



# The OSPREY

May/June 2011 — Vol. XXXVI No. 3

## The Warblers are coming...Join ELIAS Field Trips!

### Field Trip Schedule for May and June

John McNeil, Field Trip Chairman

This coming May and June I planned an exciting set of field trips for one and all. Some are places we have visited before, some are new to us. Each will offer the new and the experienced birder an exciting tour of spring birding.

On Sunday May 1st and Sunday May 21st MaryLaura Lamont will lead walks through Old Mastic, the William Floyd Estate to catch some of the early migrants. On Saturday May 7th Carl Starace will guide you through the Robert Cushman Murphy County Park to visit a rare coastal plain and pond shore that will be sure to be a great spot for a the keen-eyed birder. On Sunday May 8th, Eric Salzman will again lead us into Long Island's Natural Wonderland, Historic Maple Swamp. This area is by far the best catch basin for spring warblers, so let's join Eric and catch the wave. Wednesday May 11th and Sunday May 15th, first Eileen Schwinn and then Carl Starace will lead you on the grand tour of Hunter's Garden during the peak of warbler season. On Wednesday May 18th, I will lead a tour of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge where we can observe warblers and other species as they pass through our area. Then on May 21st, MaryLaura will once again guide us into the varied habitats of the Jamesport State Park and Hallockville Farm Fields. On June 4, Carl Starace will lead us into Pine Meadow County Park, off of Route 51. It offers a diversity of habitat with many species that can excite a birder.

I am very excited that our field trip leaders have put together an exciting schedule and I am so pleased that you will have a variety of locations to explore. Please join us to experience this birding adventure.

**Sunday, May 1st @ 9:00 am &  
Sunday, May 22nd @ 9:00 am**

### Old Mastic Bird Walk— William Floyd Estate

**Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

Bring binoculars for this 3-mile walk through the woods, fields, and wetlands of the estate. A good variety of birds will be seen as we walk the varied habitats. It's peak migration time for thousands of birds heading north or south. Spring is peak time for neotropical migrants such as grosbeaks, orioles, tanagers, vireos and warblers, and most appear in their spectacular breeding plumages. Main entrance is 245 Park Drive, Mastic. Call trip leader MaryLaura Lamont at the Estate at 631.399.2030 for details.

**Saturday, May 7th @ 8:30 am**

### Robert Cushman Murphy County Park

**Leader: Carl Starace**

This park is a favorite for hiking and bird-watching with a rare coastal plain and a pond shore which provides excellent habitat for migrants heading north. So let's catch the wave and tag along with Carl as he guides you in this interesting birding location. Check the "Robert Cushman Murphy County Park" web site for driving directions. This bird walk is courtesy of Cornell/Suffolk County Parks.

**Sunday, May 8th @ 7:30 AM**

### Historic Maple Swamp

**Leader: Eric Salzman**

Eric Salzman will guide you into one of nature's wonderlands. Maple Swamp has traditionally been the best warbler spot on

Eastern Long Island (along with Hunter's Garden.) It is like a catch basin for spring migrants and has been a breeding ground for many warblers and vireos. We will surely see many local breeders like the Scarlet Tanager, Ovenbird, Blue-winged Warbler and Wood Thrush. We are hoping for a Golden-winged Warbler. Please wear appropriate clothing because of ticks. Eric will meet you at the entrance to Maple Swamp on Pleasure Drive just southeast of the entrance to the old Graphics of Peconic. There is a dirt road leading to a pasture and he will park and wait there a few minutes before 8:00 am. You can contact Eric: [es@ericssalzman.com](mailto:es@ericssalzman.com) or John: [birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com) for more details.

**Saturday, May 14th, @ 8:00 AM**

### Terrell River County Park

**Leader: Jay Kuhlman**

Join Jay Kuhlman to search for spring migrants and nesting species in the varied habitats of Terrell River County Park. Indigo Bunting, Black and White Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler have been seen there. Hopefully we will see the resident Great Horned Owl, too. 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.

