



# The OSPREY

May/June 2010 — Vol. XXXV No. 3

## MAY MADNESS

### WHAT'S MAY MADNESS?

May marks both the return of the warblers that breed on Long Island and the time that migrant warblers travel through our area on their way to their northern breeding territory. That means there are numerous possibilities, breeders, migrants, and maybe a vagrant, if the wind is blowing or a new front comes in. Will it be a good spring, or one filled with rain and weather, taking the birds on different paths?

If you are a long-time birder you know any number of songs which can help you both locate the bird and correctly identify it. Spring means most of the males are singing their distinctive songs and are in breeding plumage. So if you can get a good look, making an identification should be possible. For less experienced birders finding those warblers still presents many challenges. There are a few songs that are quite distinctive, the witchity-witch of the Common Yellowthroat is probably the easiest to recognize. They are usually in the bushes and hedgerows, so look sideways don't look up, to see this masked guy. Listen for the beee-buzz of the Blue-winged Warbler, a breeder in the area. He also is usually in brush, high shrubs or on low tree branches. Teacher-Teacher shouted loudly in the woods means there is an Ovenbird on his breeding territory. He's usually low.

Sibley states there are 54 species of Wood Warblers in the US. There are 13 species of warblers that have been reported breeders on Long Island. In gen-

eral, Sibley points out, the brightly colored species are in the tops of trees, the ground dwellers tend to be drab.

The names can be descriptive, like Black-throated Green Warbler or Black and White Warbler. Some are named for the place where they were first encountered, like Cape May or Connecticut Warbler, or for the person who first described them like Wilson's Warbler.

The first warbler I saw was just a few years ago with an ELIAS group in Hunters Garden. There were several weekday trips scheduled for early mornings. The walks were well timed for me because they broke up by about 10 am. I could be at work before anyone missed me. (Well, almost no one, my ex-business partner called on one of those days. Never having known me for a morning person, she was more than a little shocked to find I was just returning from the best part of my day). This year Bob Adamo will be leading a mid-week trip to Hunters Garden, on May 12 at 7:30 am.

### Hard to find LI Hot Spots

Have you noticed, there are quite a few very, very hard to find birding locations on Long Island? Maple Swamp and Hunters Garden, I think, take the cake. There are no signs until you are already walking in them. Hunters Garden has a sign on a rock that is in the woods. It may be overgrown by now, I will have to look for it on this year's walks. Maple Swamp has a sign only well after you start walking down the path. Both of these areas, probably because they are relatively unknown and somewhat unused, seem to be very popu-

lar with the birds; real warbler magnets. Of course, they may be reading different sorts of signs than humans read.

There is an ELIAS trip to Maple Swamp on May 9th led by Eric Saltzman. Eric is a musician and has a keen ear for bird songs. This might be a good way to learn where Maple Swamp is. Eric will be waiting on Pleasure Drive for the group at 8 am so you will be able to find the entrance and learn the paths. Be warned this can be a ticky walk, so take precautions. Vinyl boots, socks with insect repellent, sticky tape and bug spray can all help.

Hunters Garden is off Route 51. If you are headed north from Montauk Hwy in East Moriches (you could also get on 51 from Sunrise and head toward Riverhead) you will come to a colorful sign for Northhampton. Here there is a turn that would allow you to go the other way on 51, BUT just turn there and go across Rt 51 to the dirt road that is directly ahead of you. That is Hunters Garden. Take the dirt road (slowly) until you come to a clearing to meet the group.

John McNeil has scheduled many Warbler Walks for May Madness. The walks are always led by knowledgeable leaders so please join us as we celebrate **May Madness**. There's lots to see and lots to learn.

If you have that competitive edge Beth Gustin is organizing **BIRDATHON** on May 8th. Get a team together, get pledges and go birding. See page 5 for all the details. Join in.

Sally Newbert, Editor



## Field Trips Schedule for May and June

John McNeil

Telephone your chiropractor and make several appointments in the month of May for Warbler Neck, the most common complaint from birders this time of year.

With the coming May and June field trip schedule, chiropractic adjustments will be the order of the day. So....come join our field trip leaders as they take you on this fantastic hobby of ours, the annual rites of Spring, the viewing of the butterflies of the birding world. Yes.....**May Warbler Madness.**

First, on May 2nd, MaryLaura Lamont will lead a walk on the **William Floyd Estate** hoping to catch some early migrants as they head north. That next Sunday, Eric Salzman will guide you into one of the east ends best birding spots, one that he dearly loves, **Maple Swamp**. That following Wednesday, May 12th, Bob Adamo will stretch your winter legs for an early morning walk into Hunters Garden. Beth Gustin and Jay Kuhlman will give you a guided tour of the **Terrell River County Park**, in Center Moriches on Saturday May 15th.

### Have you had enough?

Sunday, May 16th, Carl Starace will again visit **Hunters Garden** at the peak of warbler season for more of the butterflies of the birding world and for a target date of May 19th I will lead a pre-dawn trip into the birding mecca of the east during May, you guessed it, **Central Park NYC**. MaryLaura Lamont will again lead us on Saturday May 22nd to Hallockville Farms and on Sunday, May 23rd back to the **William Floyd Estate** for visit.

