



The OSPREY

July/August—Vol. XXXVIII No. 4

Nature Walks/Field Trips

John McNeil, Field Trip Chair

Sunday, July 14 @ 7:00 am

Dune Road from Shinnecock Inlet to Pikes Beach

Trip Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Early fall shorebirds should be passing our area as these migrants work their way south. Meet Eileen Schwinn, the trip leader, at 7:00 am in the parking lot on the west side of Shinnecock Inlet in HAMP-TON BAYS. We will drive along Dune Road heading west, stopping at various birding locations to see what species might be feeding on the tidal mud flats and GRASSY MARSHLAND. We will end up at Pikes Beach at about noon when it is low tide. ELIAS will provide temporary Parking Passes for those who need them. Contact your trip leader at 516.662.7751 or beachmed@optonline.net if you need more information.

Saturday, Aug. 17 @ 8:00 am (Sharp)

The Islands of Moriches Inlet

Trip Leader: Eileen Schwinn

This trip is always a big hit with our members. So...let's catch a wave of shorebirds as they pass our area on their migration. We will have a low tide for this morning walk. Meet at the parking lot of Cupsoque Beach at 8:00 am sharp!! If you arrive after 8 am you will have to pay a parking fee. Spend the morning birding the BAYSIDE SHORELINE AND ISLAND. Be prepared to get wet as we will be wading across SHALLOW water to the islands. Please wear appropriate foot wear, bathing suits and/or shorts that can get wet. Don't forget to bring sunscreen and head gear. You WILL BE AT THE BEACH. Contact trip leader Eileen Schwinn at 516.662.7751 or Beachmed@optonline.net or if you need more information.

Nature Programs/Meetings

Bob Adamo, Interim Program Chair

The next two meetings will be a little different. Each will take us to a different location. On July 13 at 8 am (Yes, this time it's a morning meeting) we will meet at South Fork Natural History Museum in Bridgehampton. Then on Wednesday, August 7 we will meet at 7:15 pm at the Suffolk County Historical Society in Riverhead for a special program about Dennis Puleston. I hope you will come to and enjoy both these programs.

Saturday, July 13, 2013 beginning at 8:00 am

Birds of the Meadow and Woods

Walk Leader: Eric Salzman, South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo) Board of Directors

ELIAS and SoFo have gotten together and are offering a walk with expert birder, composer, and author Eric Salzman. Together with Eric we will explore the avian life of the meadow behind the SoFo Museum and the adjacent Greenbelt woodlands and wetlands. This mid-July walk will be an opportunity to see and hear some locally breeding birds with their recently hatched offspring. The two-hour walk will be followed by a short discussion and light refreshments.

Wed., August 7 at 7:15 pm

Dennis Puleston: Explorer, Naturalist & Artist An exhibit at

The Suffolk County Historical Society

On August 7 at 7:15 pm ELIAS members will have a chance to spend an evening at this exhibit and learn more about the Historical Society and Dennis Puleston. Kathryn Curren the director of the Society will give us a tour. Dennis' daughter, Jennifer will also join us. This exhibit includes over 150 of Dennis Puleston's Long Island bird paintings, journals and letters from his worldwide explorations.



Dennis Puleston was a member of ELIAS when it was Moriches Bay Audubon Society. He was a founding member of The Environmental Defense Fund, whose lawsuit against the U.S. Government led to the ban on DDT that brought the Osprey back from the brink of extinction.

The Historical Society is located at 300 West Main Street on the corner of Court Street in Riverhead. There is ample parking behind the Historical Society (brick building) in a town lot located off of Osborne Ave., bordered by the library, the courthouse and train station.

This exhibit will run through September 28th. The normal Historical Society hours are Wednesday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm.

The Presidents Corner

Are you a conservationist and how did you become one?

