



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

# *The* **OSPREY**

September/October—Vol. XXXVIII No. 5

## SUFFOLK THEATER

**Join ELIAS for a  
dinner-theater event  
featuring Norman Smith's  
presentation on Snowy Owls  
Wednesday, October 16, 6:00 pm  
Cocktails, Dinner, Raffles & Fun  
at the newly renovated Suffolk Theater on  
Main Street in Downtown Riverhead.**

*For more information see page 5*



**See page 3 for Field Trips & Meetings**

*Please keep your membership current!  
Check the date on the mailing panel for your expiration date.*

## The President's Corner EPCAL Redevelopment Plan

Byron Young

Riverhead has initiated the process for submitting a redevelopment plan for the Grumman Property (EPCAL).

The first step in the process was a draft-scoping meeting held a few weeks ago to solicit comments from the public. I applaud Riverhead for the openness of the process through its first step and the promise to keep the process open for public input.

For those of you who would like to review the documents available please visit the Town of Riverhead's website at "Town of Riverhead NY. Gov." Once on the Home Page for the Town of Riverhead look for the link to the EPCAL Redevelopment on the right side of the page. After clicking on that link you will find all of the documents that were available for review during the draft scoping session.

The Town Board and their consultants will now be reviewing the comments received in preparation of a final Scoping Document which will then be brought back for public review and comment. Once the scoping process is complete an Environmental Impact Statement will be developed. How long this will take is anybody's guess. The process of completing the necessary documentation, submitting for public and governmental review will take a good deal of time and will hopefully address our concerns. Should any of our concerns not be addressed we should have ample opportunity to submit comments at a public meeting or in writing.

The good news here is that I think the Town of Riverhead has heard from the folks who want to preserve some of this property for the benefit of nature. It is our job along with our fellow conservationists to make sure that they do. As was pointed out by several speakers at the Draft Scoping Session we do not want Route 25 in Riverhead to look like sections of Route 25 further to the west.

*More to follow stay tuned.*

## Annual Seed Sale Fundraiser

Saturday, November 9th from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Start the winter off with plenty of seed! The birds will thank you all winter long! Please have your order form in by October 23rd. This is a fundraiser for Eastern Long Island Audubon Society and for the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Bay Gardens will be in the Nature Center selling bird related gift items! Please pre-order your seed. Order forms will be available at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge, as well as on the following websites in October: [www.QuogueWildlifeRefuge.org](http://www.QuogueWildlifeRefuge.org) and [www.EasternLongIslandAudubonSociety.org](http://www.EasternLongIslandAudubonSociety.org).

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<b>Orders need to be picked up on</b>		<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	_____
<b>Saturday, November 9, 2013</b>		<b>DONATION</b>	_____
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**\*Orders must be received by October 23, 2013 \*Pre-payment is necessary.**

## Pheasant Meadows Bluebird Trail

Beth Gustin

Although our bluebird trail in East Moriches did not attract any Bluebirds again this year (second year in a row), we did have another successful Tree Swallow season. The swallows nested in four of the eight nest boxes with 10 birds fledging.

I also observed a Red-winged Blackbird nest during the nesting season, as well as Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, and Willow Flycatchers. What appeared to be a young Red-tailed Hawk was being chased by about 30 blackbirds the last time I visited the property in July, and I also startled a young buck with stubby antlers.



**Thank you to the Suffolk County Historical Society in Riverhead for hosting our August meeting at the Museum. The display of Dennis Puleston's artwork runs through September 28 and is well worth a visit.**

## Field Trips

John McNeil

The cool weather is right around the corner, and fall migration will soon follow. I know you hate to think that the fall is coming, but it is, sooner than you think. We plan to meet the early "snow birds" (not the trailer driving kind either) as they make their way south. Saturday Sept. 14th, I will be your guide for Smith Point County Park to catch the air currents as we observe raptors along the shore. In October, join Eileen on a journey to Fire Island's Sunken Forest looking for late migrants as they flutter along our coast.

Won't you join our leaders as they guide you into the fall migration.

Sat., Sept. 14th, @ 8:30 AM

### Smith Point County Park

Trip Leader: John McNeil

We will meet at the western end of the Smith Point County Park parking lot. Please watch the weather and wear appropriate outerwear. Don't forget to bring binoculars and scopes. We start at the upper deck of the Ranger Station and then hike out into the Wilderness Area. Songbirds, waterbirds and birds of prey are all migrating. This is an exciting time of year to be out on the barrier beach so come on out! For more details, contact me at 631.281.2623 or on the day my cell phone 631-219-8947 or e-mail me at [birdwchr@gmail.com](mailto:birdwchr@gmail.com).

