



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

# *The* **OSPREY**

Sept./Oct. 2011 — Vol. XXXVI No. 5

Eastern Long Island Audubon Society  
Invites you to attend the Forty-fourth Anniversary  
*Dinner Celebration*



Featuring John Confer's presentation on the  
California Condor  
Wednesday, October 19, 2011  
Cocktail hour begins at 6:00 pm  
at The Vineyards in Aquebogue

**John Confer**, through his work with members of the California Condor Release Project in Northern Arizona, will present his program on the largest North American bird species — the California Condor.

John will relay the story of this magnificent bird, and will share with us what's currently being done to monitor the captive birds' breeding-and-release successes. His focus will be on the slow but steady recovery and reintroduction to the wild of a nearly extinct bird species, as well as the man-made obstacles and challenges ahead.

We will also see some of the outstandingly beautiful habitat of northern Arizona where the California Condor can be found today, illustrated through the art of Karen Confer.

Watch for your invitation, if you do not receive it by mid-September or have any questions call Sally at 631-281-6008 or Evelyn at 727-0417.

## Message to National Audubon Society (NAS) Members

**W**hen you joined The National Audubon Society, they assigned you to a local Audubon chapter. Your local chapter is Eastern Long Island Audubon Society. Once a year you will receive this newsletter from your local chapter. I would also like to extend an invitation to you to become a local chapter member. Many NAS members have chosen to do so in order to keep up with local birding activities and environmental issues facing our area. Being a local chapter member, you will receive six issues of our newsletter, *The Osprey*. The cost is only \$15 per year which helps to cover printing and mailing. Please consider joining and becoming a local chapter member. The membership form is on page 11 of the newsletter.

Our meetings and field trips are always open to everyone at no cost. You can check our website for meetings/lectures at Quogue Wildlife Refuge each month. Birding walks and other activities are also listed there.

Local and NAS members will all be receiving an invitation to the annual dinner. Hope you will come.

John McNeil  
Membership Chair  
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society

*PS. We urge you to send your email to [birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com) for program notifications, updates, and if necessary, weather related cancellations.*

## Nature Programs

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

**Monday, September 12 beginning at 7:15 pm**

### Visiting Jamaica with Eric Salzman

The island of Jamaica, the third largest of the Caribbean islands, is not much bigger than Long Island. It has (by some counts) the highest number of endemics in the West Indies. In a visit of less than a week, we only saw 82 species but one third of them were species that can only be found on this one island and another third were forms – species or subspecies – unique to the West Indies. There are not many places where you can see so many endemics in so small a space. There is good birding in many parts of Jamaica but our visit last April was focused on the famous John Crow and Blue Mountains with its mix of coffee plantations, small villages, resorts, villas, rain forest and indigenous birds. The avifauna is a mixture of neotropical and temperate North America types including many wintering birds and migrants familiar from back home. But when was the last time you saw a Rasta Bird, Mountain Witch, Doctorbird, Hopping Dick or Old Man Bird?

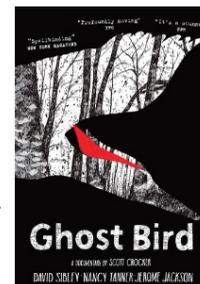
**Monday, October 3 beginning at 7:15 pm**

### Ghost Bird

Excerpted from a review on Amazon

This movie is for everyone who has been watching developments in the saga of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker since claims that it had been rediscovered. Filmmaker Scott Crocker offers "Ghost Bird", an antidote to the enthusiasm stirred up Dr. John Fitzpatrick and Tim Gallagher of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, who claim to have evidence of the bird's survival. In fact, the film presents the controversy over the bird as emblematic of hope and folly.

The movie presents the evidence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's survival in the Big Woods of Arkansas. It takes us to a small, dwindling town called Brinkley that hopes to benefit economically from the birders who come in search of the bird. It takes us to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, where ornithologists show us their collections of dead Ivory-bills. Bird guide author David Sibley, and ornithologist Jerome Jackson relate yet another facet of the story.



## An Most Unusual Trip for ELIAS Board Sally Newbert

On Friday August 19th the ELIAS board and some friends visited Plum Island. The trip was part of an effort on the part of Homeland Security to dispel some of the myths that surround Plum Island. The group was primarily interested in the birds that make Plum Island their home. Since human activity is confined to a small portion we were all wondering if the birds and other animals have taken over the rest of the island. Perhaps some interesting birds have been breeding there? That does seem to be in case for a few species. Common Eiders were swimming among the rocks near the shore, Grey Seals are, we were told, regulars at one of the rocky beaches. These 2 species, the Grey Seals and Common Eiders are usually well north of us.

