



THE OSPREY

May/June 2019 — Vol. XLIV, No. 3

PHOTOS: BYRON YOUNG



Return of Our Osprey!

Aaron Virgin
Vice President
Group for the East End

On a recent seal watching cruise co-hosted with Atlantic Marine Conservation Society and Group for the East End, an attendee called out, **Bald Eagle!** moments before we docked at the Marine Science Center on Old Fort Pond in Southampton. Close, but it was in fact an Osprey, and likely a male bird that recently flew back from its winter haunt in Venezuela or northern Brazil, where nearly all of Long Island’s Osprey overwinter. While we checked out the bird – affectionately referred to as a “Fish Hawk” due to their near total diet of fish – I noticed it was on a nest pole that the Group for the East End (then Group for the South Fork) had put in place on the Shinnecock Reservation back in the late 1980s. Since that time the Group has placed more than 225 Osprey poles and platforms across the East End, while during these 30-plus years repairing existing ones, as needed.

For everyone on board the R/V Paumanok (one of SUNY Stony Brook’s marine

science research vessels), this was the first Osprey encountered for the season. Being that it was also St. Patrick’s Day, we all felt a little lucky to have seen our first on March 17th. What initially seemed a little late for many of our returning birds was made up in no time, as within the following two weeks nearly every nest I saw had at least one or two or even a third “interloper” in the vicinity. Without question, we are experiencing the largest concentration of Osprey in our region within the past 120 years.

Since 2014, Group for the East End staff, volunteers, and a network of partner organizations have scoured eastern Long Island to monitor known and to find new Osprey nests. The goal is to determine overall annual productivity. Last year was the fifth year and the findings are interesting.

Of the 420 potential Osprey nest sites visited in 2018, nearly ¾ were occupied. Over the five-year span, activity increased from 198 to 301 sites – a 50% increase! The number of young more than doubled – 223 in 2014 to 479 in 2018 – with a corresponding productivity increase of

71%. We also witnessed the number of nests in trees double (13 in 2014 to 26 in 2018) and also double on utility poles (16 in 2014 to 32 in 2018). The former is a return to the species past, while the latter has become problematic for PSEG Long Island. So much so that the utility company has a carpenter on staff that built a dozen platforms and perches, many of which can be found across the East End just in time for the 2019 breeding season.

So why the recent increase and is it

Continued on Page 7

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Joy of Birding

Byron Young

What is better than a glorious early March day teasing us with spring thoughts, several small bags of birdseed, the friendly birds of the Morton Wildlife Refuge and an intrepid group of birders. The weather for our Annual Morton Wildlife Refuge walk turned out bright and clear, maybe a bit chilly to start but the sun soon made for nicer conditions. Our birders ranged in age from 3 to I did not ask, nor am I willing to guess, let me just say experienced. There was one younger birder but I do not think the baby shared our enthusiasm all bundled up against the morning chill.

The highlight of the morning occurred while waiting for folks to gather in the parking lot. The little girl was excited to see the Chickadees and Tufted Titmouse flying about checking us out for their morning food supply. After placing a few sunflower seeds in her small hand it did not take long for a Chickadee to attempt to land on her hand. The squeal of delight as this little girl and bird interacted was exactly the reaction her parents wanted from the walk and a delight for everyone else.

Now, the bird did not get a chance to land on the little girl's hand because she was so surprised by the bird that the seeds went flying and the bird retreated.

However, neither was dissuaded from the mission and the little girl and bird kept trying. As with most three-year-olds, patience and remaining still was the key missing ingredients.

Once the group was gathered we proceeded along the trail toward the beach. Many of us who have visited the Refuge over the years were taken aback by the massive clearing of under-story vegetation along the early portions of the walk. The clearing, according to the signage was to remove an invasive species called "Mile-a-Minute". Hopefully this clearing will help control the invasive plants and allow the native plants to take a foothold and provide cover for the birds.

We made our way along the trail, through the cedars and over to the beach viewing platform. We lingered there for quite some time, searching Great Peconic Bay for birds and enjoying the sunshine. Some of the group even searched the beach for treasures (sea shells and egg cases).

Everyone was enjoying the Chickadees, and Tufted Titmice that appeared to gather seeds from an outstretched hand. Beyond that the Cardinals would call from the brush and swoop in for any seeds that had fallen to the ground. Occasionally, a White-breasted Nuthatch or two would gather around us and think about gathering a seed or two from an outstretched hand. Meanwhile the flock of White-throated Sparrows searched

the ground for wayward seeds and other goodies.