Sat., Oct. 5th, @ 10:30 am ferry from Sayville

### Sunken Forest

National Wildlife Refuge, Fire Island

Leaders will be members of the ELIAS Board of Directors

The Sunken Forest on Fire Island is a rare maritime holly forest, the only one on the east coast. The harsh growing conditions support a variety of rare plants. As you look down from the secondary dunes into a lush canopy of trees you will see why it is called a sunken forest. We hope to catch the migration of song birds and raptors along the shoreline.

The ferry to Sailor's Haven leaves the Sayville terminal at 10:30 am, the return trip leaves Fire Island at 3:00 pm. We will meet in the parking lot. Be sure to get on the ferry to Sailor's Haven. The cost is \$13.00 per person. The ferry takes about 20 minutes each way.

Bring water, and lunch. The walk will be along the 1.5 mile boardwalk that meanders through the Sunken Forest.

Eileen Schwinn would like to know how who to expect so please give her a call at home: 631-728-8342 or cell: 516-662-7751 to let her know. Or email: [beachmed@optonline.net](mailto:beachmed@optonline.net)



## Meetings

Monday, September 16, beginning at 7:15 pm

### A Fierce Green Fire: The Battle for a Living Planet

On Sept. 16th, thanks to Ridge Barnett, we will be showing the movie **A Fierce Green Fire: The Battle for a Living Planet**. This is the first big-picture exploration of the Environmental Movement. It was chosen in 2012 for both The Environmental Film Festival in Washington, D.C. and The Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. This film depicts many of the "green" efforts (spanning over 5 decades) by grassroots citizens, as well as by global activists, including: Halting dams in the Grand Canyon; Battling 20,000 tons of toxic waste at Love Canal; Greenpeace trying to save whales; Chico Mendes and the rubber-tappers saving the Amazon; Addressing climate change, and the promise of transforming our civilization. **This program sounds like it should not be missed!**

Monday, October 7, beginning at 7:15 pm

### Birds of Riviera Maya

Linda Sullivan & Dianne Taggart

On yearly sojourns to my Mayan Palace Timeshare resort near Playa del Carmen, I have always enjoyed the lovely beaches, pools and culinary delights that Mexico has to offer. I have often been tantalized by a glance of a colorful wing high in a tree or a bright yellow something or other flying over the pool. On early morning runs, I have heard the buzz of a hummingbird or the hoot of an owl.

Finally, curiosity getting the best of me, I invited Dianne Taggart to join me on my February vacation in 2012. That year the vacation goal was to see and identify as many of the birds as possible. Much to my delight, we managed to see an impressive number of species and witnessed some curious behavior as well. THEN we went to the beach, the pool and the restaurants!!

On Oct 7th we would like to share the photos and video clips we captured on this mission of curiosity! We mainly birded the resort property, which is extensive, with many undisturbed areas awaiting future development, as well as the manicured lawns and planted gardens.

One day we did venture into Playa del Carmen to visit an aviary which housed native birds. At the aviary we managed to get some close up shots of birds that had proven difficult to get close to back at the resort.

An especially rewarding encounter was a bitter territorial battle between two mockingbirds. Dianne shot video while I shot photos. This sequence alone is worth coming to the meeting to see! You will never look at mockingbirds the same way again!

We are excited to share our experiences and photos with you all. We appreciate the warm reception our presentations have received in the past. Looking forward to a big turn out again this time.....and we promise not to disappoint! **Vive Mexico!**



## Kalers Pond & Butterfly Count

Jay Kuhlman

**F**irst for the Kalers Pond Audubon Center. The summer nature programs have gone well, the gardens also did well attracting butterflies, moths and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Look for our fall festival with a presentation featuring live animals, either birds and/or reptiles. The date is being decided now.

**Butterfly count.** I have been doing a North American Butterfly Association July Fourth butterfly count for the past five years with Steve Biasetti. Numerous members of ELIAS have participated including Andy Murphy, Aaron Virgin and my wife Susan. We go out at a reasonable hour, 8 am, and cover Central Suffolk CBC territory. It is usually hot but rewarding. We have seen up to 35 species and have that great feeling the Elliot Porter described as "a moment of discovery" when many beautiful swallowtails, like Black, Tiger and Spicebush, and Hair-streaks, like small jewels, are discovered. Then there are skippers, like fall warblers, small, fast rather cryptic making them difficult to identify.

There are also many birds in the fields and of the forest edge habitat. Their calls add a great background for the day. This year at Cranberry Bog County Park looking for Appalachian Brown, Least Skippers and Mulberry wings, Steve and I heard and saw a fast moving school of Alewives being chased by something. At first thinking a large bass. After a while a brown dog shaped head popped up and then swam above the surface across the stream. We were stunned and ran through the differential IDs. mink, muskrat, river otter. After discussing it and thinking about what we had seen decided it had to be an otter, our first on Long Island. We had both been to the presentation by Mike Bottini about his study of River Otters on Long Island at a conference at the Brookhaven Lab in the Spring. Steve reported to Mike and a week later another person saw an otter near the same site. Let me know if you like to participate next year.