There were also 2 young Turkey Vultures on one of the deserted buildings. Were they fledged here? It certainly looked that way. But the answer will have to wait. TV's were found breeding at Camp Hero in one of the deserted bunkers a few years ago, and there are several similar locations on Plum Island.

Two blogs, one by Eric Salzman and another by Annette Oliveira give many more details and photos. You will find Eric's Blog *The View from Weesuck Creek* at <http://ericosalzman.blogspot.com>, go to the archives for Aug. 19 and 21. Annette's Blog is <http://longislandbirds.blogspot.com/2011/08/visit-to-plum-island-by-eastern-long.html>.



## Fall Field Trips — John McNeil

As autumn approaches, the leaves begin to turn, a nip is in the air, our bird feeders are cleaned and hung, waiting for our feathered friends to appear once again. This is the beginning of the Fall and Winter birding season, my favorite time of year when birding is almost as exciting as the Spring migration. You never know what might turn up at your door as some wrong-way-Corrigan might alight at your backyard for refueling.

As you read on, you will notice that some field trips are repeated. The reason why this is, birds migrate at different times during the fall, so to catch different waves of different species we schedule the same area in different months. So.....with this in mind, I have outlined a field trip program to take advantage of some of the best hot spots during the coming months. Please



come and join our field trip leaders as they help you explore these exciting wonders of the Fall migration.

### Sat., September 10th @ 8:00 am Terrell River County Park

**Trip Leader: Carl Starace**

Join Carl in search fall migrants in the varied habitats of Terrell River County Park. Meet at 8:00 am at the trail head in Center Moriches on the south side of Montauk Highway, across from Kaler's Pond Audubon Center and the Flight 800 Memorial Park. This bird walk is sponsored by Cornell and Suffolk County Parks. You can contact Carl at his e-mail address: [carstarace@optonline.net](mailto:carstarace@optonline.net) for additional details.

### Sat., September 17th @ 8:00 am

### Fire Island Hawk Watch and the East End of Robert Moses

**Trip Leader: John McNeil**

Around this time of year, Ospreys, Cooper's Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Sharpshinned Hawks, and American Kestrel are just some of the raptors that can pass the Fire Island Hawk Watch station at the East End of Robert Moses near the Fire Island Lighthouse. Come join your trip leader to observe these and many other species that pass this great observation station during the morning hours. Meet in the east end of the parking lot at near the Raymore & Flannigan, along the Sunrise Highway at Route 112 in Patchogue. We will leave the parking lot at 8:00 am. Bring some snacks and thermos full of your fa-

*continued next page*

## Annual Bird Seed Sale Order Form

Qty	Description	Price	Total
	25 lb Black Oil Sunflower	\$24.00	
	50 lb Black Oil Sunflower	\$42.00	
	20 lb Fancy Flight Premium Wild Bird Mix	\$18.00	
	40 lb Fancy Flight Premium Wild Bird Mix	\$30.00	
	10 lb Niger Seed	\$22.00	
	11.75 oz Suet Cake	\$2.00	
Orders need to be picked up on Saturday, November 12 between 9:00 am – 3:00 pm			
		<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	
		<b>DONATION</b>	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	

Please make checks payable to: Quogue Wildlife Refuge

### ANNUAL BIRD SEED SALE

to benefit Quogue Wildlife Refuge & Eastern Long Island Audubon Society made possible by the generous assistance of Eastport Feeds.



\*Orders must be received by October 24, 2011

\*Pre-payment is necessary.



Please charge my card  AMEX  VISA  MasterCard  Discover

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this order form to Quogue Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 492, Quogue, NY, 11959 by October 24.**

**Pick up your order from Quogue Wildlife Refuge at 3 Old Country Road in Quogue on November 12..**

favorite hot beverage because it can be chilly. For additional details, I can be contacted at: [birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com) or on my cell phone on that day at: 219.8947 or at home before the trip at 631.281.2623

**Sat., September 24th @ 8:30 am**

### Smith Point County Park

**Trip Leader: Carl Starace**

Participants will meet at the far western end of the "Worlds Largest Parking Lot." Please watch the weather and wear appropriate outerwear and don't forget to bring your binoculars and scopes. We will proceed to the Ranger Station for viewing from the upper deck and then hike out into the Wilderness Area watching for migrating songbirds, waterbirds and birds of prey. This is an exciting time of year to be out on the barrier beach so come on out! For more details, contact Carl at 631.281.8074 or e-mail him at: [castarace@optonline.net](mailto:castarace@optonline.net)

