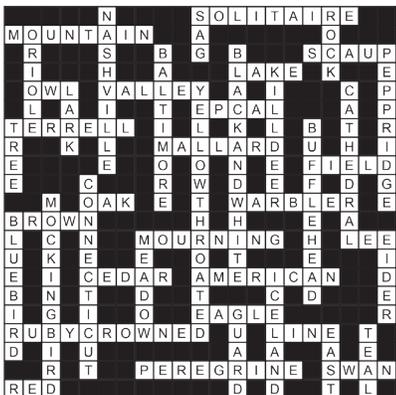
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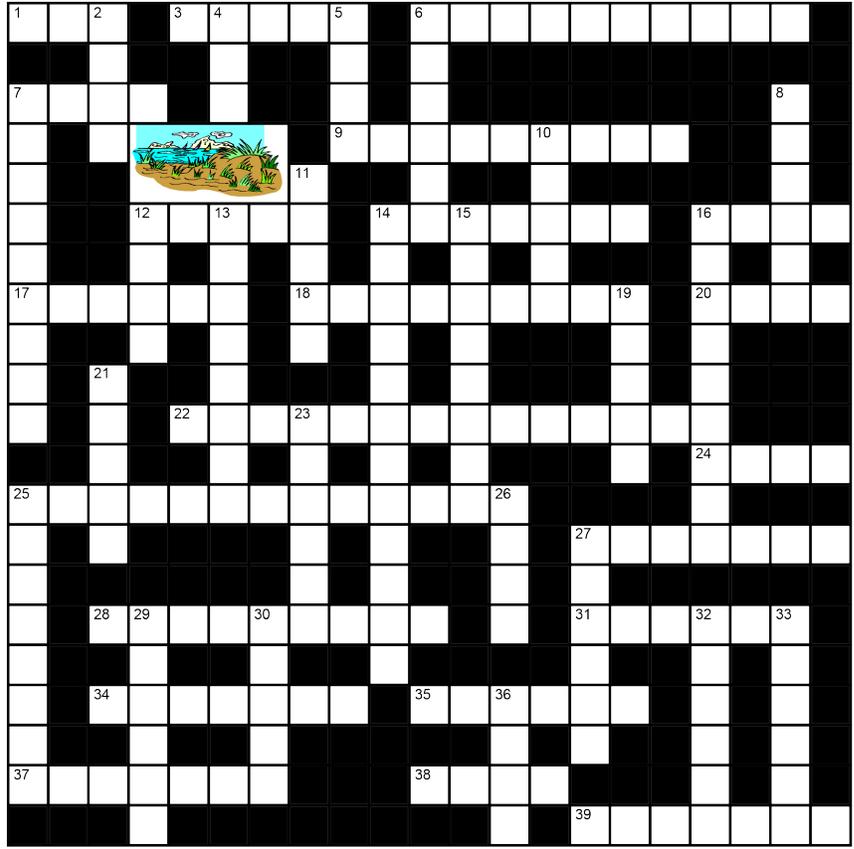
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## Answers to March/April puzzle Almost Spring by Tom Moran



## Sightings Past, Present and Places Tom Moran



### Across

- 1 With 12 Down, an unusual bird seen at Floyd Bennett Field this winter
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Beach, West End 3 is the place to be!
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ River SP, Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen there this winter
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Eagle, several nesting pairs on LI!
- 9 The Short-eared Owls used to fly here
- 12 Red-necked \_\_\_\_\_, at Timber Pt this winter
- 14 Location of the Suffolk County Farm
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_ May Warbler.
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_ Place, location of several sod farms, occasionally good for grasspipers
- 18 Short-eared Owls, Rough-legged Hawks, Grasshopper Sparrows are all \_\_\_\_\_ species
- 20 American \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow, not to be confused with a Swamp Sparrow
- 22 \_\_\_\_\_-Chat. Seen at Crocheron Park in December.
- 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Dove (aks Pigeon)
- 25 \_\_\_\_\_ Warbler, not to be confused with Bay-breasted.
- 27 \_\_\_\_\_ Floyd Estate, try for a Fox Sparrow here in season
- 28 \_\_\_\_\_ Vireo
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_ Yellowlegs or Black-backed Gull
- 34 \_\_\_\_\_ Warbler, doesn't hang out where the name implies, song goes up the scale
- 35 \_\_\_\_\_ Duck, not a Ring-necked.
- 37 More common than 28 Across
- 38 \_\_\_\_\_ Owl or Swallow
- 39 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow (possessive), uncommon sighting seen near Albany...but not by me!!