## CONSERVATION COLUMN

### BEACH CLEAN-UP

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

Beth Gustin

**H**ere on eastern Long Island we are blessed with miles of gorgeous beaches, both on the ocean and bays. As all of us who spend time on these beaches know, they are often littered with well, litter! The litter gets there in different ways, whether intentionally discarded on the beach, or ending up on the beach after being tossed off of a boat or thrown out of a car window, or even accidentally ending up on the beach, like helium balloons that have escaped.

Regardless of how garbage gets onto our beaches, it is unsightly and can harm sea turtles, seals, fish and of course birds that feed in the marsh, on the beach, or in the bays and ocean.

On September 21, why not join thousands of other folks who care about our beaches, oceans and bays by participating in the International Coastal Cleanup! As the name indicates, people around the world pick up trash on their local beaches. The event is organized by Ocean Conservancy, and since it began almost 30 years ago, the Coastal Cleanup has grown to over 500,000 volunteers. Some interesting facts about the 2012 Coastal Cleanup:

- People from 97 countries participated and picked up trash along the coasts and also along inland waterways.
- Over 2 million cigarette butts were picked up!
- 6 of the top 10 most common types of trash were made of plastic including bottles, lids, straws, and food wrappers.
- Some of the more interesting items found were lottery tickets, candles, and sports balls.
- Over 10 million pounds of trash were picked up over 17,000 miles.

We can participate through our local marine advocacy group, American Littoral Society. They have an extensive group of volunteers, leaders and many beach cleanup sites on Long Island.

Check out these websites to learn more and to sign up to participate in the Cleanup on September 21.

**littoralsociety.org** Click on Programs then NY State Beach Cleanup or **oceanconservancy.org**

Even if you don't want to participate in the organized International Coastal Cleanup, make a commitment to spend an hour or so picking up trash on your favorite beach. As we all know about conservation, it is often a combination of many small efforts that can make a big difference.

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**ELIAS Presents  
Norman Smith's  
presentation on  
Snowy Owls,  
a dinner-theater  
event at newly restored  
The Suffok Theater in Riverhead.**



**O**n October 16 ELIAS will take over the newly renovated Suffolk Theater on Main Street in Riverhead. We are looking forward to an exciting and fun evening. The Suffolk Theater, in addition to being a regular theater, can be set up as a dinner theater, so that is what we are planning — dinner, a bit of theater, a raffle and an engaging presentation about Snowy Owls by Norman Smith, Director of the Blue Hills Trailside Museum and The Norman Smith Environmental Education Center in Milton, MA. Cocktail hour will start at 6:00, dinner and presentation will follow. The cost is \$50.00 per person which includes dinner.

Norman Smith, who will be doing the presentation, has worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society since 1974. As a self-taught naturalist, he has studied

birds of prey for over 35 years. He has rehabilitated injured birds and successfully fostered over 1,000 orphaned hawk and owl chicks into adoptive nests. His ongoing long-term projects include trapping and banding migrating hawks and owls at the Blue Hills Reservation, banding nestling hawks and owls, and doing research on Snowy Owls and other raptors wintering at Boston's Logan International Airport. He has also traveled to Alaska to study Snowy Owls in their native tundra habitat. His research work has been published in *National Geographic*, *National Wildlife*, *Ranger Rick*, *Yankee*, *Massachusetts Wildlife*, *Bird Observer*, *Birding*, *Sanctuary*, *Geo*, *Nature*, *Grolier Encyclopedia*, *Owls of the Northern Hemisphere* and *Owls of the World*.

The raffle prizes are coming in and will include a boat trip on the Priscilla from the

Maritime Museum, prizes from Wild Bird Unlimited in Oakdate, Eastport Feed, South Fork Natural History Museum, wine tastings, signed photographs and signed Dennis Puleston prints.

We will be introducing a special edition of an ELIAS calendar with photos of local birds by Byron Young available in a very limited edition.

Watch for your invitation and please call Sally Newbert at 631-2816001 or Evelyn Voulgarelis at 631-727-0471 for more information and/or reservations.




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## Get Involved

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 an article or a photo?

