



# The OSPREY

July/August 2009 — Vol. XXXIV No. 4

## FIELD TRIPS John McNeil

### Saturday, July 25, 2009/8:00 am **PIKES BEACH, DUNE ROAD** **Westhampton Dunes**

**Trip Leader: Eileen Schwinn**

Let's catch the early shorebird migrants as they move through our area on their way South! Meet with trip leader, Eileen Schwinn, at Pikes Beach (Dune Road in Westhampton Dunes) at 8 am, and look for American Oystercatchers, various sandpipers, plovers, and other shorebirds. We'll keep our eyes peeled for various sparrows as well. On this field trip, ELIAS members will be joined by participants of a birding program offered by The Parrish Art Museum, Town of Southampton. Temporary Parking Passes will be provided. Please contact your trip leader at 516-662-7751 for more information.

### Saturday, August 15, 2009/8:00 am **The Islands of Moriches Inlet**

**Trip Leader: John McNeil**

This trip is always a big hit with our members; we will catch the wave of shorebirds as they pass our area on their migration along the south shore of Long Island. We will meet at the parking lot of Cupsogue Beach County Park at 8 am and walk on the flats to the accessible islands. We will spend the morning birding the islands off the inlet. Low tide is at 8:14 am at Moriches Inlet, this means we will have an incoming tide bringing the birds closer to our view. For more details, contact your trip leader John McNeil at 631-281-2623 at home or on the day of the field trip, my mobile telephone is 631-219-8947. Be prepared to get your feet wet!

### Saturday, August 29, 2009 8:30 am meeting at CR 51 or 9 am at The Sanctuary

### **The Baiting Hollow** **Hummingbird Sanctuary**

**Trip Leader: John McNeil**

Come join your trip leader John McNeil for a half-day birding trip to "The Baiting Hollow Hummingbird Sanctuary." We will be there from 9 am to 1 pm. Details of the Sanctuary can be found on the following web site: [www.li-hummer.org](http://www.li-hummer.org). Don't forget to bring your camera.



You can meet me at the north end of the County Center along Route 51 in Riverhead at 8:30 am or consult the web site for directions and meet at 9 am. For more details, contact your trip leader John McNeil at 631-281-2623 at home or at the day of the field trip, my cell phone is 631-219-8947.

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**Please note:**

**We try to schedule trips the first Saturday of the month and meetings the first Monday. But due to the July 4th holiday, tides and site availability dates for trips and meetings have been adjusted.**

**The Hummingbird Sanctuary is private property and is only open a few days each year. Paul Adams opens his property to the public in August after the birds are finished nesting, but still are on site. This is a really special place with beautiful views of LI Sound and a great photo opportunity.**

**Nature programs and membership meetings are held at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. (Directions are on our website.)**

**7:15 pm: Nature Chat**

**7:30 pm: Chapter News**

**8:00 pm: Speaker**

**All programs are free and open to all.**

## NATURE PROGRAMS



### Monday, July 13, 2009/7:15 pm

### **Jamie Reason, Decoy Carver**

Jamie Reason is a Long Island decoy carver. He creates shore birds and ducks using the same tools and methods of the 19th century master carvers. He will do some demonstrations and enthrall us with the history and stories of water fowl gunning along the Atlantic Flyway. He gives life to the rich traditions of the Native American carvers and will be bringing samples of his work.



### Monday, August 3, 2009/7:15 pm

### **Dennis Fleury, Rehabilitator**

Dennis Fleury is the Education Program Coordinator for the **Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons**. His informative talk will include live specimens of birds and reptiles which have been taken in and cared for by the largely voluntary staff of this important facility, located in Hampton Bays. The program will, as always, be preceded by a short Nature Chat. Refreshments will be served.



## FROM THE FIELD.

PHOTO: TOM MORAN



### William Floyd Estate May 9

Among the birds spotted on this misty mild morning were: Orchard Oriole, Yellow Warbler, Carolina Wren, Great Egret, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Barn and Tree Swallow, Common Tern, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Northern Waterthrush and Scarlet Tanager. The warblers included: Blue-winged, Orange-crowned, Parula, Magnolia, Pine, Black-throated Green, Ovenbird. Thanks to Mary-Laura Lamont for leading this trip.



### Hallockville Farm and Jamesport State Park May 16

A group joined MaryLaura on another misty, partially rainy day. We searched the hedge rows of Hallockville Farm, catching glimpses and listening for the Common Yellowthroats. Then, on to the pond behind the fields where an Eastern Kingbird was perched. Into the woods and dunes and onto one of the highest points on Long Island, Jacob's Hill, now part of the new Jamesport State Park. From there we looked out on Long Island Sound and a Common Loon (far away) and looked down as the swallows swooped by.