The young girl and her parents enjoyed their time with us, watching birds from up-close and interacting with them over a handful of seed. It is important to note, that it was not just the young but also the young-at-heart that enjoyed this day interacting with the birds at Morton. It is a wonderful place for new or even seasoned birders to enjoy interacting with wintering birds that have become conditioned to come to hand for a free meal offering an up close encounter with Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, an occasional White-breast Nuthatch, or Downy Woodpecker. Cardinals are often close but rarely come to hand. Turkeys while not viewed on this day occasionally will come in close to pick up seed from the ground or your hand.

For anyone who has not experienced the Morton Wildlife Refuge, I would urge you make a trip to this wonderful Refuge and enjoy an encounter with the local birds and other wildlife that call the Refuge home.



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May & June Meetings

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2019 AT 7:15 PM

San Diego County: From the Ocean Over the Mountains to the Desert

Gail Delalla

Five hundred and forty bird species have been reported in San Diego County. We will explore the wide diversity of habitats from the Pacific Ocean to the Colorado Desert and view some of the representative species found in this premier birding county.

Gail DeLalla lives in San Diego County but spends two to three months a year on Long Island. She taught biology as an adjunct faculty member at California State University, East Bay for many years, and enjoys discovering the ecological relationships between plants and birds.



*Allen's Hummingbird (top) and Burrowing Owl
Photos by Gail Delalla*

MONDAY, JUNE 3 AT 7:00 PM

Family Nature Night with Ranger Eric

Eric Powers

Join Ranger Eric for a fun and lively animal show, stories from the field, and adventures with wildlife...all with the backdrop of beautiful Quogue Wildlife Refuge. A special program sponsored by Eastern LI Audubon Society. Participants are encouraged to bring a wildlife artifact to share (feather, nest, egg, etc) as part of the presentation! Fun for all ages. Watch Ranger Eric beforehand on his TV Show "Off The Trail" at www.MyNHTV.com. Weather permitting this will be outside by the side of the Old Ice Pond. Bring the kids, bring your own chairs and bug spray.

Among his innovative projects and an episode on the TV series, he has headed a program to release Quails, natural predators of ticks and releases them in wildlife areas to control local tick populations. Watch the episode that describes raising a brood of quails from eggs to release them just to control ticks..



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



Fairy Dell, Let the Magic Begin

Sally Newbert

We have been given a gift. The Fairy Dell Boardwalk which is just on the other side of the road from the Nature Center at Quogue Wildlife Refuge has been reconstructed. Look through the entrance gate and take a few steps into a world that is usually inaccessible to us humans. A walk through the marsh has become a reality. As the season progresses the Osprey should be arriving. The birds should start feeding on the mud flats that can be seen from the end of one of the boardwalks, and, I am sure, Red-wing Blackbirds will be singing away and protecting their territory in the phragmites. Perhaps a walk during warbler migration will yield some results.

As you walk along enjoy the sturdy feel of the composite wood boardwalk underfoot. The old wooden boardwalk had rotted out and suffered its final blows from Super Storm Sandy. The new boardwalk has been rebuilt with a grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation and monies raised by Quogue Wildlife Refuge. It will give the community access to the previously inaccessible area of the Refuge along Quantuck Creek.

A few years ago a Great Horned Owl family had taken up residence in the Osprey nest that is visible from several vantage points along the walkway. The owls are not there this year, but once the Osprey return and start to raise their

family it should be fun to watch them from the many vantage points. Hopefully the pair that selects that nest will not mind the foot traffic on the walkway. There should be enough marsh between the nest and the people to keep them comfortable. We will see.

So, go, take a walk and enjoy. There are signs placed along the walkway that will give you a taste of history, tell you how Quogue got its name, why this was a favorite place to propose and a variety of other facts.



Spring Walks

Saturday, May 4 @ 7:30 am

Rocky Point DEC Property (Area 26)

Leader: Bob Adamo

Join Bob Adamo as he leads this quest for some of our "Flying Friends" on The Global Big Day. 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 turnoff is just after the intersections of first, Randall Rd. and then, Ridge Rd. Coming from the west, the parking lot is the second one you come to after having turned onto the bypass from Route 25A just a tad past McDonalds. Any questions, call or email Bob at radamao4691@gmail.com or call (631) 905-7360 cell, (631) 369-1958 home.

Rain date is Sunday, May 5.