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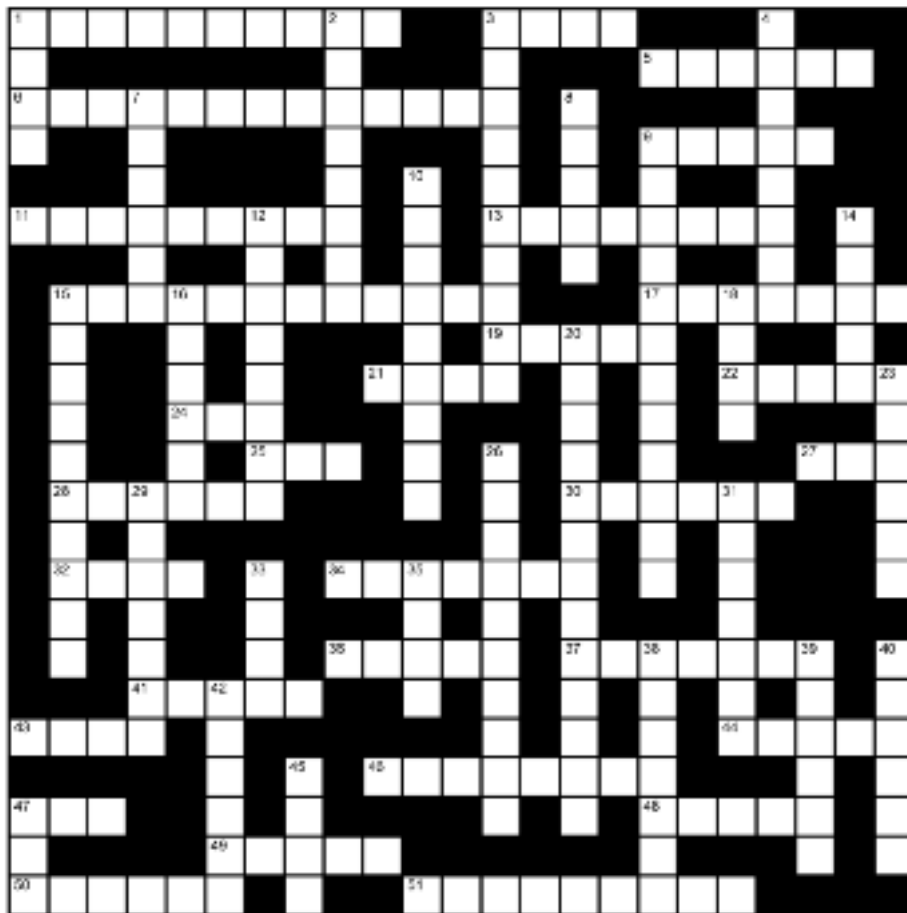
to hear from you. Contact:

[eliasosprey@optonline.net](mailto:eliasosprey@optonline.net).

Answers to last issue's July/August puzzle  
 A Summer Puzzle by Tom Moran



## An Autumn Puzzle by Tom Moran



### Across

- 1 Alternate name for Nightjars from the strange belief that they sucked the milk from these animals
- 3 Clapper \_\_\_\_, elusive, salt marsh bird
- 5 \_\_\_\_ Warbler, the one with a black necklace
- 6 A common thrush
- 9 \_\_\_\_ Turnstone, a common orange-legged shorebird
- 11 \_\_\_\_ Oriole, not the Raven, for you football fans
- 13 \_\_\_\_ Wigeon
- 15 \_\_\_\_ Owl (2 words), scarce in boreal forests
- 17 Black-\_\_\_\_ Plover
- 19 King or Common
- 21 Consisting of contrasting colors, most often black and white
- 22 An uncommon blackbird
- 24 A heron with a white belly and thin neck stripe
- 25 \_\_\_\_-necked Stint, a rare visitor this summer from Asia
- 27 Some have horns, some ears
- 28 \_\_\_\_ Warbler, yellow face with black cowl
- 30 \_\_\_\_ Blue Heron
- 32 \_\_\_\_ Dove, aka feral pigeon
- 34 \_\_\_\_ Loon, a surprise visitor from the left coast last winter
- 36 Canada \_\_\_\_\_. Its hard not to see one of these.
- 37 \_\_\_\_ Grosbeak
- 41 Football team from Baltimore (singular)
- 43 \_\_\_\_ Eagle
- 44 The more dominant color on the head of an American Wigeon compared to a European
- 46 Monk \_\_\_\_\_
- 47 Blue \_\_\_\_, probably at your feeder, right now
- 48 A good place to see the Golden type is Franklin Mtn, NY during migration
- 50 Uncommon Kingfisher in Texas
- 51 American \_\_\_\_\_, brightly colored, thistle eating bird