**Saturday, October 1st @ 8:00 am**

### Quogue Wildlife Refuge

**Trip Leader: Gigi Spates**

As the retired refuge manager, Gigi is well versed in the habits of this wonderful acreage and has a vast knowledge of the birds, fauna, and wildlife. Come join Gigi and enjoy this exciting adventure that she will lead you on. Please do not forget to bring your binoculars and especially your camera so that you can take pictures of the changing colors of the surrounding trees around the lake. You can contact Gigi at her e-mail address for additional details. [gspates@optonline.net](mailto:gspates@optonline.net)

**Saturday, October 22nd at 8:00 AM**

### Dune Road — Shinnecock to Moriches Inlet

**Trip Leader: TBA**

This will be an excellent time to bird along the barrier beach as the migration passes through our area. We looking for shorebirds, hawks and other land birds. Come join our group leader as you are guided along this route for a half or full

day's outing. We will meet on the west side of Shinnecock Inlet at 8:00 am in the parking area.

**Saturday, November 5th, @ 8:30 AM**

### Smith Point County Park

**Trip Leader: Carl Starace**

Participants will meet at the far western end of the "Worlds Largest Parking Lot." Please watch the weather and wear appropriate outerwear and don't forget to bring your binoculars and scopes. We will proceed to the Ranger Station for viewing from the upper deck and then hike out into the Wilderness Area watching for migrating songbirds, waterbirds and birds of prey. This is an exciting time of year to be out on the barrier beach so come on out! This bird walk is sponsored by Cornell and Suffolk County Parks. For more details, contact Carl at 631.281.8074 or e-mail him at: [castarace@optonline.net](mailto:castarace@optonline.net)

**Sat., November 12th @ 9:00 AM**

### Jones Beach State Park and Point Lookout

**Trip Leader: John McNeil**

This area is a catch basin for all types of birds and can produce many surprises. We will try to catch the tail end of the fall migration the arrival of our winter visitors from the north. Please, do not forget to bring water and snacks.

First we will meet at the West End #2 parking lot at 9 am, and bird this areas. Then will drive over to Point Lookout to scope out the jetties and exposed sandbars. After birding these area we will drive along Ocean Parkway east to Robert Moses State Park, where we will park see what's happening at the hawk watching platform. If time permits, we will walk out on the boardwalk to Fire Island Light House.

**Sat., November 19th @ 9:00 am**

### Jamesport State Park and Hallockville Farm Fields

**Trip Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

The varied habitats of the farm fields, woods, ponds, and dunes on Long Island Sound provide a diversity of migrants and

wintering bird residents. Bring binoculars for this 2 hour walk of spectacular views and good birding. For additional details call Hallockville at 631-298-5292. There is a \$5 charge for this walk benefiting the Hallockville Museum Farm.

**Sun., November 20th @ 9:00 am**

### Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk William Floyd Estate

**Trip Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

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

**Sat., November 26th @ 9:00 am**

### Theodore Roosevelt County Park Bird Walk

**Trip Leader: Carl Starace**

This large park is a historic landmark. It hosts a variety of ecosystems important to Long Island, including fresh and saltwater ponds and wetlands. You can also find a diverse group of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians that live amongst these ecosystems. There are trails for exercise or a nature hike. This bird walk is sponsored by Cornell and Suffolk County Parks. For more details, contact Carl at 631.281.8074 or e-mail him at: [castarace@optonline.net](mailto:castarace@optonline.net)

**Directions:** Follow Montauk Highway East through Montauk Village. Continue on Montauk Highway past East Lake Drive. Park sign and entrance is on north side of Montauk Highway.



## From Great Gull Island, New York

By Mary E. Dempsey

Photograph by Mary E. Dempsey

**G**REAT GULL ISLAND is a seventeen (17) acre tern refuge located in the eastern end of Long Island Sound between Plum Island and Fishers Island. It has been owned by the American Museum of Natural History since 1948. The Great Gull Island research station was established by the Museum in 1966 and is run by Helen Hays, an ornithologist. And it was because of Helen Hays that I was there as a volunteer this past June. She was featured in my alumnae magazine as the “Protector of the Flocks”, one of four annual alumnae achievement winners. I got the chance to volunteer when Helen took me up on my offer even though I had little birding experience. Since my job includes spending a lot of time in the Suffolk county marshes, I figured I would be a good candidate to chip in. My daily work day turned out to be a lot different than roughing it on Great Gull Island sans plumbing and hot water and focusing just on terns.