On June 12th I am planning a trip to **Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge** which can be very interesting this time of year. I am so excited that our field trip leaders have come up with such an exciting schedule for May and June 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 2 at 9:00 am**

### William Floyd Estate, Mastic

**Trip leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

In honor of International Migratory Bird Day the William Floyd Estate and Eastern Long Island Audubon Society will conduct a bird walk through the Estates historic grounds of field, woods, creeks and marshes. Bring binoculars for this 2 mile round trip walk to catch a glimpse of the early spring migrating birds. Use the Main Entrance Gate on Park Dr. in Mastic. Call 631-399-2030 for further info. Program ends by about noon.

**Sunday, May 9 at 8:00 am**

### Historical Maple Swamp

**Trip 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 Hunters 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@ericsalzman.com or John: birdwchr@gmail.com for more details.

**Wednesday, May 12 at 7:30 am**

**and Sunday, May 16 at 7:30 am**

### Hunters Garden

**May 12th/Trip leader: Bob Adamo**

**May 16th/Trip leader: Carl Starace**

Come one, Come All, for the Grand Tour of Hunters Garden at the peak of bird migration! Wear appropriate clothing, long sleeve shirts, long pants and sneakers. If you use tick spray, be sure to bring it along: 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 Bob at: radamo2@msn.com or Carl at: castarace@optonline.net.

**Saturday, May 15 at 8:00 am**

### Terrell River County Park

**Trip leaders: Beth Gustin and Jay Kuhlman**

Join Jay Kuhlman and Beth Gustin as they 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, White-eyed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Glossy Ibis, and Great-crested Flycatcher are just a few of the species we hope to see. We will keep our fingers crossed that we will see the resident Great Horned Owls. Meet at 8:00 am at the trail head, located in Center Moriches on the south side of Montauk Highway, across from Kaler's Pond Audubon Center and the Flight 800 Memorial Park. Call Beth at 631-848-9883 for details or more directions.

**Wednesday, May 19 — before dawn**

### Central Park NYC

**Trip leader: John McNeil**

Bird watching in Central Park in the spring during peak migrations makes you feel like a kid in a candy store. You do not know where to turn or raise your binoculars. There are just so many flavors to view. This is Central Park at its best and we will try to catch some of the excitement. What I plan to do is catch the 4:06 am LIRR train at Ronkonkoma to be in NYC around dawn. Your ticket should be purchased in advance since the ticket window will not be open. We will meet the normal birding crew in Central Park.

Please contact John McNeil, your trip leader, to let him know you wish to attend. He would like to know who is coming in case there are any additional trip details that need to be shared. Contact John at: 631-281-2623 or email: birdwchr@gmail.com.

**Saturday, May 22 at 9:00 am**

### Jamesport State Park and Hallockville Farm Fields

**Trip leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

Traverse the varied habitats 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.

**Sunday, May 23 at 9:00 am**

### William Floyd Estate, Mastic

**Trip leader: MaryLaura Lamont**

MaryLaura Lamont will be our trip leader for the Spring Migration Bird Walk at the William Floyd Estate in Mastic. The Estate has a varied habitat of woods, fields; creeks and marsh which brings in thousands of migrating birds to the lands of the Estate. This will be a 3 hour walking tour and will cover 2 miles, round trip. Bring binoculars and meet at the Main Entrance Gate on Park Drive. For information and directions, telephone the Floyd Estate at 631-399-2030.

**Saturday, June 12 at 6:30 am**

### Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

**Trip leader: John McNeil**

Jamaica Bay's 20 square miles of marsh and mudflats attract numerous shorebirds, including American Oystercatcher and Red Knot. Herons and waterfowl abound, and migrating passerines can occur in impressive numbers in the gardens and on the small islands. Notable among the more than 70 species of breeding birds at this fantastic site are Tricolored Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, Seaside and Saltmarsh Sparrows. Come join your field trip leader at 6:30 am in the east parking lot of the old Home Depot store along Sunrise Highway at Route 112 in Patchogue. Bring water and lunch as we will not return until late afternoon. Contact me at 631.219.8947 for details.

**Most programs and field trips are free, there is a \$5 charge on May 22 to benefit the Hallockville Museum Farm. You do not need to be a member to attend.**

## NATURE PROGRAMS Bob Adamo

**Monday, May 3 at 7:30 pm**

### "Looking back... My memories as a photographer"

**John Brokos**

John Brokos is a fantastic nature photographer from Merrick. He has shared his work with us several times before. He will present his latest material, entitled "Looking back... My memories as a photographer". Most of John's images show nature as the eye sees it, but some of his "pictorial" work alters light and composition to become "an artistic version of what the eye sees." **This program will begin at 7:30.**

**Monday, June 7 at 7:15 pm**

### Native Wildlife Habitat Gardening: The Tyranny of Landscaping

**Suzanne Ruggles, The Barefoot Gardner**

Suzanne practices organic Native Habitat Gardening by co-creating with nature in order to promote diversity, beauty, and tranquility. Her approach to "landscaping" reflects a more holistic and spiritual relationship with the environment than traditional landscaping. Learn how to attract wildlife to your garden, improve your relationship with the natural world around you, and experience the benefits of gardening in harmony with nature. Restore your yard, support your local ecosystem, and help the earth and all of its inhabitants.

Suzanne is an instructor at The Nature Lyceum for Organic Horticulture, and sits on the Board of Directors of The Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons.