PHOTO: BETH GUSTIN

### Terrell River County Park- May 23, 2009

Jay Kuhlman led 11 birders through Terrell River County Park on a beautiful but breezy morning. Several warblers were seen including Magnolia, Blackpoll, Pine and Common Yellowthroat. Thanks to a couple of cooperative birds, the trip participants had some great looks at a Blue-winged Warbler (right) and Indigo Bunting. Other species seen were Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireo, and an Eastern Wood Pee-wee was heard singing in the forest. The hands-down highlight of the field trip was the adult and juvenile Great-horned Owls that gave us birders wonderful long looks as the birds perched and flew through the trees. A total of 38 species was seen. Thanks Jay!

*Beth Gustin*



### William Floyd Estate May 17

MaryLaura led another rainy trip to see if we could catch a few warblers as they made their way north. A few interns joined us in the search. The trip ended when we heard a possible Mourning Warbler hiding in the brush. Living up to its reputation, it was impossible to find. But one sharp-eyed participant did spot a Baltimore Oriole nest, with the Oriole flying back and forth with nesting material.



### Hunters Garden May 24

A flock of Cedar Waxwings arrived at Hunters Garden just about the same time we did. Landing and chattering in the tree top, they soon flew off in a chatty loose flock. As we started our hike we listened to, but could not find a Wood Thrush with its flute like call. As we continued we were able to get some pretty good looks at a Great-crested flycatcher. The highlight came when we heard and saw a Yellow-billed Cuckoo what a treat to find this bird in the deep woods. It makes birding worthwhile. Thanks to Carl Starace for the great adventure.

## Doodletown Road Bird Trip

John McNeil

**D**oodletown is the site of a former hamlet just south of Bear Mountain and north of Dunderberg Mountain. Settled in 1792, it peaked in 1945 with 300 residents. After WWII the NYS Parks Department acquired many of the homes. By 1962 the last home was vacated, and by 1965 all the homes were condemned. What is left and visible are the foundations now covered by secondary growth, mainly barberry, making it a mecca for birders to come and see and hear some summer residents that we miss here on Long Island.

Eight members of ELIAS drove the two-hours to Bear Mountain to walk up the steep inclines that once were the main road into the town. As we walked on the narrow overgrown road we did more bird hearing than looking. We could hear the songs of the Hooded and Cerulean Warblers. In the distance we could hear Eastern Wood Peewee, American Redstart, Northern Cardinal and a Red-eyed Vireo. At a small reservoir where a stream passes under the road, a Louisiana Waterthrush popped up and we all had an excellent view as it perched on a branch above the stream. Also, singing behind us a Warbling Vireo belted out its song. After



lunch, we drove over to Mine Road to see if we could get the Golden-winged Warbler. Another group of birders from NYC joined us and we all walked up and down the road stopping and listening. We did hear and see a Blue-winged Warbler, a Cerulean and Yellow Warbler. Then Tom Moran got a quick look at the white under belly and the black bib of a small bird as it flew between branches high up in the trees. We all came to the conclusion that it might have been the Golden-winged Warbler but no one else got a look at it before it left so we did not count it as a bird seen.

In all, it was a great day birding, 39 species were seen between Doodletown and Mine Road. In addition we spotted two reptiles, a copperhead and black rat snake. Green and gray tree frogs croaked the day

away to add to the choirs of songs.

Before finishing, I would personally like to thank Bob Adamo for all his help. The Wednesday before the trip Bob and I took a quick sortie up to Doodletown and Mine Road in the rain and birded with raincoats and boots and still were able to see and hear 43 species. Without Bob's guidance, I would not have been able to pull this trip off. Thanks again Bob and as the younger generation would say: You rock. 



## Earth Day at Quogue Wildlife Refuge April 18

(From left to right) ELIAS members work on setting up a display, Dennis Fleury of Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons and a rescued cardinal, Chris Pitkin demonstrates the didgeridoo at A Taste of Australia.



PHOTOS: TOM MORAN

## Membership Corner John McNeil

August is right around the corner and the fall migrations will have already started. In early July from southern Ontario the Least and Solitary Sandpipers will be gathering to make their trek southward. Typically, male shorebirds migrate north in May/June and the ones that do not find a mate or were unsuccessful in bringing off a brood will start heading south early and sometimes even in early July. This is why you must be on the look out when heading to the shore for shorebirds probing on the mud flats at low tide.



**Greater Sand Plover**

While holidaying in Georgia and Florida, visiting friends and family I received a mobile telephone call from my daughter in Atlanta Georgia who happens to be a birder. She informed me that a Greater Sand Plover had been found in Huguenot Memorial Park in the City of Jacksonville Florida that morning. Huguenot Memorial

Park is a shoreline camping and bathing area along the coastal Route 1A1. I would say that it is like a wider Dune Road without the homes, with large off shore shipping terminals for petroleum products.