I prepared for my volunteering by reading the books, “The View from Great Gull” by Michael Harwood published in 1976, “The Bird of Light” by John Jay published in 1991 on terns in Cape Cod, and reading various newspaper articles. I did not know anyone personally who had volunteered on this island. But as the cliché goes, you have to see it to believe it! And it’s all about the birds! But make no mistake, you are there to work and I would not exchange my experience there for anything else, well almost anything else! Because it is rewarding volunteering at a site

of important ongoing research on the endangered roseate tern & the threatened common tern.

On Friday June 3rd, I headed out to the Orient Point New London ferry, just making the boat. Was I trying to sabotage my efforts at something totally new and different? I would reverse this trip on Sunday June 5th, though later in the month, volunteers stay on the island for a week. But I digress. Now, this is a ferry ride I have taken many times over the years but not once, did I notice Great Gull Island or Little Gull Island, the latter with a conspicuous lighthouse on it. My view through the binoculars did not begin to show what faced me as I could not see any birds or even humans, for that matter. Off the ferry, it was a short jaunt to Captain John Wadsworth’s dock in Waterford/Niantic Connecticut where other volunteers waited for the seas to calm in order for the boat to successfully land on the Great Gull Island’s dock.

Once there you realize you are working together with people of all ages and backgrounds bound by two common goals - helping out the terns and assisting Helen Hays. But the terns might not quite see it that way. Helen is overseeing the world’s largest common tern colony, with approximately 9,400 breeding pairs and home to the largest North American population of the federally endangered Roseate tern colony with approximately 1,375 pairs. The terns start to arrive on the island at



the end of April with the male arriving first. If a pair breeds successfully, the female will lay a clutch of two or three eggs, around the beginning of June. The week before I arrived, some nests with eggs were already marked. But in a week many nests needed to be marked by us. Incubation can take about 21 days, but no eggs hatched when I was there. And you have to be oh so careful in walking so as to not step on any eggs. It amazed me that some nests were formed right there on cement. I even felt that I was on a Rockette’s line, moving together in step marking the nests and having Helen direct your movement. There was, unfortunately, an unwelcome guest on the island. A Cooper’s hawk was creating havoc with the eggs. But a volunteer went right to work to design a trap to capture this predator.

At the peak breeding season, which I did not witness, is when volunteers are needed a week at a time. This is when the chicks are banded. Because approximately 85% of the nesting terns have been banded, wire cages with trap doors are placed over nests to capture the unbanded adults. These captured adults are brought into the lab for weighing, measuring and banding. This also allows one to connect the banded chicks with banded

*continued on next page 7*



**Great Gull Island**  
continued from page 5

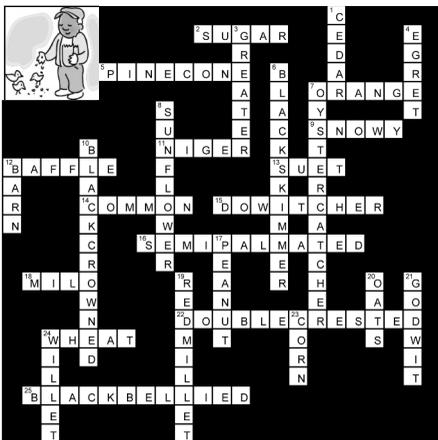
parents. The terns are tracked down to South America, where Helen has tracked some color-banded birds from Great Gull Island and where Ricardo Esteban Bremer runs a foundation which supports work on a large concentration of common terns that winter there.

From the data collected and observations on the tern's behavior over almost forty-five (45) years, much has been gleaned. They have found that terns stay together in pairs for at least twelve (12) years, common terns can mate with roseate terns and a male tern can mate with two (2) females. The oldest common tern Helen has tracked is twenty-six years old with the oldest roseate tern a mere 25 years old.