**Wednesday, May 11th @ 7:30 AM &  
Sunday, May 15th @ 7:30 AM**

### Hunter's Garden

**May 11th/Leader: Eileen Schwinn**

**May 15th/Leader: Carl Starace**

Come one, Come All, for the Grand Tour of Hunters Garden at the peak of bird migration! Wear appropriate clothing – long

*Continued, next page*

sleeved shirts, long pants and sneakers. If you use tick spray, be sure to bring it along and perhaps a snack and water bottle as well. We will spend a couple of hours looking for all sorts of warbler species, thrushes and other specialties of the season. Meet at the clearing within Hunters Garden and for directions you can contact your trip leaders for details. Eileen: beachmed@optonline.net and Carl: castarace@optonline.net

**Wednesday, May 18th @ 7:30 AM**

## Quogue Wildlife Refuge

**Leader: John McNeil**

Join your field trip leader for a early May morning walk around the Quogue Wildlife Refuge to catch some of the spring migrants as they flutter about. Walking, shoes, water bottle and binoculars will be needed. Let's meet in the parking lot at 7:30 am. You can contact me at: birdwchr@gmail.com for additional details. Driving directions are on page 3.

**Saturday, May 21st @ 9:00 AM**

## Hallockville Farm Fields & Hallock State Park Preserve

**Leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

Traverse the varied habitat of the old Hallock farm during the peak migration time for neotropical species as thrushes, vireos, warblers and more. For additional details call Hallockville at 631-298-5292. There is a \$5 charge for this walk benefiting the Hallockville Museum Farm.

**Saturday, June 4th @ 8:00 AM**

## Pine Meadow County Park

(CR 51, just south of Hunters Garden)

**Leader: Carl Starace**

This park has a varied habitat that can be interesting during spring migration. Come join Carl on this exciting tour where you probably will catch some lingering migrants or some hold overs as they pass our area. Contact Carl for additional details. castarace@optonline.net



# The Eastern Phoebe

**Carl Starace**

**T**he Eastern Phoebe – “*Sayornis Phoebe*” The Latin word, “*Ornis*” means “bird”, and “*Say*” refers to Thomas Say, a 19th century American entomologist who was also a student of American birds. The word, “*Phoebe*” refers to this bird’s call. The Eastern Phoebe is one of 37 species of North American Flycatchers. It is within the bird family *Tyrannidae*, its species are known as Tyrant Flycatchers. In America the Eastern Phoebe is found as far west as North Dakota, Nebraska and Central Texas. It is absent as a breeder in a good deal of our southland, in places like coastal North and South Carolina, all of Florida, southern Georgia and most of the Gulf States. It does breed however across most of the lower sections of Canada’s provinces. The Phoebe’s habitat preference is open woodlands and their edges, usually not far from a water source. It sometimes chooses the sides of buildings and the undersides of bridges to place its nest.



**DESCRIPTION:** Eastern Phoebes are noticeably slender, medium sized Flycatchers (about 7 inches) which makes them somewhat larger than the Empidonax Flycatchers. The Phoebe’s head is largish and rounded, its bill all black, its tail long. It has middle-gray back, darker-gray head, wings and tail. The underparts are white with an olive wash on breast and flanks. The Eastern Phoebe does not have wing-bars. These birds have a habit of pumping their tail downwards and spreading it. Younger birds in autumn will have a Yellow-wash below.

**BEHAVIOR:** Like other flycatchers, Phoebes will perch at edges of woods or streams and sallie out to catch insects on the wing. They may also land on the ground to grab prey and even hover briefly to pick insects off of leaves. Tame at times, it may allow a close approach. To differentiate Eastern Phoebe’s from Eastern Peewee’s remember that a Peewee’s head is peaked, its lower mandible is yellow and it does not flick its tail.

**VOCALIZATION:** Phoebes give an ascending two-note whistled- ZwebEE, short pause and follow with a briefer descending z-b’r, SweebEE, pause, z-b’r. Their call note is a sharp – CHHip.

**MIGRATION:** In Spring they are the earliest returning Flycatcher, a few showing in early March. In Fall they are also first to depart, though some may wait until the first frost. This little Flycatcher is also seen regularly still hanging on during our Christmas Counts through December.

**FLIGHT:** The Phoebe’s flight is direct, rapid and without undulation.

**WHERE TO LOOK:** Find them in open clearings at woodland edge, the cul-de-sac at Hunters Garden is one place to look. Try also along the Peconic/other rivers, at pond/lake edges and under the eaves of house, porch or garage.