Byron Young

A conservationist is a person who advocates or strongly promotes preservation and careful management of natural resources and of the environment. I believe that every member of ELIAS is a conservationist. The answer to the second question is not so simple. Have you ever thought about how you arrived at your current place as a conservationist? I was thinking about this subject recently and tried to reflect on those points in my life and the mentors that pointed me along this path to be a conservationist and to have a career in the conservation field.

First and foremost would have to be Mom and Dad who were keenly attuned to nature each in their own unique way. Mom provided me with guidance with her love of flowers, birds and nature in general (except snakes and mice but that is another story). Dad was a locally renown poacher, yet had a profound respect for nature and took only what he needed to feed his family during hard times living on a small hardscrabble farm in Maine. We were surrounded by nature on the farm. The barn always had several pairs of Barn Swallows nesting, the simple pine nest boxes built by my father that were scattered around the farm were home to Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and the occasional sparrow. Ruffed Grouse could be heard each spring drumming in the surrounding forest and the Whip-poor-wills were always a delight during those hot summer evenings. We were always pleased to see Goldfinch, Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings, Pileated Woodpeckers, Great Horned Owls, Grosbeaks, and the occasional Snowy Owl in the winter. Lest I forget, we also had the odd moose, black bear, bobcat, fox, or skunk wander through the yard. One of my cousins actually had a skunk for a pet until my grandmother found out the hard way that it had not been properly descended. The skunk took exception to my grandmother attempting to remove it from its resting spot under the sofa with her broom. Needless to say we were surrounded by nature in all of its wonderful

colors, sizes, shapes and smells providing a strong foundation for future cultivation.

A typical family trip was to the State of Maine Game Farm to feed the fish, to look at the new animals and to revisit animals that had been dropped off for whatever reason. My grandfather would also take us to the Game Farm and always provided a new experience with each trip. Much of early reading was Thornton Burgess and his books about animals along with National Geographic subscription from my grandfather that I maintain to this day.

As a boy, school was not your favorite place, yet several of my primary and secondary school teachers influenced my budding conservation ethic. Mrs. Higgins in fourth grade, Miss Pitts my middle school math teacher, and Mr. Sampson my freshman high school math teacher all provided lessons that resonate with me to this day. College provided the technical background for my career and provided opportunities to stretch my understanding of all things in nature. My college education was quite broad and varied covering many topics and specialties but not focusing on just one topic or issue. I am very thankful for the broad base that was provided during those formal training years and for the summer jobs in the field that allowed me to learn from conservationists working in the field.

Following my education and a short visit with my Uncle Sam, I began a career in Conservation, first working as an Ecologist/Environmentalist in Southeastern Massachusetts and then as a Marine Biologist with New York State. My work with New York State stretched my education very quickly as I had to learn to deal with conflicting interests as it relates to the utilization and protection of our natural resources. I would be hard pressed to list all of the people who have had an impact on my conservation ethic over the past 40 years. My conservation ethic continues to be modified through my interactions with all of you at ELIAS and others that I have and will interact with.

I am continually redefining myself as a

conservationist whether it be with some new responsibility, a new interest or renewed interest in a subject, stumbling upon a new report about some topic in nature or the environment, learning a new approach or interacting with other people and their points of view. The issues of today are not the issues of my youth, Global Warming, Sea Level Rise, depletion of natural resources, competition for available space, new diseases in fish and mammals (bats, white nose syndrome) to name but a few of the burning issues of today.

I think that it is important every once in a while to stop and take a look at where you are and how you got there. Thanks to all of you for helping me expand my horizons as a conservationist and I hope that I am helping you in the same manner.



From our readers

Erin King put up her Hummingbird feeder in the morning and by afternoon had her first visitor.



This Worm-eating Warbler hit the window at Pat Brack's house. Fortunately it recovered and went on its way.



Highlights of the May Walks

Sally Newbert

There were six nature walks in May. Groups went to Hallock State Park, Terrell River County Park, Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (twice), Quogue Wildlife Refuge and the William Floyd Estate. I hope you have time to join! Photo albums are usually posted on Facebook after the walk if you would like to see more photos.



