



The OSPREY

January/February 2010 — Vol. XXXV No. 1

You just never know...

Eileen Schwinn

Near the conclusion of a very pleasant sunny late fall afternoon of birding along my favorite place to bird, Dune Road, I was absolutely delighted to see an American Bittern flying overhead in front of my car. I am a year-lister (in addition to my many other vices), and had not seen this bird at all in 2009. The American Bittern is usually a “gimme” along this road, but I had missed it on every trip. I was whooping it up as I pulled back out on to the road, and resumed my trip home, feeling the day was a total success! Ten minutes later, still aglow from the newest addition to my list, something caught my eye off to the right as I passed a wonderful spot on Dune Road, known locally as The Berm. I’ve seen a Horned Owl just across from here, many late in season shore birds, and on this near-sunset Sunday at the end of November, I spotted a Sandhill Crane standing right there, a few hundred feet from the road. Right out in the open, the bird stood. I called (unsuccessfully) another birder and then took my ever-present digital camera out. Through the passenger window, I was able to snap a handful of shots of this most unusual visitor to Long Island—especially rare to see in the late migration of fall. This most cooperative bird looked as surprised as I was to be in such a place! A Great Blue Heron swooped over the Crane, and the Crane took off. I quickly did a U-turn and tried to follow, but the Sandhill Crane being a

bird and me being a mere mortal in a car, I lost sight of it in the fading evening light. A Sandhill Crane was reported flying over Baldwin, LI, a few days later on Dec. 3. Perhaps it was *My Bird*.

Safe journey, my friend, and come back to visit someday. I’ve got a picture of you I’d like to share!



EILEEN SCHWINN

NATURE PROGRAMS



BOB ADAMO

A Blue-footed Booby dances to impress a possible mate on the Galapagos Islands.

Monday, February 1, 2010
beginning at 7:15 pm

The Galapagos Islands

Bob Adamo

Join presenter and traveler, Bob Adamo as he describes his two-week adventure to Ecuador in May, 2008. This segment will deal with the four days spent in The Galapagos Islands with his “birding bud” Stan Kirsh, and the other 14 members of an OATS “small group” tour. You will learn all about the birds and creatures of the Galapagos Islands. This beautiful slide show presentation will portray the splendor of the animals he encountered including the Galapagos Tortoise, Marine Iguana, Galapagos Sea Turtle, Blue-footed Booby, just to name a few.

This program is presented jointly with the Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

There is one more program on Ecuador, as yet unscheduled, to come. In the last leg of Bob’s trip he took a bus trip through the Andes. He will wrap-up this series with these adventures.

Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. The directions are on the web site. There is a nature chat at 7:15 pm, a meeting at 7:30 and the speaker at 8:00 pm.

FIELD TRIPS John McNeil

Saturday, January 9th 2010, 9 am

Lakes Around Patchogue

Trip Leader: John McNeil

Our trip to see the wintering waterfowl around the Lakes in Patchogue is always filled with surprises. I believe that this is God's little oasis. You just never know what you might see. Please come join me as your trip leader around the area for either a half or full day excursion. We will meet at 9 am at the Swan Lake Club House at Swan Lake in East Patchogue. For more details, contact your trip leader John McNeil at 631-281-2623 at home or on the day of the field trip, cell number is 631-219-8947.

**February 6th, 2010,
leaving at 6:30 am**

Teatown's Hudson River EAGLEFEST

Trip Leader: John McNeil

We will be heading up along the Hudson River, about 35 miles north of NYC (Westchester County), to see our nation's symbol, the Bald Eagle. Teatown's Hudson River EAGLEFEST 2010 starts at Croton Point Park. Teatown Lake Reservation, the event sponsor, sets up several other sites along the Hudson River that offer views of these beautiful birds perching in trees or on the frozen ice of the Hudson River. You may check out their web site: www.teatown.org if you would like more details on the event.

We will depart at 6:30 am from the east side of the old Home Depot parking lot on Sunrise Highway at Route 112 in Patchogue where we will set up car pooling. We will return between 3 and 4 pm. The driving time is a little less than two hours. I would like to be up at Croton Point Park before 9 am. We will leave promptly, so do not be late. Contact trip leader John McNeil at 631-219-8947. Please also send John an email with your name, cell phone and email address. He would like to be able to contact you with any updates and, if needed, contact you on the day of the field trip. Send your email to: birdwchr@gmail.com.