Good Spring Birding to All  
Carl Starace



# Breeding Bird Census

June 11-26, 2011

Eileen Schwinn

Since the 1975 bird breeding season, our Chapter has conducted extensive surveys of resident – and presumed breeding – birds. Using the same geographic area as our Central Suffolk Christmas Count (Cupsogue and Smith Point Beaches, Gabreski Airport, EPCAL, Riverhead and Yaphank as rough outlines) enthusiastic volunteers venture out alone or in small groups. While not the "Snap-Shot" of a Christmas Count, these surveys take place at the participant's schedule. This year, the survey period is June 11 - 26, 2011. Experience in counts is not a necessity, and many new birders find participation in the Census very rewarding. Groups are put together with every level of birding skills and extra eyes are always needed! Over the years, more than 210 species of birds have been recorded, with some groups reporting close to 100 birds for the day! Part and whole day commitments are available to meet your schedule, with weekend and weekday teams offered. For many, this intense birding experience is a wonderful way to see lots of birds with a good group of friendly, knowledgeable people.

For more information, contact Eileen Schwinn — beachmed@optonline.net or phone: 516-662-7751. **There's a place for everyone and all are welcome!**

## Nature Programs/Meetings

Monday, May 2, beginning at 7:15 pm

### "Wow! How'd you get that picture? The story behind the photograph"

Ever see an amazing photograph of a bird or animal in the wild and wonder about the story behind it? Wildlife & nature photographer Grace Scalzo will share her work and tell us some of the fascinating "back stories" behind her photos, including the equipment and field techniques she uses to locate, approach and document her subjects.

Grace is an avid nature photographer who lives here on L.I. Except during "tax time" (she is a CPA) she spends most of her free time taking pictures here or while traveling. A favorite subject in winter is the Snowy Owl, who, when seen in good light and habitat, can be breathtaking ...as we well know!

Monday, June 6, beginning at 7:15 pm

### James Galetto, Nature Photographer

James Galetto is thought to be one of the best young nature photographers in our region. ELIAS experienced his work back in June of '06, and found it to be outstanding. We are pleased to have him back again (5 years to the month) to see his latest presentation, entitled **Wildlife Photography in British Columbia**, this time emphasizing bears. When I spoke with Jimmy about a date for his presentation, I first asked about May, our closest meeting date. He said "Sorry, but I have to be in Washington D.C. on that date." Turns out one of his bear photos (this one taken in Minnesota) is being hung in the Smithsonian Museum. See you on the 6th.

**Meetings/Nature Programs are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Nature chat begins at 7:15 pm, the meeting at 7:30 and the speaker at 8:00 pm. The programs are free, and open to all.**

### Directions to Quogue Wildlife Refuge

■ **From Sunrise Highway:** (Rte.27) take exit 64 S, and head south on Route 104. Go 2 miles and turn right onto Old Country Road. Go 0.7 miles, entrance is on the right side. ■ **From the Long Island Expressway** (Route 495): take exit 70 S to Manorville Road (Rte 111). Take Rte 111 to Rte. 27 East. Follow directions above. ■ **From Riverhead:** take 104 south towards Quogue. Follow directions above. ■ **From Montauk Highway (Route 27A):** go north on Old Main Road (one block west of traffic light in Quogue), cross the Railroad tracks, and the Refuge is straight ahead.



Instructions and all the materials you need to participate are available on the NestWatch website at [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org). You'll also get directions on how to find and monitor nests without disturbing the birds.

The Cornell Lab's immensely popular NestCams are back too. Cameras broadcast live video over the web from the nests of Barn Owls, bluebirds, wrens, Wood Ducks, and many other species. Our newest camera is focused on a Great Horned Owl family in Houston, Minnesota. Check it out at [www.nestcams.org](http://www.nestcams.org).