### Upcoming

**Eric Saltzman**, composer, author and music-theater innovator will give us a program on Birds of Israel on Monday, August 2.

**Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. There is a nature chat at 7:15 pm, a meeting at 7:30 and the speaker at 8:00 pm. Please note earlier start time for May 3. Programs are free and open to all.**

## Thanks Kevin

**I**n the last issue Kevin McDonnell's did not receive photo credit, despite his hard work and participation in a grueling Christmas Bird Count. From his note it seems he did keep up his spirits, took some great pictures, and sent this note with the pictures.

*I had a great time birding Jessup's Neck with Eileen Gerle and Tom Moran. Thanks for put-*

*ting us in touch. Unfortunately my arriving pre-dawn didn't turn up any owls. It was pretty windy and hard to hear (for me and for the owls).*

*Ironically, when it was calm the night before I called in two Great-horned Owls and a Screech Owl on the Mattituck inlet. Best regards, Kevin*

*Left and right the group in action, center, Eileen Gerle, Tom Moran and Kevin McDonnell at the tip of Jessup's Neck during Christmas Bird Count.*



KEVIN MCDONNELL

# The Blackburnian Warbler

*Dendroica Fusca*

Carl Starace

I've always been particularly fond of this warbler with its throat of fiery orange. My first look at one probably took place on a fresh May morning in the Eastport woods. It wasn't until the following Spring at Prospect Park, Brooklyn that I beheld its true brilliance." Ah yes, you high perching dancer," I intoned. It was only then that I knew the reason for my mentors calling this bird, "splendid one". The Blackburnian Warbler is similar in size to the Black-throated Green, with stout darkish bill and fairly short tail. The adult male has a bright orange face and throat. Its body is a striking black and white, the wings with large white patch. The female Blackburnian has a more subdued orange throat/face and white wingbars on its dark wings and back. Both birds show white on the sides of their tails. The immature Blackburnians show a wash of yellow on throat and face and the same white wingbars on black as the adult females. As far as nesting goes, the Blackburnian breeds from the Canadian Maritimes, (including SW Newfoundland), westwards as far as Central and Eastern Saskatchewan. Within the United States this warbler breeds throughout New England, our own state, (from Putnam County north and west), south into Pennsylvania, the eastern parts of Ohio and on down the mighty Appalachians to northern Georgia. Even further west it is a nester in North and Central Michigan, Wisconsin and finally Minnesota. Here in our state it is one of the characteristic birds of our Adirondack and Catskill Mountains where it shows a breeding preference for the Hemlock tree. The Blackburnians current status in New York is of a stable population and one that is even on the increase in parts of the state. Its heaviest concentrations



are in the heavily forested areas whose elevations reach over 1,000 feet. If you wish a good look at ones of these, "Fire Throats" in migration you must be ready for lots of head tilting for the males in particular feed at the very tops of tall flowering oaks, in Pines and Spruces. You may catch it tilting its tail and/or hovering as it forages for insects. Listen for the Blackburnians song. The song is a series of high, even notes as in - tsi tsi tsi ti ti ti ti ti seeee, then ending in an even higher seeeee. Its call is a robust, "chih", and the flight call a buzzy, "seet" suggesting our Yellow Warbler. A little advice would be – Heads back! Glasses up! And go for the COLOR! It's sure to bring a smile.

Happy migrants to ya, Carl

## CONSERVATION COLUMN

Beth Gustin

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

We have grown so accustomed to drinking beverages from disposable plastic bottles but we do not realize the impact that these bottles have on the environment.

Consider these facts:

- In 1976, the average American consumed 1.6 gallons of bottled water in a year, by 2006 that amount had soared to 28 gallons!
- Each year, 47 million gallons of oil are used to produce the plastic bottles that Americans drink from. This does not include the millions more gallons that it takes to transport bottled water to stores.
- It takes 700 years for a plastic bottle to begin composting.
- 90% of what you pay for a bottle of water is the bottle itself.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 plastic bottles are not recycled and end up in landfills or as litter.

While municipal water is required by law to be tested for contaminants hundreds of times per month, the regulations for bottled water are generally less stringent. Consumers pay up to 2,000 times more for a perceived higher quality. Many plastic drink bottles contain chemicals such as phthalates and bisphenol A (BPA), which can leach out of the plastic, and whose negative health effects are still largely unknown. The Environmental Protection Agency in March decided to research BPA more thoroughly to determine if it should be listed as a "chemical of concern".

The convenience that may come from purchasing water in plastic bottles does not outweigh the environmental cost or the potential health risks. There are lots of inexpensive (and stylish!) Stainless steel and BPA-free reusable plastic drinking bottles available at many stores including Target, CVS, and our local supermarkets. Try to make it a habit to carry one of these and keep your bottled water purchases to a minimum. It's so much better for the environment, your wallet and your health!

facebook

**ELIAS is now on  
Facebook.  
Check it Out  
and Become a Fan.**

# Birdathon — Saturday, May 8th

**W**elcome to Eastern Long Island Audubon Society's twenty-sixth annual Big Day of Birding! Set for Saturday, May 8th, this event will pit any and all birdwatchers against the elements—sun, wind, rain, sleep (or lack thereof)—in an effort to count as many bird species as possible within a 24-hour period.