February 20th, 2010, 8 am

Montauk Point

Trip Leader: Carl Starace

Please join your field trip leader Carl Starace for an exhilarating trip around the Montauk Peninsula in search of wintering waterfowl and pelagic birds. Huge numbers of scoters and eiders are always present at this time. Possibilities include

Snowy Owl, Razorbill, Thick-billed Murre, Dovekie, Black-legged Kittiwake, Red-necked Grebe, even Eared Grebe. Remember to watch for the day's weather and dress appropriately. See you February 20th at the Concession building at Montauk State Park. The time will be 8:00 am. For additional trip details, you may contact me by email: castarace@optonline.net or by phone: 631-281-8074

Bob Adamo's Photos of Ecuador are Exhibited at Riverhead Library

Robert Adamo, Program Director for ELIAS, had an exhibition of his photos taken during his two-week trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. The exhibit at the Riverhead Library ran from Dec. 1 through Dec. 31, 2009.

His trip included travels to the rain forest, the Andes, in addition to the Galapagos Islands. The photos included landscapes, portraits of the local people and, of course, birds. The landscape photos were dramatic: high, snow covered Andes' peaks, for example. One photo was of exposed layers of multicolored bedrock folded by the pressures that formed the Andes mountain chain. His photos of the local people at work and play revealed their character. These pictures included close-up portraits revealing the unique facial features of people in this area. Others showed their colorful wool clothing. The influence of the global economy, even in somewhat remote areas that Bob visited, was revealed in a particularly striking study of an elderly woman who had picked up local goods at the market. Her toothless face was etched with character; she had a traditional type of sling backpack to carry her goods, an apron, a colorful dress, and on top of her head was a Nike bucket cap!

Of especial interest to us birders were his pictures of the birds he saw on his travels. These included Nazca Boobies, Waved Albatross, Greater Flamingo, a small ground finch, Yellow Warbler, Swallow-tailed Gull, Golden-naped Tanager, a Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and a Crimson-crested Woodpecker. The sharpness and color of these pictures were breathtaking. There was an eerie photo of the fog shrouded mast of the ship with a frigate bird perched on top. Of special note were a close-up of a nesting blue-footed booby and a particularly colorful close-up of a velvet-purple coronet.

Bob had wanted to visit this area for quite a while and, thanks to his wife, Ruth Ann, who gave him the trip for his birthday, Bob's wish was fulfilled. Bob's two-week trip was enjoyable, he said, but he easily could have stayed for months!



Ruth Ann and Bob Adamo at the exhibit.

ANNETTE DEQUINNE OLIVEIRA

Tom Moran

FROM THE FIELD

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (Brigantine Division), Oceanville, New Jersey

Bob Adamo

The Nov. 7th trip to Brigantine in NJ included several Turkey Vultures, at least 6 Northern Harriers, one of which was a Grey Ghost, 2 Red-tail Hawks, 3 Bald Eagles, (2 immatures & an adult in a tree, busily tearing flesh off it's prey) and 2 adult Peregrine Falcons. The number of Snow Geese was low, compared to the past years, with about 10% being immatures, including one Blue morph.

The highlight of the day, occurred on the way back. Thanks to the *magic* of iphone, cell phones and GPS, we found our way to Staten Island with just enough light remaining to get 3 quick looks at the Rufous Hummingbird who has been a fairly constant visitor at the home of Howard Fischer. It was a treat to meet him and exchange stories and memories. Seeing the Rufous Hummingbird was especially gratifying for half of our group, Sally Newbert and Tom Moran getting "lifers" (John McNeil, trip leader, being the remaining member in our party).



PHOTOS THIS PAGE SALLY NEWBERT



Clockwise: Ruddy Ducks and Great Egret abound in this watery environment, Bob, John & Tom from one of the observation towers, the watery landscape stretches out providing habitat for many species, while birders are able to drive around and pull over at will.

Other trips were to Hallockville Farm and Jamesport State Park on Saturday, November 21 (right), and to the William Floyd Estate on Sunday, November 22nd (below). MaryLaura Lamont led both trips. Far right, MaryLaura finds and shows the group a male box turtle.



Birding Brazil

Linda Sullivan

This past October Chris McCormick, Dianne Taggart, Amy Halsted and myself joined a Victor Emmanuel Nature Tour and headed to Southeastern Brazil. The emphasis of the trip was on the many specialties of the state of Espírito Santo. The Cherry-throated Tanager, long thought extinct, was the target bird for the trip.