## From the field

### North Fork April Field Trip

Tom Moran

Spring was finally evident on Saturday, April 2 during our North Fork trip to Orient Point. Of course it's always colder by the water and with a stiff breeze, it felt chilly. MaryLaura Lamont, our trip leader, had a good turnout for our search for late-leaving winter and early-arriving spring species. On the ride to our first stop we were treated to Turkey Vultures flying over the fields along Route 25. Our trip took us to a variety of fresh and salt water locations including Maratooka Lake, Deep Hole, New Suffolk, Down's Creek, Truman Beach and Orient Point State and County Parks. Around New Suffolk we saw Ruddy Ducks, American Wigeons, Ring-necked Ducks, American Coots, Lesser Scaup, Northern Pintail, Hooded Merganser, and Bufflehead. We were also treated to many Red-tailed Hawks and Osprey, some actively building nests. One Red-tailed dove at an Osprey sending it into the canopy of trees. We were especially excited to see a pair of Killdeer in a farmer's field in New Suffolk. Also present were Robins, Red-winged Blackbirds, a House Finch and a Downy Woodpecker. Further out on the North Fork, we stopped at Truman Beach and Oyster Ponds where we enjoyed the white and black contrast of Northern Gannets as they were lit up by the sunshine. A Northern Harrier flew by over the Oyster Ponds. We spotted a pair of Greater Yellow Legs on the marsh area east of Truman Beach parking area. Visible from the pullout were Common Loons, Bufflehead and Red-breasted Mergansers. At Orient Point we saw White-winged and Surf Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Common Loons, Horned Grebes, a Great Cormorant flyby. In the State Park we saw four American Oystercatchers on a far sand bar. MaryLaura identified two Killdeer by sound at first that flew overhead near the parking lot. When we arrived at the Point, it may be these same two flew by towards Plum Island. One thought better of it and landed on the beach, affording us a close up look. Our final bird of the day was a lifer for many of



us, we picked up the Glaucous Gull (right) that has apparently been seen in Orient this season. It gave us great views as it posed on top of the concession stand, flew by close overhead and posed in the parking lot. Overall it was an action packed day and it was a pleasure to be outside in the sunshine and spring temperatures.

## From Montauk Point



# The Alewife and the Osprey, a story of survival

Larry Penny

Once again, Alewives are running up in droves to Big Fresh Pond from North Sea Harbor one of the many productive embayments in the Peconic estuary system. Long Island Native Americans knew about this fish and its uses long before European settlers came here. They knew they could count on its early spring breeding migration every year just as they could count on the Osprey's return to Long Island at about the same time. According to "Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary" the name goes back at least as far as 1633. The first white settlers to colonize the East End came across Long Island Sound from New Haven seven years later. No doubt they were already familiar with New England alewives and their early American name. They sailed around Orient Point and into Gardiner's Bay, thence, to Conscience Point at the southern tip of North Sea Harbor in Southampton Town, ironically, perhaps, into the very same body of water where the alewives had been amassing prior to their upstream run for hundreds of years already. No doubt, alewives and their roe became one of the first traditional foods to glean from the sea each year by those same settlers after suffering the ills of a harsh winter.

The alewife's scientific name, *Alosa psseu-doharengus*, means "false-herring". The common name is said to come from the females with their fat bellies full of fish eggs resembling the ladies with similarly roundish abdomens who served the spirits in the English ale houses in Elizabethian times. The species is a member of the herring family as the menhaden and Atlantic sardine are, and one of four that are anadromous, leave marine life to spawn in the freshwaters of coastal ponds, after which they again become sea-run. Like shad and menhaden the populations plummeted once they began being heavily fished for food and fertilizer. Modern road building with pavement and culverts was a major contributing factor to dwindling alewife stocks in the 1900s.

Roads that passed over coastal streams leading to coastal ponds, such as North

Sea Road were culverted along with round ceramic or steel pipes, the intake ends of which were not always set at heights favorable to migrating foot long fish. Alewives are not like salmon, they cannot leap up small waterfalls to get to where they are going, but they are adept at passing through the shallowest of waters, many times slithering on their sides, to make it through to the breeding pond. In early colonial times almost every coastal pond that overflowed to the Atlantic ocean, Peconic estuary or Great South Bay system, had an alewife run. Now, only a handful of alewife runs exist, the largest and most perennial being the

*If it weren't for the efforts of Rachael Carson and, locally, a group of dedicated naturalists and scientists in the 1960s, the Long Island Osprey population may have disappeared altogether.*

one culminating at Big Fresh Pond in North Sea. As many as 350,000 sexually mature alewives in a single year have been counted entering Big Fresh Pond in March, April and May, with the peak occurring in mid-April.


The alewife runs have always been tied to the return of ospreys, as well as black-crowned night herons, great blue herons, and lately, great egrets. Around the edges of North Sea and Alewife Brook running between the sea and pond, herons gather each year come spring, ospreys circle overhead. This dependence on alewives and other coastal fishes also became the Osprey's downfall in the 1950s and 1960s while DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons were the pesticides of choice, not only for farms and landscaped yards, but also for mosquito control. The phytoplankton took up the poisons, they were passed on to the zooplankton that the alewives and other filterfeeding fish were consuming, ultimately, into the flesh and vital organs of the top carnivores, the ospreys and herons. High concentrations of tissue DDT stymied reproduction and led

to eggs with fragile shells that rarely hatched.