Sunday, May 5 @ 9 am

Barrier Beach Birding (Smith Point to the new Old Inlet)

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

Shorebirds, sea ducks, loons, cormorants, terns, gulls, hummingbirds and an occasional warbler all pass through and along the shores of the old Great South Beach, today known as Fire Island. This will be a 3 mile round-trip walk on sand down to the New Inlet where the Old Inlet used to be. Park on the County side of Smith Pt. as far west in the parking lot as you can, then walk through the fence opening over to the federal side of Smith Pt., and meet at the top of the 2-story visitor center. Call MaryLaura Lamont at (631) 399-2030 for details.

Saturday, May 11 @ 9 am

International Migratory Bird Day Walk at the William Floyd Estate

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

The 613 acre William Floyd Estate bordering Moriches Bay is a magnet for migratory songbirds, many of which are in steep decline. Neotropical species, such as vireos, thrush, grosbeaks and warblers and many shorebirds should all be found on this 3-mile round-trip walk through the varied habitats of field, woods, creeks and marshlands. The Estate is located at 245 Park Drive, Mastic Beach. Call MaryLaura Lamont at (631) 399-2030 for info.



Sunday, May 12 – Special time instructions

Central Park

Leader: Katie Kleinpeter

We will explore The Ramble, a destination not to be missed during spring migration and other areas of Central Park. Join Katie on the LIRR train leaving from the Ronkonkoma train station at 5:35 am. or meet her in the city at West 72nd and Central Park West at 7:30 am. 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 pm train home, but you can leave earlier or stay longer if you wish! 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.

Friday, May 17 @ 8 am

Manorville Hills County Park

Leader: 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. For additional details contact Byron at 631-294-9612 or email at youngb53@optimum.net.

Saturday, May 18 @ 9 am

Hallockville Museum Farm & Hallock State Park Bird Walk

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

Sparrows, wood warblers, orioles, vireos, and grosbeaks can all be found in the fields, woods and pond of these two attached parcels of land, bordering Long Island Sound. It is a good "resting and refueling" spot for birds of all kinds before they take off over the wide Sound to their northern breeding grounds. Meet at the Farm Museum parking lot. The \$8.00 fee goes towards the educational programs of Hallockville Museum Farm. Call (631) 298-5292 to register or for details.

Sunday, May 19 @ 8 am

Hunters Garden

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, Gnat catchers, 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.

Tuesday, May 21 @ 7:30 am

Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Meet in the parking lot of the Refuge. We will 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.

Saturday, June 1 @ 8 am

Eric Salzman Memorial Walk South Fork Natural History Museum

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

Eileen Schwinn

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.

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. 🐦

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While you are on the website, sign up for our Constant Contact email list —

(If you are a member you are probably already on it.)



Saturday, May 4 is Global Big Day

It's that time of year again! The Global Big Day is coming. Your contributions to the past four Global Big Days have set repeated world records for the most bird species seen in a single day!

Last year's Global Big Day featured more than 30,000 people across 171 countries, collectively reporting 7,026 species of birds—about two-thirds of the world's bird species in a single day! This May, you can be a part of the fun. All you have to do is spend a few minutes birding, and eBird what you find.

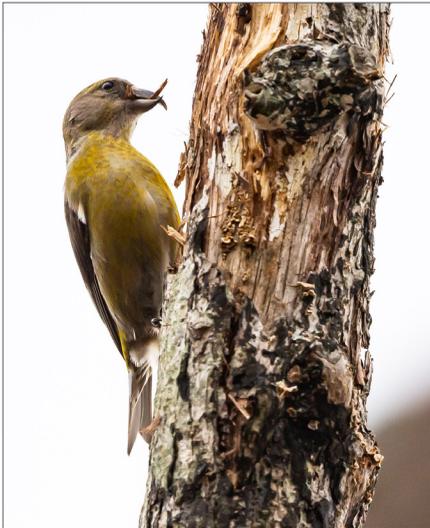
Here are three quick ways to have the most fun:

🐦 "Scout" your birding spots for 4 May. Finding where the birds are ahead of time makes the big day birding more fun, and also gives you more chances to be out enjoying birds. Perfect. Learn how to use eBird to find birds.

🐦 Use eBird Mobile. eBird's free data-entry app takes the time out of data entry, with tools like Quick Entry that mean you have less time with your face in a notebook and more time birding. Try eBird Mobile.