We flew to Sao Paulo and then on to Rio de Janeiro. From Rio we flew to Vitoria and joined our leader Andy Whittaker and three additional trip participants. We then traveled overland to the city of Aarace and the lovely Pousada Aargau, our base for the next 3 nights.

We began by birding the Venda Nova do Imigrante with the two biologists who re-discovered the Cherry-throated Tanagers several years ago. Today, fewer than 15 individuals are thought to remain! Imagine

our excitement on the second day in this pristine Atlantic Rainforest environment when, urged forward by the biologists, we heard the call of the Tanagers from high in the treetops! Then, to our delight, we spotted seven Cherry-throated Tanagers busily feeding on the spring buds of the tall trees! What a thrill!

The next day we visited a scenic wonder known as Pedra Azul (the Blue Rock) where we had excellent views of the Red-legged Seriema. Pedra Azul was visible from our lodge and made a dramatic backdrop as we birded these prolific grounds. Outside our door we were treated to such delights as the Southern Lapwing, Blue and White Swallows, a Wing-banded Hornero, Brancolored Flycatcher, Masked Water Tyrant and a most cooperative Slatey-breasted Wood Rail.

Next we traveled to the quaint Brazilian city of Santa Teresa. While traveling, we enjoyed a pair of Streamer-tailed Tyrants displaying repeatedly and then spotted a Savannah Hawk perched nearby!

Once settled in Santa Teresa, we spent an afternoon at a private residence with 12 multi-ported hummingbird feeders in the backyard. These feeders have been maintained for 20 years. The hummingbird frenzy of some dozen or more species and over 1500 individual birds actively feeding and displaying on the property was just breathtaking! The grounds were swarming with feisty Frilled Coquettes, handsome Black Jacobins, Sombre Hummingbirds, Swallow-tailed hummers, White-vented Violet Eared Hummingbirds

...just to name a few. This was a once in a lifetime experience!

Nova Lombardia Biological Reserve, an upland Atlantic forest, was our next destination. This area is the home to many range restricted endemics. We managed to see the very vocal Bare-throated Bell bird, a gorgeous and entertaining Pin-tailed Manakin, a White-bibbed Antbird, Serra Antwren, Cinnamon Tanager, Red-necked Tanager and Yellow-green Grosbeaks! There were also hummingbirds, parrots, toucans and trogons! What a spot!

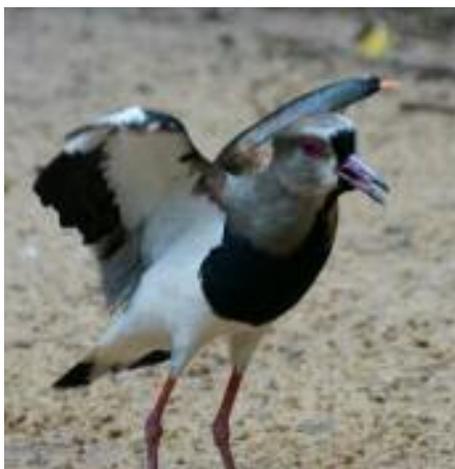
The CVRD Doce Reserva Natural de Linhares, a private reserve and lowland Atlantic Forest was our last stop on our VENT trip. In this area we encountered many of the most sought after endemics of the region. We were lucky enough to enjoy excellent views of the highly endangered Red-billed Curassow, a Striated Heron, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Plain Parakeet, White Woodpecker, Guira Cuckoo, Peach-fronted Parakeet, Black-necked Aracari, a Red-headed Manakin and White-crowned Manakin.

Chris, Dianne and myself continued on to Iguacu Falls after parting company with the rest of our group. We stayed at the very beautiful Hotel das Cataratas inside the National Park, overlooking Iguacu Falls. We found ourselves mesmerized by the enormity, power and beauty surrounding us! Here we visited an aviary too, getting close to many of the birds we had only gotten brief glances of before. On our third and last day in this beautiful spot we hired a local guide and birded the many trails within the Park. The first and most impressive bird we encountered was the beautiful long tailed Potoo. This was a very special treat.

This entire trip was fantastic. We returned home with a new bird count in excess of 275 species and memories of our Brazilian adventure to cherish for years to come.