### Down

- 1 \_\_\_\_ Catbird
- 2 A large flock of these starlings is known as a murmuration, this happens in autumn
- 3 \_\_\_\_ Duck, these should be put around fingers
- 4 Northern \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 A bird of prey
- 8 The only all white gull with black legs.
- 9 \_\_\_\_ Grosbeak, May is a good time to see these at North Fork Preserve
- 10 \_\_\_\_ Jaeger
- 12 Teacher, Teacher, Teacher
- 14 \_\_\_\_ Egret
- 15 Black or Yellow Crowned
- 16 \_\_\_\_ Duck, a surprise visitor last winter
- 18 \_\_\_\_ Sparrow, seen at Captree last year
- 20 Cormorant that migrates in irregular Vs, the one without the white hip patch
- 23 Lesser \_\_\_\_-legs
- 26 A bay duck with a white head patch
- 29 \_\_\_\_ Oriole
- 31 Northern \_\_\_\_\_, maybe we'll get another visit to Montauk from Europe this November
- 33 Northern \_\_\_\_ a visitor to Staten Island this June
- 38 \_\_\_\_ Phoebe, \_\_\_\_ Bluebird, \_\_\_\_ Towhee, you get the idea
- 39 One species of this family has a two toned bill, hence Pied-Billed (plural)
- 40 Northern \_\_\_\_\_, a large, plunge-diving sea bird, large numbers can be seen off the South Fork in the winter
- 42 \_\_\_\_ Thrush
- 45 \_\_\_\_ Swallow
- 47 A Goatsucker can also be called this: Night \_\_\_\_.

## BISHOP INTRODUCES LEGISLATION: **SAVE, DON'T SELL PLUM ISLAND**

On July 16th Congressman Tim Bishop was joined by a coalition of elected officials and environmental advocates to announce the introduction of his new bipartisan bill aimed at preserving critical biodiversity and preventing further development on Plum Island by eliminating the current requirement in law that the island be sold at public auction.

Legislation passed by Congress in 2008 mandates the public sale of Plum Island, with the proceeds intended to partially offset the \$1.2 billion cost of the proposed National Bio-and-Agro Defense Facility (NBAF) in Kansas. At a press conference in Orient with the 840-acre, federally-owned island in the background, Bishop said that Plum Island's value as a research facility and wildlife conservation area far exceeds any revenue that the government would realize from a public sale. Bishop's **"Save, Don't Sell Plum Island"** legislation will permanently decouple the future of Plum Island from that of NBAF.

Bishop's bill was introduced in the House of Representatives with Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT) and Congressman Michael Grimm (R-NY) as cosponsors. Companion legislation is slated to be introduced in the Senate by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

Bishop has consistently fought against funding for NBAF, arguing that the massive new facility is unaffordable given the nation's budget constraints and would duplicate many of the research functions currently served well by other existing facilities, including Plum Island. Bishop said that the Plum Island Animal Disease Research Center will continue to operate until at least 2020 and that no potential sale would take place before that date.


Last month, the federal General Services Administration (GSA) released a Final Environmental Impact Statement on the sale and continues to prepare for a potential public auction, claiming that up to 500 new homes could be constructed on the island. Residential development is adamantly opposed by Bishop, other elected officials representing Southhold

Town, and environmental groups. The Southhold Town Board has endorsed an "adaptive re-use" plan for the island where research work would continue in the area already devoted to that purpose, with approximately two-thirds of the island's diverse landscape preserved as a conservation district.

The "Save, Don't Sell Plum Island" legislation text notes that over \$23 million in federal funding has been spent on facility maintenance and upgrades at the current federal research campus on Plum Island since January 2012 and that "Plum Island contains cultural, historical, ecological, and natural resources of regional and national significance."

Congressman Bishop said: "Plum Island is one of the natural treasures of the Northeast and my bill would eliminate the wrongheaded requirement that it be sold into private hands for a fraction of its true value to our nation. If the federal government did not already own Plum Island, it would be seeking to purchase it for conservation as prime habitat for rare birds and plants as well as a research campus ideal for the study of biology and botany, alternative energy development, or other

scientific disciplines. Elected officials, environmental advocates, and the entire community speak with one voice in support of my legislation: save, don't sell Plum Island."

According to Bob DeLuca, President of the Southhold-based, Group for the East End, "it's hard to imagine a worse idea than selling off one of this Nation's publicly owned natural and historic treasures, simply to satisfy an ill-advised accounting gimmick intended to hide the real costs of a billion dollar bio-defense laboratory that we may not even need. Thankfully, Congressman Bishop has seen this charade for what it is, and has taken the lead on this important measure to stop the sale of Plum Island to the highest bidder, and keep this remarkable island in public hands," he said. 

In other developments the Town of Southhold has changed the zoning for Plum Island, which now would bans residential housing making it less desirable for development.

There are some reports a mastodon skeleton has been found on the Island, making it an important archeological site.