If it weren't for the efforts of Rachael Carson and, locally, a group of dedicated naturalists and scientists in the 1960s, the Long Island Osprey population may have disappeared altogether. Naturalists such as Dennis Puleston, Art Cooley and Gil Raynor teamed up with lawyers, scientists and regulators to get DDT banned. Coincidentally, these same naturalists were early members of the Moriches Bay Audubon Society which has morphed into Eastern Long Island Audubon Society. The ospreys no longer hampered by reproduction-altering pesticides and herbicides are making a strong comeback, as are the alewives.

In a way, alewives and their close cousins, the shads, blue-back herrings and menhaden are the motor that drives the machine that is known as the East End fishery. They come first, other fish such as the striped bass and bluefish follow, other piscivorous birds such as cormorants also come along, and seals of three different species hang around longer and longer each spring, sometimes throughout the year, to feed on them and the fish they attract.

The fertilized alewife eggs stemming from the swirling mix of millions of roe and milt develop into fingerlings by the end of August and are ready to run downstream to spend the next two years at sea. They've been subtly imprinted on the water during their summer in Big Fresh Pond. When it comes time for them to reproduce they will leave open waters, return to the shallows and seek out their parent stream. Their sense of smell is hundreds of times greater than that of we humans.

The challenge ahead is to fix all of those culverts that are either too much in disrepair or too small in diameter to allow alewife passage. Ospreys will then continue to flourish, as will herons and cormorants. However, keep in mind, that too much of a good thing, is not in every instance a good thing. Let's bring the alewife stocks back to pre-20th century levels, but let's not overdo it. 

## NYS Young Birders Club – Carena Pooth, NYSYBC Adult Chair

*This 2010 field trips wrap-up was written by a young birder for the NYSYBC Annual Kick-off meeting held on January 22, 2011.*

Last year, 2010, was another great year in terms of NYSYBC trips. We began the at the Marshlands Conservancy in Rye. Regardless of the early January date, the group had 41 species. The next trip (the American Museum of Natural History) had loads of great birds that were not able to make the list. On to Stockport Flats in March, gave us long-absent Killdeer and the second club record of Ring-necked Duck. April brought migrants to Derby Hill for our trip there, including Long-tailed Duck, Caspian Tern, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, and Purple Martin. Thanks to those four species, the cumulative list finally shot past 200 species! Definitely not bad for 11 trips and 2 meetings.

The long-awaited spring Bashkill trip came to fruition in May. It brought six new NYSYBC birds and a whole lot of other mentionables: Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will, Yellow-throated Vireo, another sighting of Northern Rough-winged Swallow, our 3rd record of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, and Bobolink.

Coordinating a June trip to Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks was difficult, but it rewarded those who could make it with alpine musicians like Winter Wren, and Swainson's and Bicknell's Thrushes. In July, the only logical place to go was the beach, so some club members got together for a trip at Cupsogue County Park on Long Island. Since it was our first trip directly on the ocean, we racked up some 9 new species for the list. They were Northern Gannet, Whimbrel, Red Knot, Sanderling, Roseate Tern, Black Skimmer, Saltmarsh Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, and a Sandwich Tern!

After two years of very productive August trips to Jamaica Bay, it seemed ridiculous to switch anything. We matched Marbled Godwit and Wilson's Phalarope from the 2009 trip, but upped the ante with an American White Pelican and Marsh Wren. Farther into the wilds of New York City, the September Central Park trip was even

more productive. Exciting species included Merlin, Common Nighthawk, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Gray-cheeked Thrush. Finally, October's Wallkill walk produced some nice migrants like Blackpoll Warbler and Vesper Sparrow, which happened to be the club's 224th bird species. So the cumulative checklist remains there, after 20 excursions of one sort or another, lots of great finds, and a healthy dose of good company. So here's to another great year with more young eyes for the spotting!

– Brendan Fogarty, Age 18 2010 NYSYBC Records Chair & Photo Editor

NYSYBC is a special project of NYSOA (NYS Ornithological Association). Thanks to NYSOA/NYSYBC's generous partner organizations (and the students' very supportive parents), our young birders continue to enjoy great birding experiences in various locations around the state. We have seen some great friendships develop among these fine young people over the past few years. If you are not yet a member, please demonstrate your support to an amazing group of young birders by joining. For more information, visit [nysyoungbirders.org](http://nysyoungbirders.org) and [nybirds.org](http://nybirds.org).