**Why do we do this? Just for fun? Well, partly — after all, it is a lot of fun. But the main impetus for counting birds on May 8th is to raise money for our organization. The Birdathon is an important fund raising event for Eastern Long Island Audubon and for Kaler's Pond Audubon Center in Center Moriches.**

### How does it work?

- ✈ First, you can sponsor our birdwatching teams by making a financial pledge for each bird species seen or heard. Usually, our totals range from 160 to 180 species.
- ✈ Second, you can make an outright donation to the Birdathon.
- ✈ Third, you can form a team of your own to count the birds. The rules are simple: let us know beforehand that you will be participating; only count birds of whose identity you are certain, and confine your explorations to Suffolk County. You are welcome to participate for as long or as short a time period as you would like on May 8th.
- ✈ And fourth, you can join one of our teams out in the field for part or all of the day. All levels of birdwatchers—including beginners—are invited to participate in the Birdathon.

**If you would like to take part** in any of the ways mentioned—or have questions about the event—please contact Beth Gustin (roogus@aol.com or 631-848-9883).

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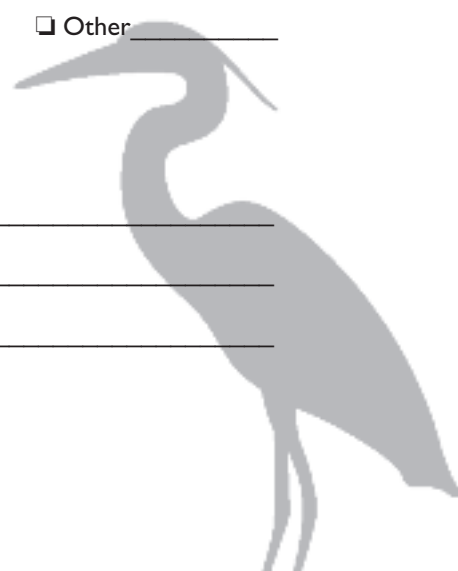
## Birdathon — May 8, 2010

Please accept my pledge of:       5 cents per species       10 cents per species       20 cents per species  
     50 cents per species       \$1 per species       Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my donation of \_\_\_\_\_ .       My check is enclosed.  
 Checks should be made payable to Eastern Long Island Audubon Society

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this coupon to:      **Birdathon**  
 Eastern Long Island Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 206  
 East Quogue, NY 11942-0206.



## When the swallows come back to Long Island Larry Penny

Everyone has heard of the swallows returning to Capistrano. There's a song about them. Those are Cliff Swallows not Long Island swallows. Well, the swallows are returning to Long Island as well, even if less celebratory. When they get here each April they take their chances that flying insects will be around to feed on. Each spring when I was a boy growing up in Mattituck not far from Wolf Pit Pond (then a part of the Ralph Tuthill dairy farm) the swallows would swarm around the pond and the eastern reach of Mattituck creek a few hundred yards away. They were mostly Tree Swallows frequently accompanied by Chimney Swifts (which were not uncommon then). Both would be flying around hawking insects just a few feet off the ground. On one such day there were so many and they were so preoccupied with feeding that Ralph Reed, a pal, and I were able to pluck them from the air with crab nets. I don't think we injured any, and we let them go as fast as we caught them.

In those days, in 1940s and 1950s, the coastal bluffs along Long Island played host to a great many breeding Bank Swallows. They always picked spots where the upper part of the bluff was eroding and bereft of vegetation. Generally they dug their burrows just below the jagged bluffs. Occasionally, a Kingfisher would nest near by in a burrow with a much bigger opening. All summer long the Bank Swallows would fly back and forth over the dunny shores below along the line of bluffs to feed.

When I took my job with East Hampton in 1983 I soon discovered that the ocean bluffs and the Block Island Sound bluffs were favorite Bank Swallow nesting areas. The faces of these bluffs on the south and north of Montauk were just as erosive as the Long Island Sound bluffs and the breeding Bank Swallows were just as often in attendance. Because their burrows were fairly close to each other and numbered in the forties and fifties each year, a stormy winter would often take them away as the bluff face cut back. Thus, in the following year the holes would be

dug under a freshly eroded bluff face not far from the last. In this way, I imagine, the Bank Swallows contribute to bluff erosion which during my 27 years of work in East Hampton, has been accelerating.

In the early 1990s for a few years running Bank Swallows nested on the face of the sand bank on the spit fronting Northwest Creek, separating it from Northwest Harbor. The bank was composed of dredge spoil and was scarped back sharply so that its face was almost vertical. Even though the sediments there were much looser than the clayey sediments comprising the faces of the Montauk bluffs, the burrows held up and the colony managed to turn out several new Bank Swallows each year. Flying insects – mosquitoes and the like – were more abundant in the Northwest Creek area and so what the swallows gave up in home stabilization, they gained in food supply and expended less energy in feeding. After the dredging of the inlet and deposition of new spoil on the spit in the spring of 1995, the colony was abandoned and has yet to start up again.

Tree Swallows and Purple Martins have also become more common in East Hampton in the last twenty five years. The townwide Bluebird nesting box program launched in the late 1980s not only increased the Bluebird population from a few pairs to more than fifty, it also increased the number of Tree Swallows by a factor of two or three times. In many instances, Bluebirds and Tree Swallows nested close to each other in these boxes, say at the East Hampton Airport or in some old field. In the upcoming nesting year, probably as many Tree Swallows will nest in boxes as in tree cavities.