🐦 Get a friend involved. Perhaps this is a good birding buddy, or someone who has never been birding before. Make it a friendly competition, or join forces as a Global Big Day team. Discover new birds, and make sure that your familiar species are noted. Share on social media using #GlobalBigDay.

No matter what you do, have a great time, enjoy the birds around you, and let us know what you find! We're excited to see what we can achieve together on Global Big Day. 🐦



Female (left) is a yellowish olive, the male is an orange red. Photos courtesy of Janis Hurley

Red Crossbills

Did you go see them?

Sally Newbert

The reports started to come in at the end of March that a small flock of Red Crossbills had been seen along the Paumanok Trail near Jones Pond in Manorville. This location was certainly new to most birders but ebird alerts had put the info out there and the birders came. On Saturday, March 30th Rosemary Valente and I ventured out to find the trail. Some birders were already there and pointed out the spot the birds had been seen. A steady stream of birders followed.

This is an usual species. The name describes its most unusual asset, the beak, as you can see in the pictures, taken by Janis Hurley, the beak is crossed. This enables the bird to eat the seeds from pine cones. These Jones Pond birds chose a location that had an area of burnt out pine trees on one side of the path and live pine trees on the other side. The live, mostly pine forest, it is the Pine Barrens after all, continued as you walked further down the path. It seemed that the birds were feeding on the pines cones still hanging on the burnt out trees, it was interesting to see that they could still

find the pine seeds in the burnt cones. The burnt area was just beginning to make a come-back so it provided a relatively clear area next to the pine forest that was attractive to other birds also. Bluebirds, Pine Warblers and Pine Siskins and even a Yellow-throated Warbler were reported in the area.

The Crossbills are part of the finch family and generally speaking this species is only here on irruptive years when the pine crops north of us are failing. Things get a bit more complicated with this species and research has shown that there may be as many as nine different types of Red Crossbills identifiable only by their calls.

At least one female was been seen carrying nesting material, raising hopes that these birds will stay and nest here. If they do, and if you go, try to record them (they seemed quite noisy when I was there). Cornell would love to have your recording. To accomplish that on an iphone look for voice memo and it will record the bird and be in a format you can send to ebird. (I just learned that, so I thought I would pass it along.)

Good birding to all of you! 🐦

Return of Our Osprey!

Continued from Page 1

sustainable? First, a closer look at the Osprey diet is warranted. As noted, the diet is nearly entirely made up of fish. This can be fish of fresh or salt water. However, when Osprey return in March it coincides with the return of a migratory fish called Menhaden or “bunker”. This relatively small, oily fish has a strong history on the East End during the last century, as large schools of Menhaden were caught, ground up and used for fertilizer, pet food, and most recently for fish oil dietary supplements.

In 2012, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission recommended a tightening on the daily allowable catch of Menhaden, as the eastern seaboard population was experiencing a precipitous decline. The result has been a noticeable increase in marine life – whales, sharks, seals, and several species of birds, including Osprey. Why Menhaden are so important to the marine ecosystem (and to Osprey)? They are a prey fish for a variety of larger predator fish, e.g. Weakfish, Bluefish, Striped Bass. Those fish then become prey for other marine life and as spring turns into summer, Osprey begin catching a variety of these larger fish. Simple math – more fish results in more fish hawks.

However, would a sudden drop in prey fish be the only reason for a decrease in Osprey numbers? This is too soon to call, but with Bald Eagles now nesting in no fewer than 10 locations in Suffolk County, an “equalizer” may be in the Osprey’s future. Where the two species coexist in large numbers they often keep each other’s populations in check. This is due to competition over prey and nest sites, as well as nest predation of Osprey by Eagles. Only time will tell, but the Group’s next five years of monitoring Osprey and now Bald Eagles will help chronicle the story.

If you would like to become an “Osprey Groupie” and help monitor nesting Osprey this season, please contact Aaron Virgin at acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org or 631-377-1303 (mobile). Training is available and volunteers can monitor one site or a dozen or more sites. 🐦