Photos: Top: a hummingbird feeding frenzy at Santa Teresa. Middle: the impressive and well-disguise Long-tailed Potoo, and left a Southern Lapwing



2009 NYSOA Annual Meeting

A Report by Bob Adamo

The 61st anniversary meeting of the NY State Ornithological Association was held on Sept. 26, 2009 in the upstate town of Savannah. Normally our annual meeting is held over an entire weekend, but this year, due to the lack of a member club volunteering to host it, the board of directors decided to hold a one-day, centrally located affair in order to conduct our by-laws-mandated business meeting. Over a hundred participants attended; taking part in the mornings/afternoon's activities, which included field trips to nearby Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, followed by lunch, a shorebird identification talk, and the business meeting, all held at the Audubon center.

With the weather cooperating, Montezuma provided many nice bird sightings, with the highlight being a Greater White-fronted Goose, which was seen by many, but unfortunately not by Bill Reeves and myself. The bird, found among a flock of Canada Geese in the water behind the visitor center, was last seen just moments before we arrived.

Shai Mitra then presented a very informative talk on identifying shorebirds, using his own slides as well as some provided by Dominic Sherony. At the end of his talk, Shai offered a few quiz slides to the audience, challenging them to use their newly re-enforced identification skills.

Next, Andy Mason made us aware of the people presented with certificates of appreciation, who during this past year, have accommodated birds and birders throughout NYS. Among this group of seven was Barbara Smith of E. Moriches for hosting a male Blue Grosbeak at her feeder, and for the hospitality she provided to visiting birders. Other award winners were: Angus Wilson, the John J. Elliot Award, for best article submitted to the *Kingbird*; Jenny E. Murtaugh, (SUNY Cobleskill), the Lillian B. Stoner Award, given to a college or high school student for expenses to attend NYSOA's annual meeting; Bill Reeves, the Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award, for his long and distinguished service, first, to the Federation of NY State

Bird Clubs and then, after a name change, to NYSOA. This award is the highest honor bestowed by NYSOA and is not given out annually, and only to individuals whose contributions are judged to be outstanding to the organization.

Official business consisted of the following: election of officers, with Carena Pooth as president; Gail Kirch as vice president; Andy Mason as treasurer; Joan Collins as recording secretary; and Jeanine Smith as corresponding secretary. Elected to the board for terms ending in 2011, were Jeremy Kirchman, Bard Prentiss, and Bob Adamo. Bob Spahn was elected to fill the open director's term with ends in 2010. Reports were made by several NYSOA committees, as well as a number of the organization's officers. Election of

nominating committee and auditing committee members, with Irving Cantor, Peter Capainolo, and Isaac Grant to the former, and Berna Lincoln, Tim Baird, and Jerry Lazarczyk to the latter. Joan Collins was recognized for the great job she did organizing the registration for this year's meeting. Bill Ostrander was applauded for his tireless work as NYSOA's President for the past two years, and also for the effort that he and his wife Mary put into setting up this year's annual meeting.

Next year's annual meeting will be held the weekend of October 22-24, 2010. It will be hosted by the Onondaga Audubon Society, based in the Auburn area. More information to follow.



Five new additions to the NYS Avian Checklist

Angus Wilson, Chair, New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC)

The latest issue of the New York State ornithological journal *The Kingbird* (Sept 2009) includes an announcement from NYSARC concerning five new additions to the New York State Avian Checklist. They are:

1. **Pink-footed Goose** (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) Discovered near Montauk, on Nov. 18 and continued into 2008.
2. **Western Reef-Heron** (*Egretta gularis*) Seen at Coney Island Creek, Brooklyn, from July 9 and continued into Aug.
3. **Cassin's Kingbird** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) Seen Oct 13 in Montauk.
4. **Scott's Oriole** (*Icterus parisorum*) Bird found in mid-town Manhattan, Dec. 4 and continued into 2008.
5. **'Yellow' Wagtail** (*Motacilla tschutschensis/flava*) Photographed at Plum Beach, Brooklyn on Sept 7, 2008.

Note: This is the first accepted record of any wagtail for NYS and is apparently the first 'Yellow' Wagtail for eastern North

America. In 2004, the American Ornithologists' Union split Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*M. tschutschensis*)—the form breeding in North America and likely occurring as a vagrant along the Pacific coast—from the Yellow Wagtail (*M. flava*) but in doing so created a severe identification challenge. After careful review, NYSARC considered the details of the Brooklyn bird insufficient to distinguish between the two species at this time but was convinced that this was indeed one of the two closely-allied species.

Congratulations to the finders of the exciting rarities and many thanks to those observers who took the trouble to submit reports and photographs for the permanent record. With these inclusions, the NYS list now stands at 475 species.

Full accounts of each of these new additions will be published in the NYSARC Annual Report (AR). The 2007 Annual Report is going to press right now and the 2008 AR is slated for the spring or summer.