### A Book Review by Eileen Schwinn

## The Private Lives of Birds— A Scientist Reveals the Intricacies of Avian Social Life

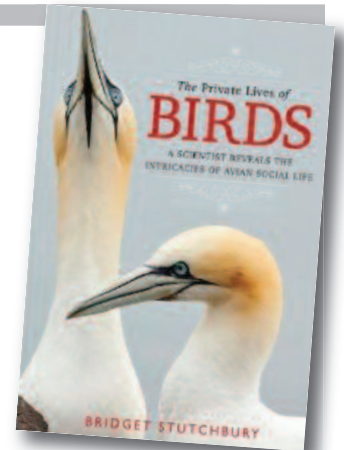
By Bridget Stutchbury

Courtship, monogamy, 'til death do us part, philandering, divorce, – a new novel of life in the fast lane? NO!! A terrific new book written by biologist Bridget Stutchbury on her insights into bird behavior! This Bird Detective – with the help of numerous graduate students – has spent more than twenty years stalking birds, mounting miniature tracking devices onto birds, taking blood samples from birds, painting birds – not pictures of, but changing the actual colors of birds (WHAT!!) – and intensely studying the breeding habits of a number of common species found in her seasonal home's woods in northwestern Pennsylvania.

While birds do not display human emotions (at least as far as we know...), their behavior translates very conveniently into our definitions of human relationships. Through Dr. Stutchbury's research, we learn that a female Scarlet Tanager would rather abandon her clutch of eggs than have an "irresponsible" mate (irresponsible defined as a male who doesn't respond to the sitting bird's alarm call for an hour). She, and her newly-hatched young, would be dependent upon the brightly colored red and black male to provide a steady supply of caterpillars for three to four weeks. If the male fails the response "test" while the female is incubating, it "may be better for the female to cut her losses and start over again elsewhere with a new male", rather than have herself and her demanding brood starve. Hmmm.

Not only focusing on her study of Pennsylvanian songbirds, Dr. Stutchbury presents information gained while her work took her overseas. We learn of the multi-year courtship of the wandering albatross, and of their twenty year "marriages". We also learn of the perils of birding research – bullet ants, and killer bees. Parentally endorsed siblicide, among many species of eagles, cranes, herons, pelicans and boobies, was also witnessed and studied. Now it's starting to sound like a play by Wm. Shakespeare.....

Although based on scientific research, *The Private Lives of Birds*, is very readable and enjoyable. Guaranteed – you'll learn the answers to many questions you have about bird behavior. Oh, and sprinkled throughout the text are delightful pencil sketches, done by noted artist Julie Zickefoose.





## Conservation Column

# Where our food comes from: important food for thought

Beth Gustin

**“Nobody can do everything but everyone can do something”**

Summer is right around the corner. Time for us to put away the Crock Pots and dust off the gas grills. Before you plan for seven days a week of burgers, hot dogs, bbq chicken, and beef kebabs, consider the environmental impacts of meat production.

Most of the meat that we purchase at the supermarket comes from large-scale farming operations where millions of cattle, chickens, and pigs are raised. These “factory farms” supply Americans with the 85 pounds of chicken, 65 pounds of beef, and 51 pounds of pork that each of us, on average, consumes every year. (Source: USDA Economic Research Service)

Generally speaking, cattle that are raised for meat production spend their first six months at pasture eating grass and the last eight months of their lives in feedlots eating corn. It takes eight pounds of grain to produce one pound of meat. Growing this grain, mostly corn and soybeans, for cattle feed requires fossil fuels for the tractors and other equipment used in planting and harvesting but also in the production of chemical fertilizers. This translates to about 284 gallons of oil needed for each calf to reach its slaughter weight.

In some countries where cattle are raised to meet the enormous global demands for beef, millions of acres of rainforest are cut down and cleared to graze cattle and for soybean production to feed the cattle. The hamburger that we eat may have been raised in the United States but fed soybeans grown from a clear-cut Brazilian rainforest.

Beef, pork, and chicken production also demand huge amounts of water, mostly to irrigate the crops and pastures used to feed the animals. Estimates vary widely as to how many gallons of water it takes to produce one pound of beef but it is probably around 1,500-2,000 gallons. This is a big environmental concern, especially if the water is pulled from an underground

aquifer faster than it is replenished or if water is diverted from a river. Many cities depend on aquifers and rivers for drinking water, and rivers are natural wildlife habitats and replenish vital wetland habitats.