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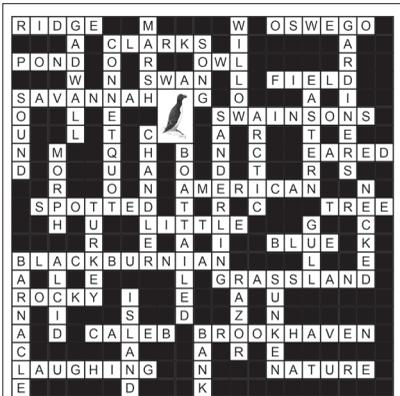
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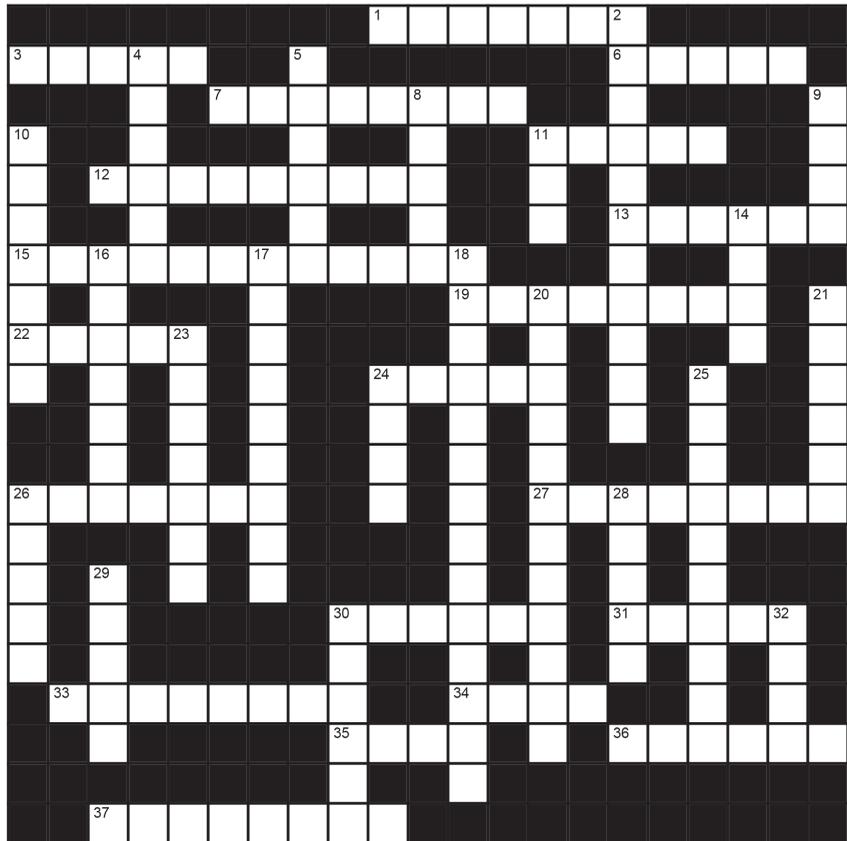
Our mission is to be an inspiration to those who feel a sense of kinship with Long Island by encouraging an appreciation for the natural world and a commitment to the environment.

Some Winter Rarities & Placesto Bird

Answers to March/April puzzle by Tom Moran



RECENTS & WARBLERS Tom Moran



Across

- 1 _____ Grosbeak, seen at Riverside Park this winter
- 3 _____ not a Downy
- 6 _____ Tern, not a Caspian
- 7 _____ Warbler occasional May/June visitor, 2012 Rocky Pt DEC
- 11 See 4 Down, builder
- 12 _____ Hawk
- 13 Warbler with a black cowl encircling head and throat
- 15 Warbler, usually a May/June visitor but was seen in Dec 2017 at 23 Downs Farm Preserve
- 19 _____ Starling.
- 22 _____ Point DEC.
- 24 _____ Smith SP.
- 26 A dabbling duck
- 27 _____ State Park Preserve (plural), try for Blue-winged Warbler here
- 30 _____ Warbler, seen at North Fork Preserve last May
- 31 _____ Sparrow, rufous wings and flanks...
- 33 National Wildlife Refuge, Shirley NY
- 34 American _____ Sparrow
- 35 _____ Swan
- 36 _____ Meadow SP
- 37 _____ Vireo

Down

- 2 Summer sparrow in the Calverton grasslands
- 4 See 11 Across
- 5 _____ Bunting, or a plant popular to color cloth deep blue
- 8 _____ Waxwing
- 9 Alley _____ Park, good warbler location in Queens
- 10 _____ Hawk, or a barrel maker
- 11 _____ Gull, western, small headed
- 14 _____ Rd, Cupsogue at one end Shinnecock at the other
- 16 _____ Oriole, the more reddish one
- 17 _____ Warbler, Dolly Parton fan
- 18 _____ Chat, Cocheron Park, Dec. 2017
- 20 _____ Hummingbird (2 words)
- 21 Many of the "first birds of spring"
- 23 See 15 Across
- 24 _____ May Warbler
- 25 _____ National Laboratory, good place to bird but restricted access
- 26 Red-necked _____ seen this winter at Shinnecock Inlet, it's the bird with the PBR
- 28 _____ Sandpiper or Tern.
- 29 _____ Beach, West End 3 is the place to be!
- 30 _____ Yellow-throat, warbler with black mask
- 32 _____ Siskin or Warbler