Upon arrival at the gate of the park, I was met by a toll taker who gave me directions to see the bird that had been sighted that day. He took my three dollars and opened the crossing gate. He told me that I could drive on the beach since the sand was hard but I decided to park my car on firmer ground and walk. About a half mile walk along the beach I met another birder seeking the same rarity. Within a few minutes we both had it in our binoculars. The bird was feeding actively with the other plovers. Amazing that we could observe it so close. As luck would have it, there was an incoming tide so as the water came in, the bird came closer. Other species observed that late afternoon were tons of Ruddy Turnstones, Red Knots, and a host of other pips. As the tide came rolling in and the mud flats started to be consumed by the onset of water, I walked the half-mile back to my car knowing that I just observed another lifer.

If you want more information about this sighting, check this web site: [http://www.jacksonville.com/news/metro/2009-0514/story/from\\_asia\\_by\\_air\\_rare\\_bird\\_visits\\_huguenot](http://www.jacksonville.com/news/metro/2009-0514/story/from_asia_by_air_rare_bird_visits_huguenot) or google Greater Sand Plover and a host of web sites about this bird will be listed. Some other birds sighted that day in the same area included a Black Tern and Wilson's Storm-Petrel.



**Black Tern**



**Wilson's Storm-Petrel**

## Land of the Quetzal

This April I explored a tract of tropical forest in the Savegre Valley of Costa Rica. My brother Jim and I are looking for twenty partners to join us in the purchase of the 486 acre parcel which is adjacent to Los Quetzales National Park. My purpose was to record footage so I could produce a short DVD about the property. Previously we had explored only the small, cleared portion where a copious spring is located.



Nearly 40 years ago, my brother Jim applied the concept of group ownership of wilderness land to along Florida's Fisheating Creek. Our children thrived on their outdoor experiences. Own, preserve and enjoy has been our motto. So why not do the same in Cost Rica?

Our guide in April was Marino Chacon the son of one of the two brothers who first settled the valley in the 1950's. Today the Chacons own one of the most attractive eco lodges in the valley. Marino is the pre-eminent birding guide in Savegre.

Marino showed us several wild avocado trees on the property. Their plum-sized fruits are feasted on by Quetzals, and soon the birds would be carrying them to their young. I had filmed nesting Quetzals in the valley on earlier visits—always awestruck by their beauty. There is no better place in Central America to see them. Preserving an important piece of Quetzal habitat is a big part of our motivation.

If you would like more information and a copy of my DVD please contact Rich Kern at [kernnature@aol.com](mailto:kernnature@aol.com).

## Shorebird Profile Ruddy Turnstone

Carl Starace

**M**y first sighting of a Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria Interpres*) happened along the bayfront at Triton Lane, just off Dune Road. It was on a clear May morning, I had just purchased a Bushnell Spacemaster Scope and decided to take a ride down Dune Road to see some migrant shorebirds. On first sighting a Ruddy Turnstone, one immediately thinks that among the smaller species of shorebird this is far and away the most dramatic and colorful of all. In breeding plumage the striking black and white head pattern, and large black bib are distinctive. Its back is extensively covered with bright chestnut interspersed with black. In flight the black, white and rusty red markings are just as striking. The sexes are outwardly similar with female sometimes larger. The bird's bill is short, black, pointed with a slight upturn and wedge-shaped. It is the wedge shape which allows it to flip and toss stones, (thus its name), seaweed and clods of mud/sand in search of food. The feet and legs are orange/yellow. The Ruddy Turnstone is partial to mollusks, crustaceans and worms but will eat berries. It will also pierce and eat the eggs of gulls, terns and other shorebirds, a very opportunistic eater indeed. The bird's length is 8-10 inches making it a bit larger than a Sanderling and almost the size of a Killdeer. The Ruddy Turnstones flight call, and occasional feeding call is a twittered, "kuiti kuiti kuiti." It may also emit a sharp "chur" or "kewk". On Long Island I have watched this species feed during low tide on mudflats at places like Cupsogue, Pikes Beach, (Westhampton Dunes), by Ponquogue Bridge and further east along Napeague Harbor. I have seen them dig out craters in the wet sand so large as to basically disappear from sight. They will crack mollusk shells with woodpecker like blows. They are well-known as searchers of every cranny for a tasty morsel, scattering other sandpipers in their way. Not unlike a plover, they often take a few steps and then pull up in an upright ploverlike pause. Look for them on rock jetties and

pillings where, in winter, they may be in company of the Purple Sandpiper. They are surely perchers be it on rocks, posts and even picnic tables gleaning breadcrumbs from the gaps. The Ruddy Turnstone is one of the world's northernmost breeders. It breeds on the northern coast of Greenland, in Alaska and on islands in the arctic. It winters along the coast of Massachusetts all the way to South America's tip. I have seen them and the larger Whimbrel on the shores of Peru and Ecuador in wintertime. Ruddy Turnstone are best seen here during the month of May and then from the latter part of July into the fall. Small flocks may be spotted into early winter. Sometimes we are lucky enough to get them on Christmas Counts.