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## For the Birds in New York City Public Schools

**Kathleen Heenan**

Twice a week during the spring and fall I travel to areas of the Bronx to teach a 2 to 3 hour class about birds to 2nd to 5th graders. I happily do this under the *For The Birds* program, sponsored by New York State Audubon. Chuck Remington, vp director of field support for Audubon Centers and education in the eastern region, had the idea to teach youngsters about birding in 1997. Working with Wendy Paulson, a Central Park bird guide for The Nature Conservancy and a long time nature teacher in Barrington, Illinois, and Gini Stowe, a parent educator, a nature guide and Audubon board member, he developed the school based program and wrote the birding curriculum, combining other subject matter: art, history, writing, geography and math. The mission was to teach birding to young children in under served schools and to spend at least half the time outside. The program was launched in 1999 with Wendy and Gini as the first lead teachers in schools on Staten Island, the Bronx and Manhattan. FTB has since expanded to all four (and soon to be five) NYC boroughs and to communities in Westchester and Nassau Counties and upstate New York.

Currently, the director, Haley Main, and two assistants run the NYC program and lead teach with 8 volunteer lead teachers and many more assistants. Volunteers are recruited by word of mouth, ads in the NYC Audubon newsletter and the Audubon web site for NYS. New volunteer informational training meetings are held every September. Several times a year workshops are held. These have included tours of the Museum of Natural History, techniques to manage a classroom and canoe trips on the Hudson River at Constitution Marsh.

Audubon charges the schools a small fee for the program. Schools choose a 4, 8 or 16 week program, one or two bird walks in Van Cortlandt Park, Central Park, and/or Jamaica Bay are included.

Each child receives a name tag, an FTB

journal and a bird guide about NY State birds. The children answer questions about the lessons in their journals, do drawings of birds, name the bird and label the body parts. The art work is often remarkable because of the children's talent and the effort of their art teachers to create bird pictures in different mediums. The photo right of the three dimensional Red-tailed Hawk is constructed from recycled classroom paper, an example from the the Ampark School.

I first became involved in the NYC program in 2001 through Wendy Paulson whom I had met on bird walks in Central Park. After meeting Wendy I started assisting in the classroom. Presently, I teach at two schools in the Bronx.

Because of all the parks in NYC, the opportunity to easily walk to areas for birding is ideal. The past few years I have taught at the Ampark School, half block away from Van Cortlandt Park, and at PS 65 near the 35-acre St. Mary's Park (a poorly maintained park, but its overgrown trees and shrubbery brought in hunting Red-tailed Hawks, nesting warblers, Scarlet Tanagers and Baltimore Orioles). PS 107 is only a block from Soundview Park. At each school we walk outside after a short lesson in the classroom. The children love going outside, leaving their overcrowded school rooms. Last fall at both schools my students saw Merlins hunting, and in the spring we observed courting and nesting behavior including nests built on lamp posts, under air conditioners and even a robin's nest in a tree snag with blue wrapping ribbon.

We start our program with a lesson on what makes a bird a bird. We move on to identification through field marks (we often play a game called stump Ms. Kath-



leen as the students describe field marks and I try to identify the bird). Further lessons include adaptation of beaks and feet (or to tell what a bird eats, observe its beak), To learn about migration children take various roles in a play as they travel, as a migrating bird, from South America to perhaps as far away as the Maritime Provinces. Pigeon watch is a two-class program developed by Cornell's Lab of Ornithology to teach the seven morphs of pigeons and their behavior: Bird calls and songs; and how birds get their names round out the program. After the first lesson we start with the neighborhood bird walks so the children get to know the usual suspects and frequently catch sight

*continued*



## Highlights of the Summer Walks Sally Newbert

of Red-tailed Hawks kiting around. In the spring we look at web cam sites that are following nesting eagles and hawks.

Recently we started a habitat enhancement project with some funding from a New York City garden club and the Bronx Parks Department. We did a planting to attract birds in front of the Soundview school. With help from the custodian, (he is watering it this summer) the soil was rot-o-tilled so the children could plant the flowers etc. (see photo, left).

Students often do a writing and research project on a favorite bird. They make bird books containing information about, and pictures of, their birds. The birds are drawn, body parts are labeled and information is included about the birds behavior, location, what they like to eat. Often the drawings include bird's habitat.

It is not easy to teach a class of very active and sometimes troubled, needy children but the rewards are many. In addition to the satisfaction of observing the children's excitement as they learn about birds and experience the outdoors, my thank you letters and drawings have grown into a large stack over the years. Let's hope these young students, authors and artists constitute the next generation of birders.

*Kathleen Heenan is an ELIAS member who lives both in NYC and on the East End.*



**There is still time to sign up for the 66th Annual NYSOA Meeting November 1 - 3 in Union City on Long Island**  
[www.nybirdersconference.org](http://www.nybirdersconference.org)



ERIN KING



ERIN KING

July 13th at The South Fork Museum of Natural History a turkey surprised everyone when it flew out of the brush. The field had several nesting Indigo Bunting, a Purple Martin colony, a Common Yellowthroat and Cedar Waxwings.