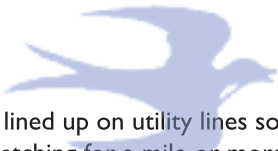
There are at least ten long-standing Purple Martin box colonies in East Hampton. The Martin boxes of Elke Grimm on the shores of Fort Pond in Montauk, Andy Sabin in inland Amagansett and the Geyer on Gerard Drive and Gardiners Bay in Springs each year fledge young Purple Martins. The Sabin residence not only has a Martin box, but also an array of gourd houses after the fashion of certain southeastern Amerindian groups in pre- and early post-Columbian days. The Grimm

boxes are on poles with devices that allow the boxes to be lowered and cleaned out periodically. The Martins are not abashed by on lookers or Mrs. Grimm and her kindly neighbors' attention to them and their boxes. They not only provide hours of amusing flight acrobatics each day during the breeding season, but also sweep the air clean of mosquitoes and other noxious insects. While I was watching one day last summer, they were catching wasps, apparently, without incident.

Each year there are one or two pairs of Rough-winged Swallows nesting around the old "dumps" scattered around Montauk and the East Hampton mainland. Probably, however, the most common swallow of all in the town is the Barn Swallow. They nest under docks, in boxes, in barns, under eaves of institutional buildings and the like. Several years ago I was asked to examine the Barn Swallow nests in the long-standing Henry Schwenk barn on Stephen Hands Path near the East Hampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike. There had to be at least 25 active nests in a barn no larger than 75 feet by 40 feet. What amazed me is that some of the nests consisted of several layers of previous nests, they were as high as eight inches tall. The tallest one consisted of 13 annual (I presume) layers. Was it the same pair or their offspring that returned to build a new layer each spring, the way Ospreys do when they come back to last year's nest? I imagine that one of the readers knows the answer to that one.

Every late August the swallows and their fledged young mass together in large migratory flights and work the marshes of Napeague, Accabonac Harbor, Hook Pond and other wet spots. There can be a thousand or more in a flock; the adults still in their breeding plumage, the young a little duller, but just as maneuverable in flight it would seem. Sometimes Purple Martins and Barn Swallows join these non-static flocks, especially where flying insects are common and there is enough to go around. When they are not flying they will

*Continued, next page*



be lined up on utility lines sometimes stretching for a mile or more, only a few inches apart in many such stretches.

Once in a while you will be watching one of these flocks in the air when all of a sudden they will tighten up into a ball, a geometric formation in the manner of Starlings or schooling fish. Invariably if you search the sky on such occasions you will see a Merlin or a Sharp-shinned Hawk closing in on them, generally a bit higher up in the sky than they are. Such precision, so quick to get in step, such cadent aerial maneuvers, wheeling and dealing in close proximity of a rapidly approaching predator. The fledglings know the drill without being told. And nine times out of ten it works. God wouldn't leave such an effective defense strategy up to chance or trial and error learning, it has to be instinctive, in the genes, part of the DNA. Of course!



## New ELIAS Bluebird Trail in East Moriches

**Beth Gustin**

ELIAS recently installed a new bluebird trail in East Moriches. Thanks to everyone who helped with this exciting project including Dick Belanger, who mounted the boxes onto the poles and enthusiastically got his wife's truck REALLY muddy on installation day, Bob Adamo and Sally Newbert who also helped with installation, Luke Ormond with the Town of Brookhaven who made the trail possible at this site, and Gary Fortcher at Wild Birds Unlimited in Oakdale who continued his strong support of ELIAS by getting us a great deal on the nesting boxes. Sally and I will be monitoring the trail so we will keep you posted on how it is going!



## From Kaler's Pond Nature Center

**Jay Kuhlman**

Kaler's Pond is sponsoring a **Spring Celebration** at 1 pm on Sunday May 16th at the nature center. It will combine Earth day, Arbor day and a native plant sale. We are planning a big event with live birds or reptiles from Teddy Roosevelt Audubon, live singing and a program geared for children. We will have over twenty varieties of native plants for sale at a minimal cost. The plants are being grown just for us. They will include plants for pollinators, and host plants for Hummingbirds and Butterflies. Advice and guidance will be given to anyone interested in using native plants in their yard.

The Nature center will be open on weekends in late May through September.

We are preparing a morning program for children in the month of July. Please check our web site for details.

I will lead a walk at the Terrell River Park with Beth Gustin on May 15th. This will include upland, successional field and wetland species. Hopefully the spring migrant warblers and shorebirds will be present. I will begin at 8 am.



## Field Trip Reports

**Riverhead to Orient Point**  
**John McNeil**

Saturday, April 3 was a great day for birding as Tom Moran and I drove from Riverhead along Peconic Bay Boulevard to Orient Point searching for the tenants of every Osprey pole and high structure. I am happy to report that 99% of them, indeed, had Osprey on them. This was very encouraging. In some sections of beaches, roping had been installed in anticipation of the return of the Piping Plover. Even the land birding was pretty good. We enjoyed good views of a Hairy Woodpecker, several flyovers of Cooper Hawks being mobbed by crows and heard many Red-bellied Woodpeckers hammering away. We even spotted lingering Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck and a Common Loon. Our first Great Egret of the season was on Oyster Pond at Orient.