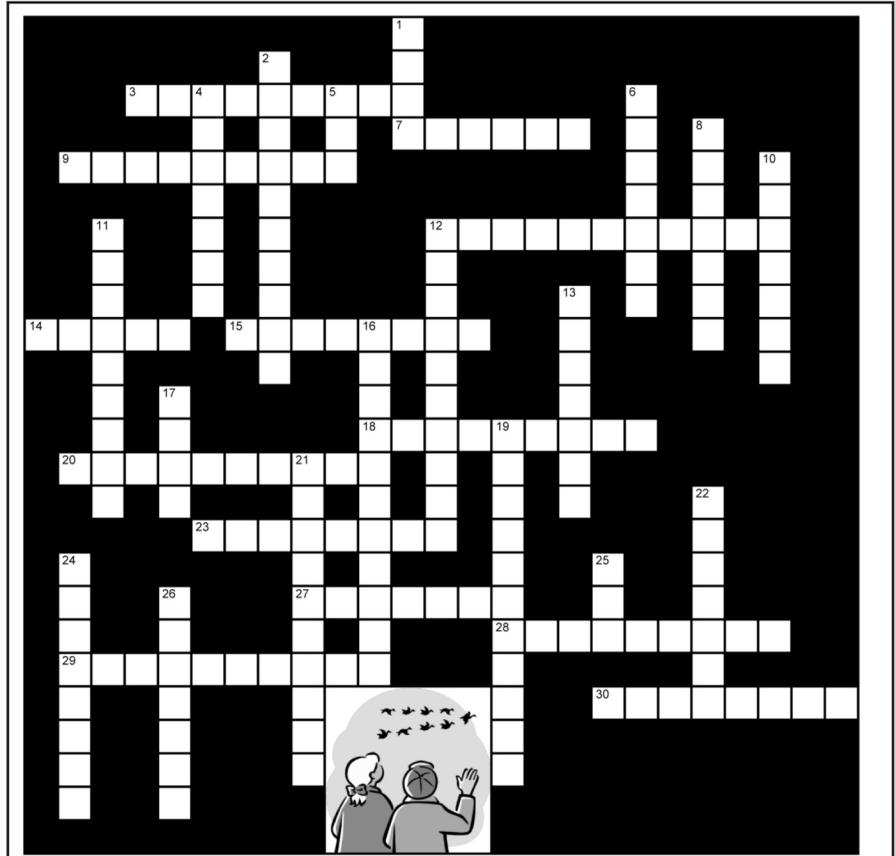
Helen is only a click away and is always looking for volunteers, even people like me! So if you would like to experience true bird camaraderie, wear straw hats sporting long plastic flowers, hear the constant symphony of the sounds of the terns, get up close and personal with terns as they poop or peck you, see a lot of nesting birds and eggs, witness spectacular vistas of the Long Island Sound, and work on a worthwhile cause, you can always get a ride with me in the beginning of the summer of 2012. And let's not forget that Helen deserves all the accolades she receives, even for her Spam dishes which are remarkably tasty!



**Answers to last issue's puzzle**  
**Bird Food**



**Migration by Tom Moran**



**Across**

- 3 Not migration, movement of a bird from where it was hatched to where it will breed, for example
- 7 Migratory pathway
- 9 Some birds migrate because tropical area nesters lose more young to other hunting animals, called
- 12 Birds who migrate mostly in the morning
- 14 A particular star night migrants can use to orient themselves
- 15 Breaks migrants take due to bad weather
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_ migrants, birds that breed high in mountains and migrate downslope in the winter
- 20 The ability of birds to get around, Little Eva sang about it
- 23 Updrafts of wind that help some species migrate
- 27 Part of the wing that is longer on migrants that go further
- 28 Night migrants
- 29 Ability to find a particular place
- 30 A big help to migrants, and planes

**Down**

- 1 Long distance migrants have this much weight of body fat
- 2 Twice a year migration

4 Migrants that depend on thermals

- 5 Some birds use this even when it is below the horizon to help orient their migration
- 6 The decrease in the numbers of this food item in the winter is one reason many birds migrate
- 8 A species that migrates during the day because of availability of food at that time of day
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_migrants, species that have some individuals who do not migrate
- 11 Movement of birds between breeding and wintering areas
- 12 Large bodies of land, migration between these classifies a bird as a long distance migrant
- 13 One way migration has been studied, bring a net
- 16 Ability to find the right direction
- 17 Some night migrants can be seen as they pass in front of this
- 19 Migrating in a flock results in this advantage
- 21 Not migration, unusual movements of birds caused by low food supplies, for example, volcanic birds?
- 22 Migration in the daytime
- 24 Birds can use this planetary phenomenon to orient themselves, a birder's personality?
- 25 A good fuel for migration
- 26 What a soaring migrant does between thermals