SALLY NEWBERT



SALLY NEWBERT

On July 14th starting at Shinnecock Inlet stopping under the Ponquogue Bridge, then going onto our most productive stop on the bay side of Tiana where the new Sandy-created washover beach was favored by Skimmers, Common, Royal and Fosters Terns, Ruddy Turnstones and Short-billed Dowitchers. Then, on to Pikes (right) where there were Oystercatchers and a flyby Little Blue Heron.

On August 17 we went out to Cupsogue. On our way out to the flats, some returning birders reported an Upland Sandpiper in the marsh. We got there just in time for some good scope views. Marbled Godwits (right) were more cooperative and were feeding very close to the beach. We spotted about 26 species.



EILEEN SCHWINN



EILEEN SCHWINN

## EPCAL – Riverhead’s strange treasure

*I admit to a certain fascination with Riverhead’s EPCAL. It has a seedy quality in some places, a certain mystery when you find the old bunkers, and a wildness in others. The birds still make their homes there. At my last trip I found Meadowlarks, Kestrels and Grasshopper Sparrows. Last winter there were hunting Northern Harriers, even with all the Sandy damaged cars. A few years ago the Short-earned Owls spent the winter. So I watched with amazement when a railroad track was built. Armed and unfriendly guards hung out at the community center. The construction equipment had out of state plates. That’s all gone now, but the rail to almost nowhere is completed. So I was surprised to find this article in the Riverhead News-Review. You be the judge — what do you think of the new rail line? Oh, did I mention parts of this property are grasslands, now a rare habitat on Long Island.*

*This article is used with the permission of Tim Gannon.*

*Sally Newbert, The Osprey Editor*

## Rail spur in Calverton has just one customer after \$5.5M stimulus project

By Tim Gannon

The \$5.5 million restoration of the rail spur into the Enterprise Park at Calverton was hailed by politicians with hard hats and shovels when the job was first begun in May 2010, but three years later, only one company is actually using the rail spur.

Paul Victor, president of New York and Atlantic Railway, which handles freight on the Long Island Rail Road, said the company has only one active customer using the rail spur, Eastern Wholesale Fence.

When the spur was completed in 2011, two Calverton companies, Eastern Wholesale Fence and Metro Biofuels, were expected to use the spur, which terminates near those companies’ locations on the western side of the EPCAL.

Since then, however, Metro, which also had oil terminals in Brooklyn, has declared bankruptcy. The business, including the EPCAL site, was acquired by the Red Apple Group, headed by billionaire John Catsimatidis, who also bought the ConocoPhillips oil terminal in Northville. The new company is called United Metro.

Mr. Victor said that, so far, the new company has not reached out to New York and Atlantic about using the rail spur.

United Metro representatives could not be reached for comment.

On the other hand, Mr. Victor said, the arrangement with Wholesale Fence “has worked out precisely as we hoped.” But, he added, “We were hoping to have two anchor customers.”

Riverhead Supervisor Sean Walter was critical of the rail spur’s design when it was under construction, saying it was designed to serve only two businesses. He had proposed building a new siding off the spur, heading toward the center of the industrial park, where it would serve more businesses — a plan that did not come to fruition.

“I think the ultimate goal is to try to have businesses at EPCAL locate either on property to the south that we are subdividing, where the rail could fit right into that property, or to try to run it up Burman Boulevard, where there are a lot of businesses,” Mr. Walter said Friday.

But, he added, any changes to the rail spur would need additional federal funding or funding from the private businesses that seek to benefit from it.

The rail spur restoration was funded with \$4.8 million in federal stimulus funds and additional money from the state.

“The town is not going to pay [to extend the rail spur],” Mr. Walter said. “I’ve heard passing interest, or people saying they think it’s a good idea and they’d like to use it, but nobody has come to me directly and said, ‘We need this. When can we get it?’ So right now, it’s just serving one business.”

Another existing EPCAL business that’s interested in extending the rail spur is Island International, which is in contract to

purchase property on Burman Boulevard with the intention of building facilities there, Island Green Steel, that will make metal studs for use in construction.

Although he hasn’t reached out to town officials, Island International president Tim Stevens told the *News-Review* he’s hoping to have a new rail siding extended through the east side of buildings along Burman Boulevard, which would feed the Island Green Steel building at 400 Burman Boulevard, along with the adjacent Lido Stone building, and possibly four other buildings to the north, he said.

But the land from which he proposes to have the spur extended is currently under the control of the U.S. Navy, which is still conducting cleanup activities to remove pollution from the land. Officials with the Navy, which used to own the former fighter jet plant property, have given no timetable for completion of the remediation work.