Before I end, to those participants that were in another parking field, please accept my apology that we did not hookup. I should have scoped the other parking fields around the court complex before Tom and I drove off. I waited in the northern parking field with Tom near the probation parking were I could be seen from anyone coming from the circle from about 8:30 am on. Next time I will know better, but I can always be reached on my mobile

number 631.219.8947 the day of the trip. If you telephone my home before the day of the trip and tell me you are coming, I will wait for you and search until you arrive or telephone me otherwise.

**Argyle Like, Belmont Lake, Point Lookout & JB Coast Guard Sta.**  
**Lead by John McNeil**

Our first stop on March 6th was Argyle Lake in Babylon, now very urbanized and a host to multitudes of gulls, a nice flock of Northern Shovelers and some Coot.

On Belmont Lake a domesticated Greylag Goose, several hybrids, a nice flock of Ruddy Ducks, one in full plumage, and a Pied-bill Grebe.

On to Massapequa Lake for a Lesser Scaup, more Ruddys, nice views of Hooded Mergansers, and a Great Blue Heron.

Then to Point Lookout, on the ocean were Long-tail Ducks, Horned Grebes, Common Eider, Sanderlings and Dunlin. Along the third jetty were the treat of the day, Harlequin Ducks. A Cooper's Hawk flew over the parking lot. Throughout the day you had to be quick to pick up the seals as they poked their head up and disappear just as quickly.

At the coast guard station was a Common Loon, Cormorant and a few Yellow Rumps flying quickly across the path.



## Remembering Margaret (Peg) Caraher

Peg Caraher left this world in February. Eastern Long Island Audubon is grateful for the many years that she served on the board of directors including four years as president. A profile of her appeared in a 2004 Osprey written by Shirley Morrison, that highlighted her many contributions to ELIAS. Shirley described her as "one of the rare people who could be counted on to volunteer for almost every special project from bird seed sale to earth day celebration."

Many others wanted to share their stories.

### From Eileen Schwinn

A few years back, on a lovely spring afternoon, my home telephone rang. When I answered it, Peggy Caraher was on the line, reintroducing herself to me. We had worked together on various parent committees and PTA programs when our sons were classmates at Westhampton Beach High School. Peggy had noticed that I had been attending a few of the most recent local Audubon Society meetings, and she was wondering if I might be interested in taking a little more active role in the club. I recently had been in "retirement", having left a full-time job. My interest in birding could be classified as strictly neophyte — I could tell a bird from a cat, and that was about it. But the call came at just the right time for me — I was beginning to look for "something" to become involved with, since sitting home, eating bonbons and watching the soaps wasn't doing it for me!

Peggy said that Roz James, the president of then — Moriches-Bay-Soon-to-Be-Eastern-Long-Island Audubon Society, was relocating to sunny Florida. The organization was in need of a president. President? My shock could be heard in my silence!! What kind of an organization would want a total stranger leading the pack, so to

speaking. Other than Peggy, I didn't know a single person in the club! I expressed my disbelief, and Peggy said, "just come to a director's meeting or two — meet everyone, and let's see how it goes". Well, I did, and suddenly found myself amid an absolutely delightful group of people! With a little more gentle prodding, I agreed to give it a try. As the expression goes, the rest is history. I've been sitting in this director's chair for nearly five years now, and ELIAS makes up a major part of my life.

I've said many times to anyone and everyone who will listen, the friendships, camaraderie, and just plain fun I've had while being a part of ELIAS, has just been an irreplaceable part of me.

Why, without Peggy's phone call and that gentle little push, today I'd probably be 400 pounds heavier and have a brain made of mush from eating all those bonbons and watching nothing but those soaps!

Thank you, Peggy, you will be missed, but will always have a place in our hearts!

### From Roz James

"It was while walking along binoculars in hand and eyes cast to the sky that I got to know Peggy. Her energy and enthusiasm for birding was boundless. Just being with her was a delight. Her "eagle" eyes could spot birds that no one else could see and once she pointed out her discoveries to me; what fun we had trying to decide what species they were.

Peggy was passionate about everything that had to do with environmental issues. Even when working full time, she donated countless hours and incredible energy to every volunteer effort she undertook. Added to all of these things was her enthusiastic love of golf and gardening.

During the last few years when Peggy spent winters in Florida, we had so much

fun birding together, learning about the many birds we discovered on Pelican Island W.R., Vero Beach water treatment plant or Merritt Island W.R. Peggy made many new friends in Vero Beach, all of whom are deeply saddened by her loss.

As for me, I will miss my friend Peggy and especially so when I'm walking along binoculars in hand and eyes cast to the sky."

### From Evelyn Voulgarelis

A round of golf with Peg was really a birding field trip with clubs instead of binoculars. "Two red tails circling above" she would call out while preparing a drive toward the third hole. "What is that white thing in the tree?" She said as she teed off at the fifth. The white thing turned out to be an albino Mockingbird, verified by Bob Adamo, who rushed to the site, camera in hand, after getting an excited call from Peg. "Kingbirds singing, there they are in that bush", Peg informed us as we waited our turn at the last hole.

### From Al Scherzer

Everyone correctly refers to Peggy as the 100 (or less) pound dynamo. She listened, was sensitive and always interested in one's ideas and suggestions. She operated in many organizations at different levels simultaneously: Southampton Town Planning Board, and later the Town Zoning Board of Appeals, the League of Women Voters, garden club, among others. She had a tough Irish side as well, and would not tolerate less than complete honesty and integrity. All that is a given and well appreciated by any one who knew her.