New York Breeding Bird Atlas III Update

**By Kathryn Schneider, Co-chair,
NY BBA III Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee for New York's third Breeding Bird Atlas has been meeting since 2015 to fund, organize, and plan our next bird atlas. This project will provide a five-year snapshot of the distribution and abundance of breeding birds in New York State with field work set to begin in 2020. The committee is excited to announce that Julie Hart has been hired to fill the position of Atlas Project Coordinator. Julie beat out an outstanding field of nearly 80 applicants who sought this position. She impressed the Search Committee with her combination of scientific training, field work, large-scale citizen science, and project management experience. Some New York birders will remember Julie from the years she spent in New York working on the Important Bird Areas program with Audubon New York. During this time, she was based at the Cornell Lab where she had the opportunity to work on eBird during its development. From 2007 to 2009 Julie was a Conservation Biologist for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. In this position she recruited, trained, and organized more than 150 volunteers for Mountain Birdwatch, a project that monitors high-elevation birds in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Julie has

participated in bird atlases in Vermont and Connecticut and she has trained volunteers to use eBird. Her most recent position as a Database Manager for Yale's Map of Life project involved managing large datasets not unlike those generated by a bird atlas.

Julie hit the ground running and attended her first Steering Committee meeting after only four days on the job. She will work in DEC offices in Albany as a part of the staff of the New York Natural Heritage Program and she will be officially supervised by Matt Schlesinger, Co-chair of the NY BBA III Steering Committee.

Everyone on our committee is delighted to have an individual on the team whose sole responsibility is the management and coordination of the atlas project, but we all know that the success of a project as large, complex, collaborative, and long term as our state atlas depends first and foremost on large numbers of skilled volunteers to gather the data. In the coming year we will be asking birders to commit to field surveys using atlas methodology. We are relying on you to get involved! We will want you to go places that you've never been before, and we will need you to watch and document the birds you see in new and different ways. Are you up to the challenge? 🐦

Peent!

Peent!

Whip-poor-will!

Whip-poor-will!

Sally Newbert

There are a few birds that you are extremely unlikely to see, so just hearing them has to count on your bird list. Among them – the American Woodcock who can be heard calling on springtime evenings just as the sun sets. If you can find just the right kind of field, hang out there as the sun sets and see if you hear the distinctive *Peent, Peent* call of the Woodcock. If you are lucky you will see a bird take off, fly into the sky and spiral back down, to land, in all probability where you will not see it. Poxabogue County Park in Bridgehampton is one place the Woodcock can be found.

A little later in the season, the Whip-poor will is another bird that is so well disguised he is almost impossible to detect, the only way you will know he is there is to here his calls from the thick brush that he prefers. 🐦

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Long Island Natural History Conference March 22-23, 2019

By Kathleen Heenan

Ah! This is right up my alley – an email alerting me to a two-day nature conference at Brookhaven Lab. The purpose of this seven-year-old annual conference, organized by www.longislandnature.org, is “to exchange current information for researchers, natural resource managers, students, naturalists in various aspects of applied field biology (freshwater, marine and terrestrial) and natural history”. The two page listing of talks ran the gamut from birds, odonates (damselflies and dragonflies), sharks, ferns, monarch butterflies and climate change and the coast. And it was open to the general public. As a part time resident of Remsenburg, I always want to know more about this interesting and beautiful area. I signed up for the conference knowing my husband’s attention would be focused on March Madness those two days. *Perfect!*

Tim Green, environmental compliance manager at the Lab, welcomed us and gave us a heads up on the 20-mile speed limit on the property. His technology expertise was needed with all the power point presentations. He kept track of the speakers’ time limits and monitored the Q and A.