Use of a rail spur would take trucks off the road and allow materials to be shipped by rail, Mr. Stevens said.

“Direct delivery is key in our business,” Mr. Stevens said. “Our master coil steel exceeds weights of 60,000 pounds per coil and total freight car loads will exceed 250,000 pounds per car. We always try to achieve maximum efficiency when moving this kind of weight and limiting excess cranes and trucks.”

He said the company will be trying to engineer a plan that would benefit both his business and others at EPCAL.

Mr. Victor said that while New York and Atlantic provides freight services to businesses, it’s up to the businesses themselves to provide the direct rail connection to their properties.

“We’re like any utility: If you want the service, you’ve got to pay to connect,” Mr. Victor said.



# A Long-Time Favorite

## Larry Penny

Having looked at and listened to birds since I first opened my eyes and used my ears, 77 years later, I've finally decided on my favorite bird. It's the first species I ever preoccupied myself with, perhaps, because it was a curious about me as I was about it. Before I was three I used to walk around outside the Penny house on Westphalia Road in Mattituck and examine this and that living thing.

A gray bird with black markings used to follow me around on my little journeys keeping well out of reach, mewing its scratchy call, getting my attention. It was the bird I learned by name, the Catbird. We had a small farm when I was a child, we raised chickens, pigs, ducks, goats and the like, but mostly we raised different berries, raspberries, boysenberries, strawberries, gooseberries and currants, among them.

I think it was the plethora of ripe berries that lured the Catbird to our yard year after year. There must have been lots of Catbird nests and lots of baby Catbirds but I never looked for them, I was mesmerized by the adult Catbird that followed me around calling all the while.

When I was 43 years old I moved into my present residence in Noyac in the spring of 1979. Wouldn't you know it, the first bird I saw in my new yard was a Catbird. Every year since then a Catbird or two has shown up every spring and disappeared by the end of September. After feeding on the last pokeberry and or autumn olive berry, the Catbirds would leave. Unless I saw one on one of the annual Christmas Bird Counts by chance, I would have to wait until the following spring to see one.

About five years ago, my wife Julie took to putting out blueberries on the patio table for the birds. Well, the Catbirds took to them right away. This year I started putting out blueberries on the patio table and they disappeared within an hour or so, but the Catbirds would only take the berries when I wasn't looking.

During the nesting season, the male would sing his spattering of this-and-that notes in a continuous string beginning at 5:40 am. He would go on for an hour or two, but then just before the baby Catbirds fledged he became silent. During midday, however, he would be following my footsteps or those of my wife, calling out for more blueberries. Once the blueberries were on the table he became silent, the berries disappeared one by one, feeding young, I thought to myself.

Two weeks ago I found an adult catbird in perfect shape dead in the driveway. Perhaps, it had hit a window. The death accounted for the catbird song silence in the early morning from that time on. The surviving adult, the female I thought, cared for the one fledgling that resulted from this year's breeding. She continued to remind us to put out blueberries until the fledgling was old enough to fend for itself.

She comes and visits now and then, but no longer begs for blueberries. There is something about the Catbird that speaks



to a longing deep inside my brain. I don't know what it is, but I do know at 78 years of age that the Catbird is my favorite bird and, I guess, has been so during all those years of looking and listening, from tot through child through teenager to young man to middleager to senior citizen.



## Remembering Jim Clinton, Sr.

### Bob Adamo

As I was thinking about Jim, there was one more story I wanted to share with our members. Another example of Jim Sr.'s intrepidity took place on another count, with the weather, albeit, snow this time, bringing out the *quiet tiger* in him. It took place on Dec. 30, 2000 on the Orient CBC. After Gil Raynor became incapacitated, Jim Sr. took over many of Gil's responsibilities, one of them being the Shelter Island (North Sector) leader. As such, we caught the 6 am ferry out of Greenport, planned to bird all day, and catch a ferry back after dark and then attend the compilation at MaryLaura Lamont's house. It had been snowing since about 2 am and continued as we left Wading River at 5 am. With the questionable weather forecast, Jim did have his doubts about getting in a full day. Once on the Shelter Island, we found the snow coming down harder and the wind much stronger.

After a short while, it got so bad that we had to stop, but managed to find refuge in an open luncheonette...where we waited the storm out. About 2 hours later we resumed the count, finishing with a Screech Owl – one of our morning misses! Upon reaching MaryLaura's house for the compilation party, amidst all the snow, MaryLaura was flabbergasted! Most of her participants had either not started, or pulled out mid-morning. A few had indeed finished their sectors and skipped the compilation. We (read, Jim Sr.) had "stayed the course" and now wanted to be fed...which ML was overjoyed to do!





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