Save The Date ★★ ★ October 14, 2011

★★ ★ World Premier of "The Big Year" ★★ ★

FINALLY!! A movie about US!! Birdwatchers and our Sweet Obsession

### Reviews by Eileen Schwinn

In honor of this event, here's a little bit of information - and a few abbreviated reviews of a few books about Big Years, and birding over a year's time in general. (It seems that the second requirement in doing a big year, it to write and get published)

A Big Year is an informal competition among birders to see who can see or hear the largest number of species of birds within a single calendar year and within a specific geographical area. The first Big Year can be traced back to 1939, when a businessman timed all his trips and business appointments to migration and endemic species. His total: 497. 1953 – Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher crisscrossed the US in *Wild America*, total: 572. In 1956, by following Peterson's and Fisher's route, the bar was raised by a 25 year old Englishman (oh those twitchy English!) to 598. Ted Parker, was 18 in 1971 when he recorded 626, and in 1973, the number was upped to 669 (with Kenn Kaufman, *Kingbird Highway*, reaching 666) Six hundred ninety-nine birds were seen in 1979, in 1983 the total was 710. In 1987, 721 birds were "ticked".

1998 was a year of El Nino, and the year of the unbelievable total of 745 species of birds recorded. This was the year upon which Mark Obmascik's book, *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession*, and the awaited movie, *The Big Year*, is based. Amazing. Consider the fact that there are only about 675 native birds in North America to begin with.

Big years continue to be embarked upon - some with a little different tilt. In 2007, a family of three took to the pavement with their bicycles, and totaled 548 birds, rode 13,000 miles, and raised \$25,000 for bird conservation efforts. In 2010 a Big Year in the Lower 48 netted 704, and 731 by an individual covering the whole of North America.

**Whew.**

Here are a few books you might be interested in – perhaps to help you plan your own Big Year:

***Extreme Birder – One Woman's Big Year***, by Lynn E. Barber Who wouldn't want to take a year off, basically, from every responsibility one has, and bird your brains out? Well, in 2008, Lynn E. Barber did just that. Statistically, she spent 272 days "on the road", and recorded 723 birds in 25 states and three Canadian provinces. Ten pelagic boat trips and 175,000 miles.

Although she had friends accompany her on some trips, she basically traveled alone, and, reminiscent of Phoebe Snetsinger, who spent almost every non-birding moment planning the next trip. The book is not a check list of where and when, however, but written as her daily journal. We can almost see her writing her notes on a plane ride home, or sitting in a lonely motel room before turning in for the night. Her own photographs and illustrations punctuate the book, and snippets of her poetry are scattered about.

***The Reluctant Twitcher – A Quiet Truthful Account of My Big Birding Year***, by Richard Pope

Canadian point of view, and quick and fun-filled read. Mr. Pope limited his year to his home Province of Ontario. He was joined on most of his quest by a few loyal friends, proving what I believe is a major component of birding - the camaraderie. Sometimes one needs that extra push, either to go the extra distance or to know when to fold the tent and head on home. Photos and a quick wit are smattered about this slim volume.

***The Big Twitch***, by Sean Dooley Australia's take on the event and a real hoot! And you think travel across the U.S. would be intimidating! The cast of characters and events, great gets and so-close misses (dips, in the "proper" vocabulary), make this book fun and informative. Half-way through it, I wondered if the bird names

were all made up, and Mr. Dooley was just playing games with us who have never explored Down Under!

***The Falconer of Central Park***, by Donald Knowler Central Park in 1982 was not always the safest of places. The author, a British journalist sees his first bird of '82 – an American Kestrel – and is mugged and robbed, moments later. The park has changed over the past nearly 30 years, but the birds have remained the same. And the pleasure of encountering each and every one of the 131 species, is shared. I won't ever walk past the statue of The Falconer when in the Park again, without thinking of this diary.

***Out of the Woods – a Bird Watcher's Year***, by Ora E. Anderson Published posthumously, Mr. Anderson's "year" is reminiscent of Dennis Puleston's "A Nature Journal". A gentle read on the ebbs and flows as seen through the eyes of an Ohio observer. It's the journey through the seasons, and a "celebration of growing old."

Did any of these authors win anything? No – they all received the satisfaction of accomplishing a truly fantastic goal. We may all dream of doing a big year – maybe if it's only in our own back yard!

**Now, about the movie premier:**

Let's all show up. Wear your club hat, your zip-off, quick-dry trousers, your tan/green/beige/any-thing-but-white shirt, your multi-pocketed vest, your sensible walking shoes, and your binoculars. Leave the scopes at home. I think the audience will know who we are without them!