She thought long and hard about taking on the presidency of Moriches Bay Audubon (now the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society) when Barbara decided to step down. (Of course this was in addition to her many other organizations as well). That honest streak held her back a bit because she thought she wasn't a good enough birder. Foolish thought, of course, but once the decision was made Peggy

*Continued, next page*





never missed a chance to sharpen her birding skills and demonstrate she was up to the task. I even remember her taking a full environmental training program with Bob Deluca of the Group for the East End at Southampton College on top of all her other activities.

I also remember her general meetings as always being well conducted. Board meetings were crisp and to the point. Her many community contacts came in very handy in extending relationships between MBAS with numerous voluntary organizations and government agencies. She helped to maintain very close relations with New York State Audubon and all the Long Island Chapters. And the list goes on and on.

We respected Peggy as a strong leader, a community activist, and a strong environmental contributor who helped us to fulfill the Audubon mission of education and conservation. It is a legacy that her son and husband must surely appreciate and one that we will never forget.

**From MaryLaura Lamont**

It was back in 1981 when I first met Peggy Caraher. It was down at Sailor's Haven, Fire Island and Carl Helms, then the Director of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge, had brought his adult education class to that special spot so they could have a tour of the rare Sunken Forest. I remember Peggy and another member of that class, Gigi Spates, telling me that they both "help out" at Quogue. When I asked them what they did they both replied "we both pick up the garbage along the trails!" We all had a good laugh. Ever since I joined Moriches Bay Audubon Society, now Eastern L.I. Audubon Society, I used to see Peggy involved in everything that the Society did or had to offer. She was lively and entertaining, petite and pretty, graceful and polite, informative and active and always looked neat, clean and polished, even when doing hands-on-dirt programs! How could she accomplish that all at the same time? I'll never forget seeing her involved in the "Hands-on Skinning Birds Workshop" that Art Cooley taught one year

when the Society used to have the overnight program at the Baiting Hollow 4-H Camp! There was Peggy, the only person signed up for the program, with her hands and nails deep inside a dead bird actually stuffing it for one of Art's High School classes! Wow, we thought. This woman is really something. And so she was. Seeing Peg do that bird skin expertly made an impression on my husband and me, and we recall it to this day.

Whether it was sharing a table at the bird seed sales, or handing out pamphlets for Quogue's Earth Day activities, or going birding, Peg was always fun to be with. It was Peggy who suggested I join Moriches Bay, and so I did. It was Peggy who asked I join their Board of Directors, and so I did. Peggy, your tenacity and vivacious nature are a role model to follow. You left a wonderful lasting impression on so many of us and we will all miss you tremendously. We will never forget you!

**From Gigi Spates**

As many know, Peg Caraher was an avid worker in our local community: Audubon, Quogue Wildlife Refuge, League of Women Voters, Southampton Town government, etc. She shared one aspect of the various parts of her community life with the others. We in Audubon would often hear her refer to and use her experiences in government with her work in the environment. In that way, Peg brought a reality and knowledge that most of us didn't have. She tempered her sharp mind not infrequently with an infectious enthusiasm and laughter. Because of her many and varied responsibilities she was known by a great number of people. This, what I call "Peggy's community", will greatly miss this strong-minded wisp of a woman.



**SPRING MIGRATION TABLE FOR MAY**

<b>May 1 - 10</b>	Cuckoo
Least Bittern	Common
Ruddy Turnstone	Nighthawk
Willet	Eastern Wood
Short-billed	Pewee
Dowitcher	Swainson's
Least Tern	Thrush
Common Tern	Gray-cheeked
Ruby-throated	Thrush
Hummingbird	Cedar Waxwing
Eastern Kingbird	Red-eyed Vireo
Great C'd Flycatcher	Tennessee
Least Flycatcher	Warbler
Long-billed	Magnolia Warbler
Marsh Wren	Cape May
Catbird	Warbler
Wood Thrush	Cerulean
Veery	Warbler
White-eyed	Blackburnian
Vireo	Warbler
Yellow-throated	Bay-breasted
Vireo	Warbler
Warbling Vireo	Blackpool
Blue-winged	Warbler
Warbler	Yellow-breasted
Black-thr Blue	Chat
Warbler	Wilson's Warbler
Chestnut-sided	Canada Warbler
Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Ovenbird	White-crowned
Northern	Sparrow
Waterthrush	Lincoln's
Yellowthroat	Sparrow
American	<b>May 21 - 31</b>
Redstart	Sooty
Hooded Warbler	Shearwater
Bobolink	Wilson's Petrel
Orchard Oriole	Black Tern
Northern Oriole	Yellow-bellied
Scarlet Tanager	Flycatcher
Rose-breasted	Willow Flycatcher
Grosbeak	Olive-sided
	Flycatcher
<b>May 11 - 20</b>	Mourning
Red Knot	Warbler
White-rumped	
Sandpiper	
Roseate Tern	
Black Skimmer	
Yellow-billed	
Cuckoo	
Black-billed	