There are also serious environmental concerns regarding pollution caused by cattle farms and especially chicken and hog factory farms. On the Delmarva Peninsula (an area including eastern sections of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) more than 600 million chickens are raised each year. These chickens produce enormous amounts of manure which is spread on agricultural fields as fertilizer. But the land can only absorb half of the nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) that leach out of the manure. The rest ends up washing into rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay, or eventually ends up in groundwater. The Chesapeake Bay now has “dead zones” which cannot sustain oysters, crabs, and fish, all which have ecological and economic significance.

Other states have similar problems with hog factory farms. An operation of 50,000 hogs (which is typical for a large factory farm) creates half a million pounds of pig waste every DAY. This waste is often kept in waste “ponds” which are essentially huge outdoor cesspools. Spills and seepage from the ponds can occur, especially in times of unusually heavy rains. In the case of cattle feedlots, there can be tens of thousands of cattle hanging out in dirt pens, and the waste from these cattle is stored in holding lagoons until it can be transported for use as fertilizer. After heavy rains, however, it is likely that some of the manure runs off of the feedlots, flows out of the holding lagoons, or runs off of the fields on which it has been spread and into nearby streams and rivers.

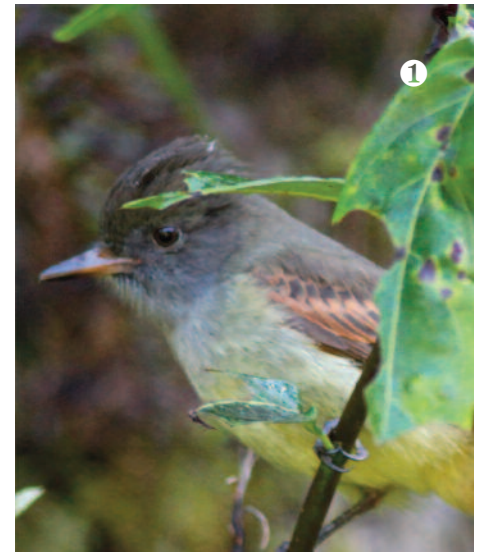
I am not suggesting that all Osprey readers become vegetarians. There are a couple of things we can do however, to reduce the impact that meat production has on the environment.

■ Increase the number of meat-free meals we have by just one or two a week. If millions of like-minded Americans did the

same, it could mean drastic reductions in meat demand.

■ Purchase meat and eggs from local, organic farms. These farms are exponentially smaller than factory farms and can properly handle the waste that their animals create. These small organic farms also feed their animals sustainably raised grains. Locally, you can find “Browder’s Birds”, which are raised in Southold, at the Westhampton Beach farmer’s market. You can also find organic and sustainably raised meats at Whole Foods.

Source of information for this article: *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter* by Peter Singer and Jim Mason.



## Neck-Collared Mute Swans Byron Young

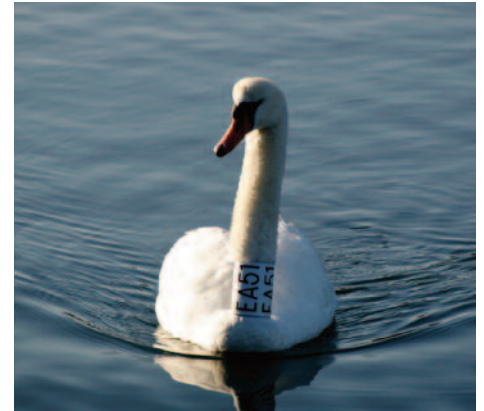
DECEMBER 30, 2010 IN SETAUKET HARBOR.

**O**n two occasions during 2009 and 2010, I observed Mute Swans with numbered neck collars. It is always exciting to encounter a banded bird. During my career I tagged thousands of fish and never tired of receiving a recapture and interacting with the person who found the tag. That excitement carries over to the present whenever I find a marked bird, whether it is a Mute Swan, the equally ubiquitous Canada goose, or something more exotic like a flag banded Red Knot.