To find out which of our local theaters will be showing the film and when we are going to go—you will have to check the web page, facebook, or join our email list. To join the list, send an email to [birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com). If you need a new hat, shirt etc. go to Marlo Graphics, 391 Riverleigh Ave # B in Riverhead, they have the logo and can put it on a whatever you would like.

## From our camper at Pack Forest DEC Camp

Dear Elias,

I just wanted to thank you for such an awesome experience at the DEC Pack Forest Camp. Thank you so much for giving me a scholarship to encounter the wilderness in Upstate New York. I had such a memorable experience between meeting new friends, learning conservation tips, and participating in fun activities such as archery, kayaking, scavenger hunts and cooking classes. This camp was a great opportunity to learn how to help save our environment. I hope you will be able to continue to send teens to DEC camps. It is so vital to bring these next generations up to take care our Mother Earth and Father Sky. Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Sarah  
East Moriches.

*Editor's note: Each year ELIAS sends several young people to DEC camps. We have done that for several years and have every intention of continuing. Part of the membership dues support this program. We are quite proud of it, and would like to encourage more Audubon clubs to start similar programs.*

**ELIAS is now on**

**Facebook**

**Check it Out and**

**Click on Like**

## The Ruby-throated Hummingbird

*Archilochus Colubris*

**Carl Starace**

**H**ummingbirds are unique to the Americas. The Ruby-throated is the only species that breeds in the eastern United States. *Arch*, a prefix to the Latin name is from the classical Greek, meaning, "chief", *lochos*, literally means, "body of people"...but in this reference means, "first among the birds." The word *Colubris* literally means, "serpent". It is thought that Carolus Linneus, the person who named this species must have erred in his spelling and actually meant to write the word *Colibre*, a French word meaning hummingbird. Carolus Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist, was the first modern taxonomist. The first Ruby-throated Hummingbird examined and named by him was from a specimen collected from South Carolina in 1758.

There are eighteen species of hummingbird in North America. When John James Audubon was painting the birds for his monumental work, *Birds of America*, he was only aware of four, one of which was the Ruby-throated. The Ruby-throated breeds in North America from central Florida into and across the Canadian provinces, and west to the eastern edge of British Columbia. It can be found breeding as far west as the eastern parts of Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, the Dakotas and Texas, right down to the Mexican border.

**Description:** The Ruby-throated is a small, 3" to 3 1/2", stocky bird with a dark, straight, medium sized bill. Adult males have a long, deeply forked tail. Females and immatures have a shortish tail that is just slightly longer than their folded wings. This birds wings are narrow and look something like a saber. Adult males are green above with white on their chests, with grey-green flanks and belly. The black Gorget, (belly), shows Ruby Red in the sunlight. The plumage of the adult females and immatures is a bronzy green above and



LINDA SULLIVAN

white below. The females show white in their tails. Ruby-throated's and Black-chinned Hummingbirds that breed further west are almost identical but Ruby-throateds average shorter bills and longer tails and females are brighter colored. These two species are best separated by the shape of their wingtips.

**Behavior:** This species loves the nectar from orange and red tubular flowers but will also feed on flying insects and snatch spiders from their webs. The Ruby-throated come easily to artificial feeders. It likes a high perch on exposed branches but may also perch lower down when the weather turns wet. Ruby-throateds are aggressive, like most other hummers, and will defend a nectar source. When hovering these birds sometimes flutter their tails.

**Vocalizations** Its call is a terse, but soft, "spit". When chasing another the call is a rapid stuttering, "zzzzzzzz chikaachikaachikaaa."

**Attracting Hummingbirds to your residence:** A number of my friends and customers have purchased artificial feeders and hung them around their houses. They are readily available at pet and feed stores as well as on the web. Some folks had luck the very first spring they put them up, with others it took more than a season. One thing you must do is fill them frequently but also try to keep them clean. A final note: I searched the web for the total number of this species and found that different web sites had quite different numbers. From a low of 325 to a high of 356 species of hummingbirds extant in the Americas. Whatever the true number may be is not relevant to most. Being in the presence of just one individual of this extraordinary bird family is for many of us an experience to be treasured.