First up was Chip Hamilton from NYSDEC speaking about Wild Turkeys on the East End. In the 1990’s Turkeys were re-introduced to Long Island by bringing upstate NY turkeys to Hither Hills and the Smith Point / Wm. Floyd corridor. Our area is a good habitat for turkeys with its large oak trees and pine trees for nesting. The North Shore has large estates with manicured lawns and forest to field laid out, which are ideal for Turkeys to forage for food, breed and nest and walk (they can travel up to eight miles in a day). Turkeys are a very social birds with high-level communications systems. They travel in groups and have flourished as have the number of complaints from farmers and vineyard owners (“The Turkeys are tearing open my fertilizer bags/feed

bags.”). Chip and his team investigate the complaints. Sometimes they find the culprit is a raccoon, but if it is a Turkey, it is relocated. The locals call in (“A turkey is chasing a six year old down the block”; “they’re at my bird feeder”). A standoff approach is suggested – “I’m bigger than you and I’m not going to move.” One woman kept them off her property by conducting a two-week campaign of harassment when they wandered onto her property. There was lots of shoeing, screaming, and banging of pots and pans. Soon the turkeys got the message they were not wanted. It’s never easy for man and animals to live together.

A fall hunting season was initiated to help cull the population. There has also been a Spring Hunt Weekend since 2011 open to licensed junior hunters age 12-15 years – each supervised by an adult. When winter is mild and spring is warm the Turkey population thrives. But snowy winters (hard to find food) and cold wet springs (turkey’s thermal apparatus is not good) are bad for them.

Overall in NYS there has been a ten-year decline in the Turkey population, based on spring and fall bow hunter sighting logs. Chip and his group take their Turkey management seriously and are pleased at their local success.

My husband and Chip recommend the 2013 movie *The Life Of a Turkey* shown on PBS. Furthermore, Chip agrees with Ben Franklin that this hard working creature should be our national bird.

Odonate – Damselflies and Dragonflies with their two slightly different sets of membranous wings were the subject of a presentation by Erin White, a zoologist for the New York Natural Heritage Program. Long Island has a diversity of these flying predator insects,



Wild Turkey, as Audubon drew it, re-introduced, it is once again roaming the East End of Long Island.

including several rare varieties

Erin explained the differences and similarities of the two types of insects. A NYS Damselfly and Dragonfly Survey from 2005-2009 identified over 2,000 known sites in our state and 195 odonate species. Citizen scientist, volunteers, in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy, did the work. The endangered endemic species on Long Island, the Pine Barren Bluet, the Little Bluet and Scarlet Bluet, were found at more ponds than previously. Our pine barrens constitute a significant habitat for these insects with native vegetation, seasonal variations, normal ponds, green belt ponds, and brackish and saltwater marshes. In addition, the species are indicators of water quality, biodiversity and ecological changes. If you Google NY Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey 2005-2009 there are wonderful photos of these creatures and of the volunteers.

Don Riepe, a well-known Jamaica Bay ranger and director of the NE American Littoral Society spoke about the Barn Owls he knew and loved at Jamaica Bay. When he was nine years old living in Ozone Park Queens and a member of the notorious “Rawhide Gang” they rode their bikes to Jamaica Bay looking for adventure. And they found

it when they spied a Barn Owl inside an old Department of Sanitation incinerator building. They took him home and after a few unsuccessful attempts to feed him, including with a pigeon, they set him free.

According to Don, Barn Owls flourish at Jamaica Bay because of all the owl boxes he has put up as head ranger for twenty-five years. He is doing penance for his misguided youthful encounter with "the most beautiful of all birds" with its heart shaped face, white, blue and brown feathers and a docile personality. It has long legs so it can hunt for voles in the grasslands. Don has banded over 200 of these birds, but has had little or no feedback from birders and others on their fates. That can be good or bad news.

Barn Owls can be seen at the 25 nesting boxes at Jamaica Bay, in old abandoned buildings at Floyd Bennett Field and at Shirley Chisholm State Park. They are in danger near JFK where they fly low over the former 45-acre salt marsh. Aircraft hit them and a shooting program also takes them out. Don's last slide was a Barn Owl nestled in the wheel well of a jetliner.

Program Note: Best time to visit Jamaica Bay is in May, Don Riepe reports.

Just before lunch we heard from Kevin McAllister, President of Defend H₂O. It was a scary talk about our coastline and climate change. Are we literally living on the edge? With facts, slides and charts Kevin showed us the changes in the coastline. Wave energy from powerful storms affects the shapes of beaches, forming sand bars and berms, plateau beaches and new inlets, i.e. Bellport. He spoke of man's effort to stop the loss of beaches by building groins and jetties. We saw a slide of a sea wall protecting a home in Montauk that was very close to the edge of the sea. Why not move the house back, Kevin suggested. Officials in Bridgehampton/Sagaponock are pumping 1.1 million cubic yards of sediment from a mile out in the ocean to replenish their beaches. Quogue has proposed to do the same. The cost is enormous and may have to be repeated in five years. But it is uncertain whether creating these potholes in the ocean floor may simply cause dead zones in the ocean.