Between 2004 and 2007 the NYSDEC neck banded about 160 Mute Swans, about 100 were on Long Island. A final report on this banding project is being prepared now. It will discuss the distribution of the banded birds, their survival rates

and movements. The project biologist passed on the following summary information from the draft final report:

“Swans banded on Long Island were nearly as sedentary as those banded on Lake Ontario. Only four (4%) of 102 birds banded on Long Island moved >50 km, and nearly all movements followed shorelines or water bodies. All swans banded on the south shore of Nassau County remained in that area (n=16 birds seen at least once), between Jamaica Bay and South Oyster Bay. All swans banded on the north shore of Suffolk County (i.e., Nissequogue River, Stony Brook Harbor and Conscience Bay) remained along the north shore (n=17 birds seen at least once), between Huntington Harbor and Port Jefferson Harbor, a span of 32 km (20



miles). None of these birds were reported seen on the south side of Long Island or across Long Island Sound. Similarly, most sightings of swans banded in central and eastern Long Island (i.e. Riverhead and Moriches Bay) were from the South Shore, with only four of 25 birds known to have moved as much as 50 km. All four were banded in or near the Forge River (Moriches Bay) during August 2004; two were seen in New Jersey, one seen in southern Nassau County, and one was seen along the Hudson River near Peekskill. The latter bird was the only Mute Swan that was documented moving from one major region of New York to another.”

My first neck-collared Mute Swan was seen on May 3, 2009 in the Peconic River off Indian Island. The bird was a male and had been banded as a juvenile on July 27, 2006 at the mouth of the Peconic River, across from Indian Island Golf course, east of the Rt. 105 bridge. This was the first sighting for this bird since it was tagged in the same area 3 years before. The second bird (photo above) was seen on December 30, 2010 in Setauket Harbor. This bird was a female was captured on her nest in Conscience Bay – Setauket Harbor on April 25, 2005. She was last reported seen in April of 2007.

What should you do if you see a neck-collared Mute Swan? If you see a neck collared Mute Swan note the number on the collar, when and where you observed the bird and send the information in an e-mail to the following address:

[fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us). You can read more about New York's Mute Swan population at the following website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7076.html>.



**Beth Gustin, who attended a friend's wedding in Jamaica, took a little time to go birding. She has shared her pictures with us. 1. Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, 2. Black-billed Parrot, 3. Red-billed Streamer Tail, 4. Olive Throated Parakeet and 5. a Little Blue Heron.**



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## 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)

*Pat, an ELIAS member, shared this photo of a Tufted Titmouse checking on her backyard feeder.*

### Survey Dates:

**May 8 to May 15**

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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*to be added. You will receive reminders of programs, and program changes, or cancellations. This is only an ELIAS list.*

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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*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:

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	<a href="mailto:eliasosprey@optonline.net">eliasosprey@optonline.net</a>

**Mark Your Calendars**

<b>Sun., May 1</b>	<b>Field Trip: Old Mastic Bird Walk, William Floyd Estate</b> <b>Leader: MaryLaura Lamont (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Mon., May 2</b>	<b>Nature Program: <i>Wow! How'd you get that picture?...</i></b> <b>Presenter: Grace Scalzo (see p. 3)</b>
<b>Sat., May 7</b>	<b>Field Trip: Robert Cushman Murphy County Park</b> <b>Leader: Carl Starace (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Sun., May 8</b>	<b>Field Trip: Maple Swamp. Leader: Eric Salzman (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Wed., May 11</b>	<b>Field Trip: Hunter's Garden. Leader: Eileen Schwinn (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Sat., May 14</b>	<b>Field Trip: Terrell River County Park.</b> <b>Leader: Jay Kuhlman (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Sun., May 15</b>	<b>Field Trip: Hunter's Garden. Leader: Carl Starace (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Wed., May 18</b>	<b>Field Trip: Quoque Wildlife Refuge</b> <b>Leader: John McNeil (see p. 2)</b>
<b>Sat., May 21</b>	<b>Field Trip: Hallockville Farm Fields &amp; Hallock State Park Preserve. Leader: MaryLaura Lamont (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Sun., May 22</b>	<b>Field Trip: Old Mastic Bird Work, William Floyd Estate</b> <b>Leader: MaryLaura Lamont (see p. 1)</b>
<b>Sat., June 4</b>	<b>Field Trip: Pine Meadow County Park</b> <b>Leader: Carl Starace (see p. 2)</b>
<b>Mon., May 2</b>	<b>Nature Program: James Galetto, Nature Photographer (see p. 3)</b>

If there are any changes in programming, it will be announced on the website and on Facebook.  
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