Members' Corner

John McNeil

Membership Chairman

The first snowfall of the holiday season might be right around the corner—my bird feeders are filled waiting for the first early morning outside diner. Winter birding is **fun**, you never know what may arrive in your yard when the snow is on the ground. Gil Raynor always told me that when snow is on the ground, start searching out the bird feeders around your area. Some species of birds that normally seek food from other means will come to a feeder when the ground is covered. Fox Sparrows come to mine, they are ground feeders so look for them as well as Pine Siskins and both Nuthatches. You might be lucky and a Red-headed Woodpecker might pay you a visit or a flock of Evening Grosbeaks. Usually birds do not die from cold; they expire from the lack of food. If you have started a feeding station, keep it up until the spring comes when natural food becomes available.

To answer the most asked question that I have received on the "Feeder Survey Form," submitted to date: **"where have all the birds gone?"** Well to be quite honest, the outside air temperature has been unseasonably warm the last few months, and when that happens, birds can forage for food themselves in the woods, bypassing your feeding station. Wait, when the arctic jet stream drops below us and the cold weather starts to settle in, I almost guarantee that your feeding station will see more activity.

Now to a few highlights of some of the comments I received:

Gigi Spates reported a **"Brown Creeper"** barking up their big walnut tree and a **"Red-tailed Hawk"** lurking around her bird feeder. John Roberts reported a one day appearance of a **"Hairy Woodpecker,"** and Joanne Spitznagel had an unwelcome **"Sharp-shinned Hawk"** making a pass at noisy **"Blue Jays."** ... That will teach the Jay to keep its trap shut. Miss Bastable has a **"Carolina Wren"** hanging around her yard. That's always nice to hear. Keep those comments coming, I love to read them.

From *Bird Watching Digest* come some excellent tips for your bird feeding station. They can be contacted at 800-879-2473 or you can visit their web site at: www.birdwatchersdigest.com, if you subscribe mention Eastern Long Island you will also be supporting ELIAS. (see pg 10)

Tips for a Healthy Feeding Station

- Give your seed feeders (especially thistle & tube feeders) a shake before you refill them, to dislodge any compacted seed. Dump out any wet clumps of old seed.
- Clean all hulls off platform feeders and out of seed trays daily.
- Keep some old spatulas and brushes handy by the feeding station for cleaning purposes.
- Disinfect feeders by scrubbing with a weak bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of warm water) every few weeks, more often in summer or rainy periods. Rinse and allow feeders to dry before refilling.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after filling or cleaning your feeders.
- Move your feeding station when the ground beneath it becomes covered. Rake the old site to remove hulls and to give the grass a chance to recover.
- Store your seed in a clean, dry, air-tight container, such as a metal garbage can.
- Don't allow large amounts of seed to become wet, as on platform feeders. Instead, when it's wet outside, feed primarily from covered feeders that will keep seed dry, or put out only a handful of seed at a time on platforms.
- Don't put hulled sunflower hearts (or bits) out where wet weather can cause them to spoil. Offer them in a tube or hopper feeder.
- Don't put out any more seed than can be eaten by the birds by nightfall, especially where raccoons, opossums, bears, deer, or rodents are a problem.
- If you see a sick or dead bird at your feeders, halt your feeding for a few weeks to allow the healthy birds to disperse. This lessens the possibility of disease transmission. Remove and discard in the trash any dead birds. Report the sick birds to your local wildlife officials, many of whom monitor wildlife health.

■ If you provide suet, reduce the amount you offer in hot weather. Heat can make suet rancid and unhealthy for birds. Runny suet can also stick to birds' feathers, making them hard to keep clean and useful. Use rendered suet or heat-resilient suet.

■ Reduce window-kills of birds by placing feeders a safe distance away. If birds regularly strike a particular window place a screen, crop netting, or a series of branches over or in front of the outside glass panel to break up the reflection.

■ Though birds may not be entirely dependent on your feeder, it's best not to leave them totally without food if you plan to be away from home in mid-winter. Purchase an oversized feeder with a large seed capacity, or ask a willing neighbor to continue feeding your birds.

■ Don't discontinue feeding as soon as the grass greens and the weather warms in spring. Many birds will continue coming to your feeders all summer long.