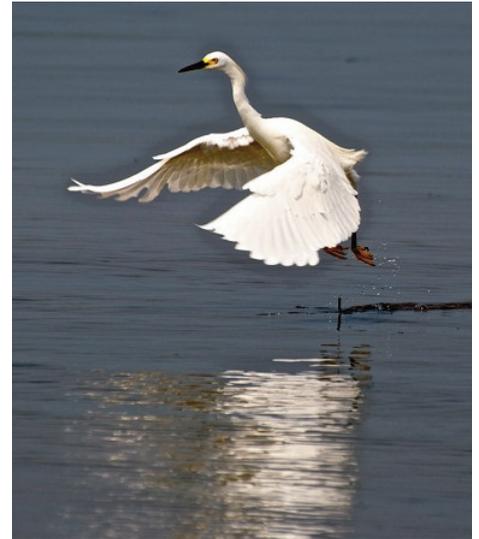


## From the field...

### *black bill and golden slippers*

The walk scheduled for Pikes Beach on Dune Road on July 23rd, proceeded on down the road and went to Cupsogue. There were reports of more birds there. On the rising tide we walked over to the islands looking for shore birds. It ended up as a pretty good day, over 24 species including several Black Terns, lots of Skimmers that allowed us to get quite close to them. And, the highlight for Byron Young who took these photos was observing this Snowy Egret show us how he caught fish. Flying in, it then proceeded to dance on the water to attract the fish, shading the water with its wings. It was quite a show that Byron captured. In many of the photos you can see the golden slippers that is one of the distinguishing features of the Snowy Egret.

Thanks Byron, for sharing these photos. Seeing the photos gives you a chance to really see the egret's behavior.



# Feeder Survey

## John McNeil

The Survey will be conducted the first full 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.

### There are three ways to participate:

#### 1. Mail the survey to:

**Feeder Survey c/o John McNeil**  
168 Lexington Road  
Shirley, NY 11967

#### 2. Send your information via the internet

go to:  
[easternlongislandaudubon.org](http://easternlongislandaudubon.org)  
and

- 1) Click on: Chapter Projects
- 2) Click on: Feeder Statistics
- 3) Click on: To submit via the internet and follow the prompts

#### 3. Email the results to: [birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com)

### Survey Dates:

**Sun., Oct. 4 to Sun., Oct. 11**

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:

**Sun., Nov. 2 to Sun., Nov. 9**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mourning Dove
- \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Cardinal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Jay
- \_\_\_\_\_ House Finch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black-capped Chickadee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tufted Titmouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ White-throated Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dark-eyed Junco
- \_\_\_\_\_ House Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ White-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Song Sparrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Crow
- \_\_\_\_\_ European Starling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Common Grackle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Carolina Wren
- \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Mockingbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Goldfinch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-winged Blackbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Common Flicker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rufous-sided Towhee
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Robin
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brown-headed Cowbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gray Catbird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- \_\_\_\_\_ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_





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## Chapter Renewal & 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 important updates and program updates. Although we try not to cancel or change event dates and times, it does happen. This list is not shared.*

Make check payable to:

**Eastern Long Island Audubon Society**

and mail to:

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# The **OSP**REY

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**Please check the date on your label.**

**If your membership is about to expire please use the membership/renewal form on page 11 to keep your membership current.**

**This issue is also sent to National Audubon Society members to let you know about your local club. We hope you enjoy the issue and consider attending walks, lectures and the annual dinner.**

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## Mark Your Calendars

Sat., Sept. 10

**Field Trip: Terrell River County Park**

Carl Starace, leader, see page 3

Mon., Sept 12

**Nature Program**

Visiting Jamaica with Eric Salzman, see page 2

Sat, Sept 17

**Field Trip**

Fire Island Hawk Watch & the East End of Robert Moses

John McNeil, leader, see page 3

Sat, Sept 24

**Field Trip: Smith Point County Park,**

Carl Starace, leader, see page 4

Sat, Oct. 1

**Field Trip: Quogue Wildlife Refuge,**

Gigi Spates, leader, see page 4

Mon., Oct. 3

**Nature Program: Ghost Bird see page 2**

Wed., Oct. 19

**Dinner Celebration beginning at 6 pm at The Vineyards**

in Aquebogue, see page 1

Sat, Oct. 22

**Field Trip: Dune Road, Shinnecock to Moriches Inlet**

Sat, Nov. 5

**Field Trip: Smith Point County Park, Carl Starace, leader**

Sat., Nov. 12th

**Field Trip: Jones Beach & Point Lookout, John McNeil, leader**

**More Nov. field trips are listed on page 4**

If there are any changes in programming, it will be announced on the website and on Facebook. If you are on our email list you will receive an email reminders and any last minute program changes.

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