Good Birding to all and get out there to the flats at low tide, get your feet wet. 

### Seriously—For The Birds and Birders— WANTED: Program Chairperson

*I hope this appeal will "pump -up" an ELIAS member to step up and volunteer to be the ELIAS Program Chairperson.* Bob Adamo

Since 1984, Bob Adamo has been securing a wonderful assortment of programs for our monthly Members Meetings—ranging from wild animals to wild speakers. But because of additional responsibilities at the state birding level, Bob's decided to take off this local hat —much to our dismay!! He's asked you, our readership, for help. Maybe you're a recent retiree, looking for something to keep you busy (beside birding!) Maybe you've been "downsized" at work, and are looking for a way to round out your resume for the next job. Maybe you've decided you want to give something back to your community and don't know where to start!

**Are you interested?** Here's what the job takes:

**Responsibilities:** Find and schedule the speakers/movies/program/????

**Requirements:** Good planing and organizational skills.

Experience is helpful, but the entire ELIAS Board—and Bob, of course—will be available to help with a starting list of program possibilities. *Hint:* Many programs come from other local organizations!!

Bob—or any member of the board, listed on page ))—would be delighted to discuss this opportunity with you—and just asking about it doesn't commit you, HONEST! It is a fun job that means much to the health and prosperity of our Audubon chapter. To quote Bob, "I found the Program Chairmanship to be highly satisfying. I treasure the memories and friendships that I cultivated."

So, if you're just sitting out there, waiting to be asked to join in and give a hand—**We're Opportunity and We're Knocking on YOUR Door!**



PHOTO: DIANNE TAGGART

# Adventures From Birdathon 2009

Beth Gustin

**O**n May 9, the ELIAS Birdathon team of Jay Kuhlman, Richard Kaskan, and I met before dawn to once again count as many bird species as possible in one day. We had already heard the regular “early birds”, Robin and Catbird. Jay reported that he heard his resident Eastern Screech Owl in his yard as well as a Mockingbird. The weather forecast concerned us a bit but we headed out at 4:00 am with a few sprinkles plus lots of energy and anticipation of the day to come.

**4:15 am:** We arrive at Gabreski airport with hopes to repeat last year’s success in hearing both Whip-poor-will and Chuck Will’s Widow. Although quiet at first, the pine forest soon awakens with the calls of Eastern Towhees and American Robins. After several minutes of walking in the dark we finally catch a distant call of Whip-poor-will. We wait and listen for the Chuck-will’s-Widow but he is not to be heard this year. We decide to move on, and we notice that the heavy cloud cover is postponing dawn.

**5:10 am:** We make a quick stop at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge to see if we can perhaps hear a Great Horned Owl, which have been known to nest at the Refuge. The sprinkles are fairly steady now and we hear a strange squeaking call which we decide is probably a swallow but can’t count it without a positive ID. With the rain becoming even more steady we decide to head down to Dune Road to catch some shorebirds.

**5:20 am:** It is officially pouring. Through the rain we see Willet, Canada Goose, and Red-winged Blackbirds. We bite the bullet and get out of the car and are treated to a nice flock of Dunlin. A Least Sandpiper is spotted among the Dunlin and several Semipalmated Sandpipers join the group. Out in the marsh we suddenly hear the distinct call of a Clapper Rail which makes getting wet at this stop certainly worth it!

**6:05 am:** Dune Road is deserted in the drenching rain and early morning hour—which is definitely a good thing since we are driving quite erratically straining to see birds through the downpour.

Richard’s hawk-like vision pays off again as he spots a Whimbrel that flies up from the marsh. We stop the car and get the scope out to see if we can find where it landed. The rain is too heavy for me to see it through the scope, but Richard makes a definite ID and we count it.

**6:30 am:** A slight let-up in the rain encourages us to stop at a small bay beach in hopes of seeing a Piping Plover. Getting out of the car, we count our first warbler of the day—a Common Yellowthroat. We also see and hear a pair of Common Loons flying over. Walking along the beach, we see Black-bellied Plover, Red-breasted Merganser, and a pair of Red Knots. The rain picks up again and as we spot American Oystercatcher down the beach we also spot a flash of lightning followed by the rolling of thunder. Time to get back to the car! We tally this as the first lighting our team has recorded on Birdathon.

**7:10-7:40 am:** The rain eases up again and we stop at the Quogue Village boardwalk on Dune Road. Here we see American Goldfinch, Tree Swallow, more Common Yellowthroats, and a real treat—a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak nicely perched out in the open.

**7:55 am:** As the rain has pretty much stopped and it seems the sky may be lightening up a bit, we decide to head back inland to find some warblers. We make a quick stop along Montauk Highway in Quogue where we tally a Green Heron.