■ Don't use grease, oil, petroleum jelly, or similar substances on your feeder poles or wires to thwart squirrels, ants, or other feeder-raiding creatures. If these substances come into contact with bird feathers they are impossible for the bird to preen or wash out. Goopy feathers can become useless for flight or insulation, thus putting the birds at risk to predators, extreme weather, and disease. For squirrels and other mammals, use a pole-mounted baffle (many are sold commercially). For ants, use an ant guard that prevents ants from reaching the feeder. Baffles and ant guards are available on the internet, by mail-order, or in retail stores that sell backyard products.

Tips for Better Feeding

■ Black-oil sunflower seed is the most widely used bird seed, popular with the greatest number of bird species. Its thin shell and large nutmeat are ideal for most feeder species.

■ Offer a variety of seeds and food in a variety of appropriate feeders (sunflower seed in tube, hopper, or platform feeders, thistle in tube feeders, peanuts in peanut feeders, suet in suet cages, and mixed seed on platform feeders or scattered on dry ground).

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Sending Kids to Camp – Four Scholarships Offered

EASTERN LONG ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY is offering scholarships for four students in grades 7 through 12 to attend New York State Department of Conservation camps for one week. Campers will choose between two camps in the Adirondacks, one in the Catskills, or one in western New York State. Campers enjoy fishing, hiking, canoeing, volleyball, and hunter safety training. Activities such as sampling streams for aquatic life and hiking in the dark to listen to the sounds in the woods are designed to bring conservation concepts to life.

A perfect candidate would be interested in the environment, and anxious to learn more, (*Parents do not have to be Audubon members.*) Here is what the candidates need to do:

- Fill out the form below.
- Write an essay stating why they are worthy candidates for the scholarship. Include environmental experiences and interests. Also, describe what benefit they might derive from the experience.
- Have a parent attach a letter stating that they are aware of the transportation stipulation.

If accepted

- Campers are responsible for their own transportation to and from the camp.
- Campers are responsible for their own physical examination, if the camp requires it.

For more information, call Evelyn at 631-727-0417.

Please complete and forward the application by **January 11, 2010** to:

Education Committee
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society
PO Box 206
East Quogue, NY 1942-0206

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Date of Birth _____

Name of school _____ Grade _____

Have you ever attended an outdoor education/ecology camp?

If SO, what camp, where, and when _____

Applicant's signature _____ Date _____



Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh Thanks ELIAS

Over the summer I went to Camp DeBruce thanks to your scholarship. I had a great time and hope to go back. Some things I learned at camp were about different trees, hunter safety, the fish hatchery, and the natural rivers in the area. I thank you for the opportunity to go and learn about hunter safety and many other environmentally related things. Because of this opportunity I was able to earn my junior hunting license. I hope you enjoy getting this thank-you letter as much as I enjoyed camp.

**From Micheal
ELIAS camper**

The DeBruce Environmental Education Camp is one of the camps potential campers may choose, it is in Sullivan County near Livingston Manor.

At DeBruce campers participate in discovery groups and complete lessons ranging from group dynamics to field, forest, and pond explorations, to study of human impact. Group members learn science, solve challenges, play games, keep a journal, catch salamanders, net butterflies and discover the interconnectedness of life on earth.

Life at camp may include a variety of optional activities that introduce them to outdoor pursuits and pastimes. Experiences include learning to fly fish, canoe trips at Mongaup Pond and down the Delaware River, hiking to a nearby waterfall, exploring a bog and spending the afternoon on a mountain peak.

Wetlands, Peat Bogs and Legislation

Larry Penny

When New York State signed into law the Freshwater and Tidal Wetlands Acts in 1973 and 1974, respectively, the thrust of the acts was to preserve important plant communities and wildlife habitats, but also to reduce damage from floods. Prior to that time, wetlands in NYS and most others across America were fair game for dredging, draining and even landfilling with municipal garbage. This took place in the San Francisco Bay area as late as the early 1970s. Wetlands, it turns out, were important primary producers at the bottom of the food chain and rivaled tropical rainforests in biomass production.

Wetland protection was just one of a bunch of environmental reforms that took place throughout the United States, ironically, under the aegis of the Nixon administration in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time global warming and its potential damages to mankind and the physical world was a tiny glimmer in the eyes of most climatologists, ecologists and early scientists. However, one of them, Barry Commoner, advertised the alarming rise of carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere since the onset of the industrial revolution and tied it to the warming of the earth's atmosphere and rising oceans.