## VISITS FROM HOME, GIRLS RULE!

Jody Levin, Snowbird Report

**February 2010** By midseason, I really start missing my friends from home, so its always a treat to see birding buds from up north. I look forward to seeing Eileen and Sue when they make their annual sojourn to Florida and as a bonus Linda was also here. We got together and met at DuPuis Wildlife Management Area which is between all of our Florida home bases on yet another cool, cloudy morning. We first went to the horse barn to see if we could nab the barn owl and find its day roosting spot. We were not successful at first but in our wanderings around the camp ground and barn, I did catch sight of one flying low out of the corner of my eye. The hunt was on. I then entered the barn to see if there was any evidence of owls and indeed there were pellets and white feathers. Interesting thing about owl feathers. The shaft runs right down the middle of it to give owls that silent flight. When I went into the barn, Eileen saw two owls flying out one the hay loft doors! I missed them. Both Linda and Sue had brief sightings of owls but they disappeared into the ether. Poof! It never ceases to amaze me how birds can hide so easily from our eyes.

In our search for the owls, we were pleasantly distracted by the flushing a Whip-poor-will! Talk about a bird that can melt into the environment! Twice flushed. Twice vanished. It has been ages since I've seen a Whip-poor-will and two years since I've heard one, so it was a treat! Further explorations netted us some warblers, gnat-catcher, meadowlark, and a raccoon family in a tree.

The bird bonanza was at the visitor center and about the parking lot. Its my second "rule" of birding that the best birds are in the parking lot. (Ask me sometime what the first rule is.) We had nine warbler species, including the stunning Yellow-throated Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Painted

Bunting, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Hermit Thrush.

### "Give us a half hour Ma'am"

We then returned to the main part of the preserve to a hammock where I have often found Barred Owl, but we had no joy on that score. We then drove down the main road toward the Red-cockaded Woodpecker cluster. Our progress was halted by a crew working at a proscribed burn area taking down a tree that was leaning dangerously over the road. The man with whom I spoke said they needed a half an hour to complete their work before we could pass towards the nesting site of the woodpeckers. We amused ourselves by stumbling across an odd scene of a grave site of what we concluded were animals, though we created many different humorous scenarios.

During the dry season are the proscribed burns that mimic the natural burn and regeneration cycle of many Florida habitats. Winter is the normal dry season. I have often come across this in my travels around Florida. Small fires are intentionally set to burn the undergrowth as some plants need the heat to regenerate. Passing one section of burned area, we observed several species of birds feeding on what I imagine to be, perhaps, opened seeds, fruits, dead bugs and crispy critters. We had Grackle, Robin, woodpeckers, and Blue Jay picking and pecking through the recently and still smoking charred remains. In a few years, I won't remember what area of DuPuis was burned, that's how fast the burn recovers. Still no luck this season with seeing Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

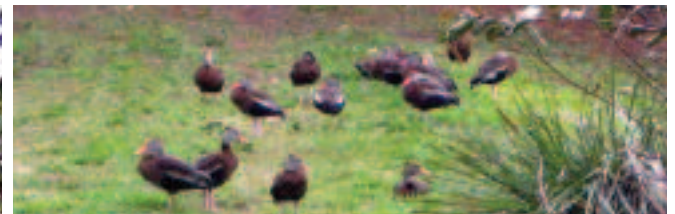
A few days later, the Girls drove south to my turf to take photographs at Green Cay and Wakodahatchee. At last, a beautiful day! I even had the top down on the car! This being vacation week in Florida, both



Linda Sullivan, Sue Little, Jody Levin and Eileen Schwinn at Wakodahatchee

places were busy. Our stroll was leisurely over the board walks, stopping to observe behavior, photograph, and chat. Most numerous were Coot and Common Moorhen. We also had two Sora. At one of the chickee huts at Green Cay, we had male and female Painted Buntings. We looked for the Black-throated Grey Warbler that was still popping up there but the parking lot where it has been seen was very quiet. So much for my "rules!" Nesting was continuing at Wakodahatchee and we had wonderful views of baby Anhinga that were still all white and fluffy begging for food. One of the big draws were the Black-bellied Whistling Ducks who were all out on the dike between cells so their black bellies were noticeable.

Its always bittersweet to say good bye to dear friends. We had had such a wonderful time together, birding, chatting, taking pictures and creating new memories. Don't be too sad for me, though. We have already started planning for next year.





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**Mark Your Calendars**

**Sun., May 2** **Field Trip: William Floyd Estate Mastic (pg. 2)**

**Mon., May 3** **Nature Program: "Looking back...My memories as a photographer" by John Brokos (pg. 3)**

**Sat., May 8** **BIRDATHON (entry form on pg. 5)**

**Sun., May 9** **Field Trip: Historic Maple Swamp (pg. 2)**

**Wed., May 12** **Field Trip: Hunters Garden (pg. 2)**

**Sat., May 15** **Field Trip: Terrell River County Park (pg. 2)**

**Sun., May 16** **Field Trip: Hunters Garden (pg. 2)**

**Sun., May 16** **Spring Celebration at Kaler's Pond (pg. 7)**

**Wed., May 19** **Field Trip: Central Park (pg. 2)**

**Sat., May 22** **Field Trip: Hallockville Farm (pg. 3)**

**Sun., May 23** **Field Trip: William Floyd Estate, Mastic (pg. 3)**

**Mon., June 7** **Nature Program: Native Wildlife Gardening Suzanne Ruggles (pg. 3)**

**Sat., June 12** **Field Trip: Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge (pg. 3)**

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