**8:30 am:** We arrive at Maple Swamp with hopes that the warblers are coming out after the heavy morning rains. Right away we hear Carolina and House Wrens. Walking to the swamp we pick up several species—Baltimore Oriole, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Wood Pee-wee, and

Red-bellied Woodpecker. Two vireos are also seen—White-eyed and Blue-headed, as well as Northern Parula, Pine, and Blue-winged Warbler. We also hear many Ovenbirds.

Arriving at the swamp we find a small hotspot of activity where we see Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Black and White Warblers. A Scarlet Tanager is heard but not seen.

We make our way back to the car, slightly disappointed that we did not pick up more warblers. But on our way out we get four nice species—White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and a great look at a Savannah Sparrow. We are encouraged also by the fact that the rain seems to have stopped for the day as the sky is much brighter and the air feels drier.

**11:45 am:** We head into Riverhead where we stop at the Citibank to look at the water behind the bank. This quick stop gives us four more species—Ring-billed Gull, Chimney Swift, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, and Fish Crow. Not bad for a bank parking lot!

**12:10 pm:** At Wildwood Park in Riverhead, we come upon an Empidonax Flycatcher. We get a nice long look at the bird, but cannot identify it without hearing a song or call. Just as we are commenting on the difficulty of identifying flycatchers, the bird lets out a single call note and Richard and Jay immediately know that it is a Least Flycatcher. A lucky break and a nice tally!

**12:30-1:00 pm:** At Cranberry Bog County Park, a walk around the pond gives us only one more species, Belted Kingfisher, but we also see lots of Black and White Warblers, Pine Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats.

**1:20 pm:** We arrive at Hunter’s Garden along County Road 51 where we hope to increase our tally of wood warblers. The woods are extremely quiet but we are able to pick up Black-throated Blue Warbler, Great-crested Flycatcher, Hermit Thrush, and Purple Martin. We also get a

long, close look at a Swamp Sparrow.

Driving down CR 51 and stopping at the bike path, we see Eastern Kingbird, two Wild Turkeys, a Field Sparrow, and an American Kestrel.

**2:30 pm:** A slight detour west to Eastport Pond turns out to be a good stop as we pick up Canvasback, Wood Duck, and a Lesser Scaup.

Three short stops in East Moriches give us Gadwall, Killdeer, Pheasant, Least tern, and Yellow-crowned Night Heron. It is about this time that we start to get concerned that we still haven't seen a Great Blue Heron. But hopefully at our next destination, Terrell River County Park, we will find a Great Blue and those warblers that are giving us trouble today.

**3:30 pm:** We arrive at our favorite pit stop, the Kuhlman home, where we pick up our canine team member, Pearl. We arrive at Terrell River shortly thereafter and start out last long push for more species. In the woods, a persistent pursuit of a singing Hooded Warbler yields a nice look at the bird. We make our way down to the river in hopes of hearing a Marsh Wren, which sings nicely for us as if on cue. We also see Green-winged Teal, Glossy Ibis, and a beautiful flock of Black Skimmers flying just above the water as the late afternoon sunlight (finally!) shines on the birds.

Walking through the marsh we see Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Seaside Sparrow. In the woods we also pick up Pine Siskin and a singing Wood Thrush. We also startle a groundhog who proceeds to climb a tree (yes, the groundhog climbed a tree) about 12 feet up before deciding that's a bad idea and runs head-first down the tree before falling the last six feet or so. Thankfully he scampers away unharmed except for his pounding heart. Sometimes the most memorable birding experiences don't involve the birds at all!

**6:30 pm:** We decide to call it a day. Richard and Jay came through with several more species on their way home. At Calverton grasslands, Richard saw Eastern Meadowlark, Prairie Warbler, and a Short-

eared Owl—three fantastic species! And Jay finally spotted the elusive Great Blue Heron as well as Willow Flycatcher.

It was a great day of birding despite the weather early in the day. We missed some species that we saw last year, but also picked up some others that we had not seen in the past. We also had several memorable things—a dozen or so Common Loons flying over and calling over the course of the day, the funny groundhog incident, a last minute ID of the Least Flycatcher, thunder and lightning, and almost an entire day without seeing a Great Blue Heron. These will be added to the many stories we have of Birdathon.

**B**IRDATHON 2009, held on May 9th, was a success again this year with 143 species tallied—5 more species than in 2008! Thanks to all members of our three birding teams: Jay Kuhlman, Richard Kaskan, Steve Biasetti, Jim and Alice Osterlund, Dan and Allyson Wilson, and Beth Gustin. Jay, Richard and Beth tallied the highest number of species with 124. Steve, who tallied 105 species, saw the only Peregrine Falcon, Ruddy Turnstone, Scoter, and Little Blue Heron of the day. And the "Lab Rats", Jim, Dan, and Allyson, tallied 75 species and added 3 different species to the total—Indigo Bunting, Eastern Bluebird and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Thanks to all!