Sea levels are rising and expected to rise 2"-10" in the coming decades. Flooding is tidal on Dune Rd. in East Quogue. We saw

a slide of a flooded Dune Rd. on a sunny day with no rain. The rising ocean tide is bringing salt water into fresh and brackish water. There is an impact on sewage, trees, flora and fauna from subterranean flooding.

Time ran out but Kevin's final question was could we create "a living shoreline as the Shinnecock Indians did"?

After a lunch break, Dr. Janet Nye from Stony Brook University spoke on climate change and global warming impacts on marine fish distribution. Dr. Nye has been monitoring the rising ocean temperatures and tracking species of fish that have disappeared and those that are new to our area. She noted that 2012 was not only our warmest summer, but also Sandy hit us. Now beaches are open two weeks past Labor Day. Summer is now one month longer in Maine and two weeks longer in New England. It is not an anomaly that sea temperatures have turned warmer.

This warming trend has some local fish moving north and they have not returned. She gave several examples. Yellowtail flounder, a bottom feeder, was last seen here in 1973. It was over-fished in our region. It recovered, but only in the north. Silver-hake once abundant locally is now fished in Maine. Fisherman once caught Atlantic mackerel here but now only north of here. The Atlantic cod market collapsed in 2014 and the winter flounder market collapsed in the 1990s.

Next, we heard from Dorothy Peteet a senior scientist at NASA/Goddard Institute of Space Studies about how Jamaica Bay marshes are archives of vegetation, sediment and pollution history in NYC. Because of a delicious heavy lunch my notes are not so complete. So bear with me: The Bay has changed over the past 100 years because of pollution i.e. treatment plants, use of zinc, nitrogen etc. Accretion rate and sediment flux has caused a decline in trees, and loss of mineral matter leading to fragmentation and loss of healthy marshes.

Polly Weigand of the Central Pine Barrens Commission reported on groundwater protection, ecosystem protection and landscape. The invasive Southern Pine Beetles are an emerging threat at Sarnoff Barrens Preserve, Rocky

Point and Eastport.

Tobey Curtis from SOFO White Shark Research and Education program spoke on the sharks increasing their range across the North Atlantic and the available food: seals.

John Wernet, NYSDEC reported on the three threats to our local trees. Gypsy Moths were accidentally introduced by silk makers. Treatment is to put a burlap sack or heavy tape around the trunk. Oak Wilt, is a fungus that started in WI and is known to attack all oak trees. It has been in Nassau County, but not here. Leaves turn red and drop. Do not prune in early spring and summer for fear the fungus will spread. Southern Pine Beetle has not gone away but has decreased in numbers. East Quogue has lost many trees. At Harry's Hollow Pine Barrens State Forest suppression and thinning the forest has worked.

Carl Lobule, senior marine scientist at TNC, spoke about Menhaden, sometimes called bunker fish. It is an important food for striped bass, weakfish, bluefish, whales and dolphins as well as terns and Osprey. Their marine habitat is about three miles off NYC. It is the largest fishing haven in the Atlantic Ocean. This area was not regulated until 2012. The new regulation initially helped to keep the fish population viable and balanced. However since then, the regulated quotas have been increased three times. Lobule believes there are not now enough of these fish in this area for the fish that feed on them. He advocates tighter regulations in NYS. Google Menhaden and Carl Lobule to learn about the problems in NYS waters.

The day was over and we rushed to our cars. I will report on the second day in the next ELIAS newsletter. Highlights were a very entertaining presentation on the hatching and life stages of the Monarch Butterfly video taped on John Potente's i-phone and an update on the removal of the many dams (built for cranberry bogs and grist mills) on LI that impede the sea to fresh water migration of the glass eel, sea trout and river herring. 

The **OSPREY**

Published by
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 206
East Quogue, NY 11942-0206

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Membership & Feeder Stats:
John McNeil 631-281-2623

Field Trips: Eileen Schwinn 631-728-8342

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Conservation & Bluebird Restoration:
Gigi Spates 631-765-1436

Education: Evelyn Voulgarelis 631-727-0417
and Suzi Stewart 516-443-4906

Newsletter Editor & Publicity:
Sally Newbert 631-281-6001
eliasosprey@optonline.net

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