The relationship between industry, generation of electricity and transportation and carbon gas emissions was well known, but the idea of carbon sequestration in forests, sea bottom sediments, and other earthly and aquatic components was more subtle. We knew that most of the increased atmospheric carbon was coming from the burning of fossil fuels, namely, coal, oil and natural gas. We more poorly understood that ongoing biological processes of photosynthesis and metabolism were locking up millions of tons of carbon daily, partially countering the rise.

It turns out that the preservation of salt marshes and freshwater wetlands with their peaty bases sequester a large proportion of the carbon. East Hampton Town's wetland law, written into the Town

Code in 1984, is much stronger than the state and federal laws. It doesn't have a size limit: all wetlands no matter how small are protected. Consequently, East Hampton continues to sequester carbon at a significant rate.

Contrast the tiny municipality of East Hampton with Indonesia, the third largest atmospheric carbon contributor in the world. Yes, we well know about the cutting down of the tropical forests to produce lumber and make way for plantations, but what we didn't know is that large wetland systems hundreds of times larger than East Hampton are being drained and the expanses of peat thusly exposed are releasing vast quantities of carbon into the atmosphere. The same thing is happening in the muskegs of Canada where most of the peat for our gardens and nurseries originates.

Before coal and oil, wood and peat were the fuels of choice. In Europe peat was mined and used for fuel, not for gardening. Ireland's economy practically ran on the burning of peat. Block Island sitting in the ocean off Montauk Point pretty much exhausted its peat bogs for household heating needs. As a consequence, many of its wetlands have been taken over by invasive plants.

The deposition of peat, beginning during the Coniferous Period more than 300 million years ago, is related in some way, yet poorly understood, to the deposition of the other fossil fuels, coal, oil and natural gas. By saving wetlands and trying to maintain them as much as possible in their natural state, a major source of carbon sequestration continues. Paradoxically, rising sea levels spurred by the green house effect (largely caused by carbon dioxide and methane trapping heat radiated from the earth's surface) may end up submerging the bulk of the world's tidal wetlands, thus leaving it up to the freshwater ones to carry on the sequestration process by themselves



Members' Corner

Continued from page 6

■ Offer the thick-shelled gray-striped sunflower seed to Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Jays, Chickadees, Titmice, and Nuthatches.

■ Offer safflower seed to Cardinals. Squirrels and blackbirds in many parts of the continent do not like it.

■ If your feeder is overrun with blackbirds, pigeons, or house sparrows, stop offering mixed seed on the ground or on platform feeders. Feed only black-oil sunflower seed in tube or hopper feeders until the problem species disperse.

■ Don't offer so-called wild bird mixes in tube feeders. These are better fed on platforms or out of hopper feeders. Birds which prefer sunflower seed will just empty the feeder to get at the sunflower seeds.

■ Make a brushpile near your feeder to make sparrows, towhees, and other shy birds feel more at home, but be sure it won't harbor roaming cats.

■ Add natural features to your feeding station, such as branches to perch on, to make birds feel more at ease.

Tips for a Healthy Bird Bath

■ Don't situate bird baths under feeders or perches, where droppings can fall into them. Rinse and scrub birdbaths daily in summer, or whenever they become fouled. Once a month, scrub out with a light bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach in 2 gallons of water), rinse thoroughly before you refill.

Join the Feeder Survey

While watching your feathered friends flutter between the bushes and your feeder, why don't you participate in our "Feeder Station Survey?" The forms are on page 10 of the newsletter. I would love to hear from you.

birdwchr@gmail.com

If you have not subscribed to ELIAS email notification list send an email with sign-up in the subject field and your name & email in the text. You will receive any updates, reminders, and last minute notices between newsletters.



A Nice Addition to Your Birding Library

Review by Eileen Schwinn

GOING WILD

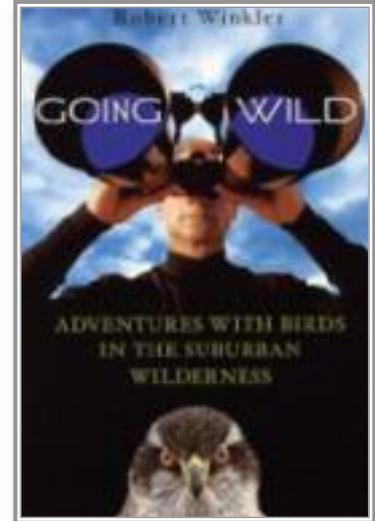
Adventures with Birds in the Suburban Wilderness

By Robert Winkler

On the coldest of winter days, most of the birds we seek are snuggled into their safe little roosts. So are we. Sit down, have a cup of tea, and reach for a book like this one to enjoy.