Also a huge thanks to all who donated money for this fundraiser. We appreciate all of you who support this fundraiser year after year and also the new names that we see on the pledge forms! The money that was raised will be shared with the Kaler's Pond Audubon Center and will also support our Calverton Grassland's Fund.

A full list of the 143 species can be found on our website.

## From Kaler's Pond Nature Center

**Jay Kuhlman**

**The Earth/Arbor Day** went well with good weather. We had a program with live reptiles and amphibians by Pam Musk and Kevin Nolan. They also gave a program about attracting hummingbirds. Sixty people attended. The program ended with a nature walk.

A reminder—the nature center at Kaler's Pond is open Thursday through Sunday.

There will be two Audubon Fun Weeks July 6, 7, 9, 10 and July 20, 21, 23, 24. They are geared for K through 5. They are held in the mornings and are \$189 per session. Further information is available at the ELIAS or Kaler's Pond web site: [www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org](http://www.easternlongislandaudubonsociety.org).

There will be a butterfly survey held in conjunction with North American Butterfly Association the second week of July. Contact me at 631-878-4461 for more information.



**Jim Kern** (founder of the Florida Trail) and **Rich Kern** (wildlife film-maker) are looking for additional conservation-minded partners to buy 486 acres of virgin cloud forest in the Savegre Valley adjacent to the new Los Quetzales National Park.

**Prime nesting habitat for the quetzal. 170 bird species. Botanical paradise. Hiking, fishing, horseback riding in the valley. Elevation 8,000 ft.**

A house for use by the 22 partners will be built on a small, cleared portion.

**Total Cost: \$27.5K per partner**

**For more info contact:  
JimKern@thekernco.com**

## Quick Notes Sally Newbert

### Horseshoe Crabs win in court, FINS bans harvest

A federal court has ruled that horseshoe crabs are wildlife, not shellfish. That means that the **Fire Island National Seashore** has banned the harvest of horseshoe crabs and is set to enforce the law. Although you might now be able to bring a gun into a National Park (remember that got tacked onto a credit card bill that passed in Congress). Do not use that gun on a horseshoe crab. Taking of wildlife is prohibited in National Parks. Now horseshoe crabs are wildlife—how about that!

New Jersey banned the horseshoe crab harvest in 2008, Delaware and Connecticut have placed added limits on the harvest. New York State hasn't acted yet.

### EPCAL

Rumor has it that Riverhead is working on zoning regulations that will be favorable to the developers at EPCAL.

*Dan's Paper* is reporting that the federal government is going to recognize the Shinnecocks as an Indian Nation in the next few months.

Then they will be entitled to a casino.

Belmont Race Track is reportedly vying for the casino. However, I would bet that the Calverton developers would be very interested in this turn of events.

So, ask yourself, is this what you want for the East End of Long Island? I can hear the arguments now. With the economy down, attendance at the indoor ski slope may be beyond the pocketbooks of most. A casino however, may be less invasive than the current plans. This may present the opportunity to keep the environmentalists and the Short-eared Owl a little happier.

If you don't want this, please watch the paper's and contact your congressmen to let them know how you feel.

### YouTube

**ELIAS** now has a presentation on YouTube, It gives an overview of our activities.

Search Eastern Long Island Audubon to find the presentation. And enjoy!

## Conservation Column Beth Gustin

**"Nobody can do everything but everyone can do something."**

Unfortunately, there are lots of litterbugs in this world and the beach is a place where they seem to enjoy visiting. Things that are tossed as litter on the beach are not only unsightly but can end up in the ocean and bays where they can be harmful to marine life.

When visiting the beach this summer, take a few minutes to pick up some litter that you see. You don't even have to leave your beach chair to pick up at least a few cigarette butts. It may be frustrating to clean up after other people but it may be the only way to reduce trash that ends up in our oceans and bays and to keep our beaches looking beautiful. It is good to lead by example; litterbugs may think twice if they see you picking up trash. Or maybe someone else who doesn't litter will follow your lead and do a bit of their own beach cleaning. And save the date: September 19, 2009 is the annual New York State Beach Cleanup with the American Littoral Society. [www.alsnyc.org](http://www.alsnyc.org)

You can join lots of other volunteers on that day cleaning up a local beach. Until then, enjoy your beach, ocean, and bays and help keep them healthy and beautiful!