### Down

- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey, good after a long, cold day birding?
- 4 Barred, Great Horned, Screech, Saw Whet...
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Sparrow, look for central chest spot.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_, and the less common Pink-footed seen at Deep Hollow Ranch this winter.
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Oriole
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Sandpiper, likes rocks
- 11 Cupsogue \_\_\_\_\_ County Park, check sandbars for peeps
- 12 see 1 Across
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_ Starling
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ Cuckoo. *Kooop kooop* not *cu cu cu*
- 15 Downs Farm \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_ Pines County Park
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Fork see 15 Down
- 21 Robert \_\_\_\_\_ SP
- 23 \_\_\_\_\_ see 12 Down, seen on an ELIAS field trip this winter.
- 25 \_\_\_\_\_ Estate, Suffolk CP that abuts Mt Sinai Harbor.
- 26 \_\_\_\_\_ Rd, Cupsogue at one end Shinnecock at the other
- 27 Common shorebird but is it an eastern or western...
- 29 More common than 30 Down. But less common than Pied-billed.
- 30 Less common than 29 Down.
- 32 Black, Surf, White-winged \_\_\_\_\_
- 33 \_\_\_\_\_ Island, good place to see Bank Swallows but don't go ashore.
- 36 Hallockville Museum \_\_\_\_\_, you can see American Pipits here in season.

Continued from page 5

The Horseshoe Crab fishery is managed by the states jointly through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The original Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab was adopted in 1998. Subsequent addendum to the original plan have provided for greater protection of the Horseshoe Crab and the birds that rely on the Horseshoe Crab eggs. The Atlantic state Marine Fisheries Commission established state-by-state quotas in 2000. States with Horseshoe Crab fisheries must monitor their harvest and report the results annually. In 2004, the harvest quotas were reduced, seasonal bait harvest closures were implemented, and monitoring requirements were strengthened in response to decreasing migratory shorebird populations. Reduced quotas were implemented in New Jersey and Delaware and along with additional protection in Maryland and Virginia to increase Horseshoe Crab and egg abundance in and around Delaware Bay.

Since 2012, additional measures have been added to the Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management plan to increase protection for Horseshoe Crabs, shorebirds and to allow appropriate levels of harvest for the bait fishery and for the medical industry. The management plan is reviewed annually, and necessary adjustments are made.

New York State is an active member in the management of Horseshoe Crabs with an annual harvest allocation of 150,000 horseshoe crabs, which is adjusted annually based upon the previous

year's harvest and any changes to the Fishery Management Plan. The annual quota is first adjusted to account for any over-harvest during the previous year, then following consultation with industry, the department establishes quota period harvest limits. Permitted harvesters must report their harvest on a weekly basis. In this way the department can make necessary adjustments to daily harvest limits or close a quota period or the season if the quota has been harvested. It is important to note here that any under harvest is not rolled over into the next year, it is returned to the resource.

In addition, to the harvest quota, New York has three closed horseshoe crab harvesting areas:

1. Fire Island National Seashore;
2. West Meadow Beach in Setauket; and
3. Mount Sinai Harbor. The closed area is all of Cedar Beach Park landward of mean high tide, extending seaward 300 feet into Mount Sinai Harbor and 300 feet into Long Island Sound.

There are several volunteer efforts underway to obtain biological data on our Horseshoe Crab populations through tagging of spawning individuals, the collection of biological data and monitoring of sites around Long Island. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation has staff that check on several spawning locations, along with the Cornell Cooperative Extension. In addition, there are a couple of independent surveys conducted by local colleges which add to the knowledge base.

When you are out and about this spring looking for shorebirds keep an eye out for tagged horseshoe crabs. The tags are colored plastic disks attached to the carapace of the Horseshoe Crab. If you can capture the crab and record the tag number it will indicate where to return the information. If you can only get the number that is OK as the researchers submit their information to a central data base and the animal can be tracked by that number. The tag return information provides information on movements and survival.

If anyone wants to participate in a volunteer Horseshoe Crab monitoring program you can contact either of the following groups to offer your assistance:

**The Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, New York Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Network**  
[http://nyhorseshoecrab.org/NY\\_Horseshoe\\_Crab/Home.html](http://nyhorseshoecrab.org/NY_Horseshoe_Crab/Home.html)

**Seatuck Environmental Association**  
<https://www.seatuck.org/index.php/25-static-site-content/59-horseshoe-crabs>

Finally, should anyone see what they think is a poaching event, do not confront the fisherman but record as much information as you can about the vessel they are using (boat registration numbers), where they are harvesting, and how they were harvesting the crabs (by hand, rake, net). You can report any observations of potential poaching to the Region I DEC Law Enforcement Office at (631) 444-0250. There is a duty officer at the phone from 8:30 am to 4:45 pm. At other times there should be a voice mail option. 🐦

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*Please be sure to include your email. You will receive an email confirmation, a pdf of the first newsletter and updates and reminders of programs and trips including notices of any program changes or cancellations due to weather. This list is not shared.*

Make check payable to: **Eastern Long Island Audubon Society**

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