While many personal stories about birding involve travels afar, this one centers on Robert Winkler's own backyard, and some areas just beyond it. Set in Fairfield County, Connecticut—some 75 miles from NYC—Winkler sets out to prove Henry David Thoreau's observation, "It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns." He shares his belief that the appeal of birds and birding is an attempt to

deal with "living in humanity's overpopulated, paved-over world—with all its rules, regulations, and traffic jams.....We envy the birds and their wild freedom. They are more beautiful and exotic than any being Hollywood could concoct, and yet they are here, at our doorsteps, for us to enjoy." While some birds—Barred Owl, for example—and some creatures—copperhead snake and coyote—are not to be found here on Long Island, this diary could read as local observations. What Winkler teaches us is that visiting our own neighborhood favorite places, over and over again, throughout the seasons, and armed with patience, and optimism, we can be awed each time. He even shares his disappointment with the development, in the name of Progress, of one of his most favored places, a mid-sized, abandoned farm. I immediately replaced the words "Grumman Facility" for "farm". His chapter on Hollywood Bird Songs was an amusing addition.



Not an earth-shattering gotta-read, this gentle reminder of how and why the majority of us find pleasure in our beloved hobby, is a fine addition to your birding library. So heat that cup of tea up, grab your cozy lap throw, and settle in for a comfortable winter read—and plan your next birding adventure close to home!



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From Kaler's Pond Nature Center

Jay Kuhlman

We have put the center and gardens to sleep for the winter. The bird feeding will continue throughout the winter.

There will be two winter programs held at the Center Moriches Library

Sunday, January 24th 1:30 to 3 pm

Getting ready for spring!

Ideas for using native Long Island plants to add color and heartiness to your garden that will attract butterflies, birds and other wildlife.

Sunday, February 21, 1:30 to 3:00 pm

Winter birds

Learn to identify birds at your feeder as well as those you are likely to see in the fields, forests, wetlands and shores. Also learn about hotspots in the area.

We are planning next spring and summer's programs.

Feeder Survey

John McNeil

The Survey will be conducted the 1st week of the month starting on Sunday and ending the following Sunday.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEEDER SURVEY

- Define an area containing feeders that you can see all at once from a window. The area should be one you glance at frequently during your daily routine.
- Don't include birds seen off premises.
- Predators perching in or swooping through the count area (not just flying over) may be counted if you feel that they were attracted by the birds at the feeder.
- Record the largest number of each species that you see in your count area during the eight-day count period.
- Do not add counts from previous days together. Be specific with the species name, e.g. we can't use just the name Sparrow, Blackbird or Gull.
- At the end of the count period, record your final tallies and send in the form immediately.

Personal observations and comments are welcome as are suggestions to improve the surveys and reports.

Please mail immediately after each survey period to:

Feeder Survey c/o John McNeil
168 Lexington Rd
Shirley NY 11967-3212

Or to send via the internet, go to: easternlongislandaudubon.org and

- 1) Click on: Chapter Projects
- 2) Click on: Feeder Statistics
- 3) Click on: To submit via the internet, etc.

Survey Dates:

Jan. 3, 2010 to Jan. 10, 2010

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 _____

Survey Dates:

Feb. 7-Feb. 14, 2010

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
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- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Other _____

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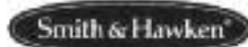
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& Membership**

For \$15 a year, you will receive 6 copies of this newsletter. You will be supporting our local education and conservation activities. (Members of National Audubon who are not chapter members receive one copy of this newsletter per year.)

This is a Renewal New Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

Email _____

Please be sure to include your email. You will receive an email confirmation, a pdf of the first newsletter and occasional updates. And, no we do not share this list!

Make check payable to:

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Mark Your Calendars

Jan. 3 - 10 Feeder Count (pg. 10)
 Sun., Jan. 24 Lecture Getting ready for spring (pg. 9)
 Mon., Feb. 1 Nature Program The Galapagos Islands at QWR (pg. 1)
 Sat., Jan. 9 Field Trip to the Lakes Around Patchogue (pg. 2)
 Sat., Feb. 6 Field Trip to Teatown's Hudson River EAGLEFEST (pg. 2)
 Feb. 7 - 14 Feeder Count (pg. 10)
 Sun., Feb. 21 Lecture Winter Birds (pg. 9)

NEXT ISSUE

Look for Carl Starace's article on
 the Common Eider, where to find it,
 and how to identify it.

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