## Chapter Renewal & Membership

For \$15 a year, you will receive 6 copies of this newsletter. You will also 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!**

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## TWO BIRDERS, TWO OUTLOOKS

Eileen Schwinn

*Birdwatcher*, by Elizabeth J. Rosenthal

*Life List*, by Olivia Gentile

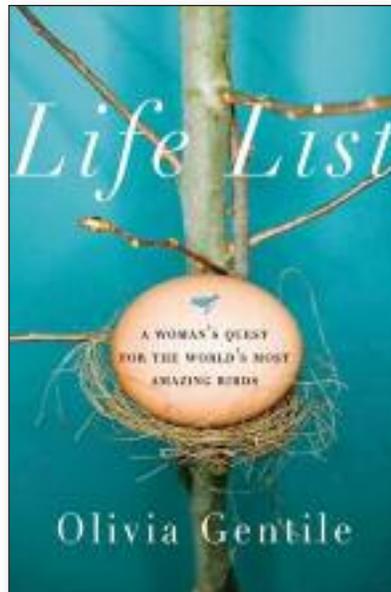
One a man, one a woman. One bitten with the birding bug as a youth, the other in near middle age. What's the common denominator? BIRDS to the extreme.

It's been said that the very, very rich aren't like the rest of us—I think that statement can be made about the outer edges of just about anything. In the birding world, two people fall into that category—Roger Tory Peterson and Phoebe Snetsinger. The first name is recognized by nearly everyone who's ever picked up a bird guide and a pair of binoculars. The second, is recognized by those folks who might be approaching that fringy, extreme edge of the hobby.

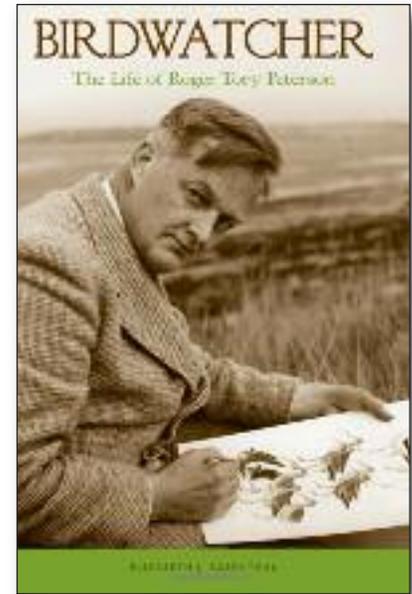
In Elisabeth J. Rosenthal's recent biography of Roger Tory Peterson, *Birdwatcher*, we learn through interviews, personal letters, various publications and The King Penguin's own words, just what helped to make this legendary man tick. Coming in at the changing of the guard time of the mid 1930's through the 1950's (and, indeed beyond) Roger Tory Peterson bridged the gap between the "elite birders"—professional museum curators and ornithologists and the ordinary folk just interested in getting out and observing. His field guide with highlighted focus points and brief, specific field guide markings which he provided for the first time is a book that is easy to use and easily carried. A well written biography, presented not in a strict chronologic approach, but rather topically organized, one comes away with a real sense of just how much this one man contributed to the world of birding as we know it today—diverse, scientific, and embraced by many. We learn of Peterson's involvement with the early stages of conservation and his warnings about the effect of deadly poisons upon the bird population. We also learn that every notable birding author today has a profound gratitude toward Roger Tory Peterson for leading the way. His influence will always be permanently felt through

out the birding world. This biography truly helps us understand the man behind the legend. Previously unpublished photographs highlight the text and paint a very personal picture of the most famous name in birding.

We've all dreamt of what we'd do if we won the Big Lottery—I'd guess most birders would quit their day jobs and hit the road, looking for all the birds they could possibly see. After reading *Life List*, by Olivia Gentile, those doing that dreaming might want to change their minds. The name Phoebe Snetsinger is known to the birding world as the Woman Who Saw the Most—over 8000 species in her life-time. But at what expense?



At age 49, a well-to-do stay at home mom of four, with a more than passing interest in looking at birds, Phoebe Snetsinger was diagnosed with cancer—and given about a year to live. With an almost novel-type account, we see Phoebe spend the rest of her life traveling the world in her successful attempt to see more and more living birds. When not on a trip, she was home planning a trip, learning everything possible about what she hoped to see next. Detailed notes filled index cards and diaries. The original prognosis of her disease was wrong and Phoebe birded the world for 19 years beyond her initial expecta-



tion. But somewhere along the way, Phoebe's hobby crossed the line and, as the author explains, "She lost the capacity to take into account her family, her health, and her safety." Also through interviews with family, friends and Phoebe's own words, this biography presents a troubling picture of a woman obsessed. Well written and difficult to put down, I found myself observing a person who showed more and stronger emotional attachments to her casual birding acquaintances than to her own family—a family which suffered from her absence. Not only everyday events were missed, but a daughter's wedding and her own mother's funeral were put aside for birding plans made. Rationalized in her own mind, her family's needs were always second to her own. Her husband's account of their life together was, I felt, particularly moving. Phoebe's selfishness—there's no other word—put herself (and those hired to lead her on her quest) at terrible, terrible risks—travel in war zones, a near drowning from an overturned boat, multiple falls and broken bones and a brutal kidnapping and an awful assault. Phoebe seemed to ignore overall common sense—*The Life List*—was the only thing of importance in her life. Olivia Gentile poses the question of where is the "line between dedication and obsession and when does obsession cross the line into pathology?" I feel Ms. Gentile answers that question well in *Life List*, and I recommend this book be read by all.



# Pine Forests

Larry Penny

When I was a boy growing up in Mattituck there were no native conifers other than eastern red cedars. These were quite common because of the agricultural nature of the area. The pitch pines ran in a narrow belt between Sound Avenue and Westphalia Road (where I lived), from the southwest arm of Mattituck Creek (filled in by the 1960s major dredging of the creek) and Cox's Neck Road. This was a little island of Pine Barrens surrounded by oaks, beeches and hickories. There was also a sprinkling of pitch pines on either side of the Long Island Railroad Tracks, which crossed NYS 25 at the eastern edge of Laurel. There were no white pines, a common tree on the South Fork east of Sag Harbor.

Paul Stoutenburgh introduced me to Moors' Woods where a number of unusual plants grew that Roy Latham had cataloged over the years. That is when I saw my first Long Island white pines. When I took part in the Nature Conservancy's Mashomack, Shelter Island study, I was further introduced to another small population of Long Island's white pines and, finally, when I went to work for East Hampton Town, I was introduced to the Island's biggest collection of white pines. They stretched from the Sag Harbor-East Hampton Turnpike, NYS 114, on the west, all the way to Three Mile Harbor on the east.

Unlike the pitch pine, the white pine eschews hot weather. It does wonderfully in the New England states and upstate New York, but south and you only find it in the

interior, particularly in the Appalachians and it tapers out south of Pennsylvania, where it is replaced by several other pine species. How it came to remain, and thrive, in East Hampton, particularly after it was lumbered early on when the forests were completely cut over, is a mystery. The three spots, Moors' Woods, Mashomack, and east of Sag Harbor, line up roughly in a south-to-north fashion, so there must be some rhyme or reason to account for this distribution.

Where they grow with oaks and other broad-leaved hardwoods they have a distinct advantage, ever since the mid-1900s when repeated gypsy moth incursions decimated the oaks, especially, the white oaks and left most of the pines little damaged. Indeed, if you visit the center of the white pine population in "Northwest" in East Hampton today, you will see very few oak seedlings sprouting from the forest floor, but a host of white pines, greatly outnumber pitch pine seedlings, as well. Pitch pines are also spared by gypsy moths, canker worms and other tree damagers, but they are slower growing and more fire dependent than the white pines. In the absence of fire, they, too are losing out to the white pine in northwestern East Hampton.

Probably the outstanding contributor to the success of the white pine, however, are not the gypsy moths or the slowness in growth of the pitch pines, but the proximity of the groundwater to the shallow roots of the white pines. The temperature of the water table remains close to 55 degrees F. and while the white pines in summer may be experiencing an average

ambient temperature of 75 degrees, the white pines are pulling up the much cooler water groundwater. The microclimate around the needles of the transpiring white pines is further cooled when the water evaporates from their surfaces.

Under these propitious conditions the Northwest white pines have not at all shrunk back while throes of global warming, but have prospered. Trees that were 70 feet tall and one and a half feet in diameter when I first visited them in 1980, are now more than a hundred feet tall and more than two feet diameter today.

Why is this good? The pine forest is a unique habitat. In the winter it caters to birds that eat pine seeds and like the cover of the pine's soft needles. Here in the winter you are liable to find a Saw-whet Owl issuing its monotonic bell-like notes in the early evening. Broad-winged Hawks, Black-throated Green warblers, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers occasional breed here as well as lots of ground-nesting birds, such as Hermit Thrushes, Towhees, Ovenbirds and Whippoorwills, although these last have become very scarce lately with all the traipsing and mountain biking around during the nesting season. I have a friend who lives amongst these white pines who as of May 29, still has pine siskins, males and females coming to her feeder. There is a lot we don't know about this habitat, a lot to find out from the ground up to the tips of the canopies. I think the white pine forest will surprise us again and again with its revelations over the next several years.



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**Mark Your Calendars!**

**July**

Monday, July 13 **Nature Program: Jamie Reason, Carver** See page 1  
 Saturday, July 25 **Field Trip: Pikes Beach, Dune Road** See page 1

**August**

Monday, August 3 **Nature Program: Dennis Fleury** See page 1  
 Saturday, August 15 **Field Trip: Islands of Moriches Inlet** See page 1  
 Saturday, August 29 **Field Trip: Hummingbird Sanctuary** See page 1

Two abundant shorebirds to look for are the Semi-palmated Sandpiper and the Willet.



PHOTOS: DIANNE TAGGART

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