Wertheim National Refuge, May 18.



At Quogue Wildlife Refuge, May 10.



Terrell River, May 5.



On top of Jacob's Hill, Hallock State Park, May 4. Below getting around the puddle on the way to the top. Right MarryLaura shares her admiration of a box turtle with a young participant.



Baltimore Orioles were spotted on almost all of the walks.



The William Floyd Estate, May 11.



A rather blase Red-tail Hawk perched in the woods at Terrell River County Park. Below, two Glossy Ibis on the flats of the Terrell River.



A correction on Brood II

I do apologize for the article on Brood II. It turns out that Brood II is not on Eastern Long Island. I am grateful to Eric Salzman and his blog for giving us the whole story. We have 8 years to go before our Brood (Brood X) comes out. Editor

Here, from Eric Salzman's Blog and used with permission:

The locusts are cicadas — magic cicadas (*Magicicada*) to be generically specific. These are the so-called periodical cicadas that live underground in their nymph state for 17 years (some have a 13-year cycle) and then emerge en masse creating a massive buzzing cicada symphony. They are tuned up for quick mating, followed post haste by egg laying in trees, nymph hatching and burrowing underground for another prime number of years before reemerging.

There have been lots of stories about this year's emergence of the 'Eastern brood', last seen in 1996, and this has aroused a good deal of local interest. There was even a page about them in the latest issue of the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society Newsletter.

The 17-year cicadas don't emerge all at once but have different cycles in different places; there are (according to various estimates) between seven and 15 known broods, each with a different timetable. The periodic cicadas that have been getting all the publicity belong to Brood II which is indeed widespread in the East — but not Eastern Long Island. Our guys belong to another set of Eastern magic cicadas: Brood X which appeared here in 2004 when they were all over the place. 2004 plus 17 makes 2021. As I said, only eight years to go.

There may be some Brood IIs coming out on Western LI and we will have our regular annual cicadas emerging a bit later on. The Annuals are an entirely different insect and they (or at least some of them) emerge every year. The Annuals come in the hot weather and are a typical feature of mid- to late summer; one of their common names is Dog-day Cicada.

CONSERVATION COLUMN

THE PLIGHT OF THE HONEYBEE

"Nobody can do everything but everyone can do something"

Beth Gustin

A devastating plight has befallen honeybees in the United States. About seven years ago, there was a massive die-off of honeybees and a gradual decline in their populations ever since.

The die-off and subsequent decline has been attributed to several possible factors or a combination of factors. Exposure to pesticides, specifically a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids, is believed by many scientists to be the cause of honeybee decline. Lack of food, pests (such as mites) and pathogens (disease-causing agents) may also be to blame for the plight of honeybees.

Why should we be concerned about honeybees? Many foods we enjoy would not be produced if not for pollination by honeybees. How many of us enjoy eating blueberries, strawberries, broccoli and almonds? All of these depend on honeybees for pollination. Large-scale crops such as soybeans and alfalfa also require honeybees for pollination. Neonicotinoid pesticides are applied over an enormous expanse of these crops. It is suspected to be the most probable cause of honeybee decimation. These pesticides are not just used by major farm conglomerates however — they are also found in some of our backyard gardening products. Which brings to mind another reason to care

about honeybees — they pollinate the flowers that we enjoy in our backyards and produce the wonderful honey that so many of us enjoy.

There are things we can do to help honeybees which don't require us all to become backyard beekeepers (although this is a great idea that I encourage readers to do — beekeeping increases the bee population and strengthens the healthy bee gene pool). Keep a backyard bee garden — plant flowers that supply nectar and pollen. Do not use any pesticides! Not only can pesticides kill bees but the bees can transport the poison back to the hive. Plant a diversity of bee-friendly flowers and plant them in large patches to maximize the potential for bees to visit. Keep your yard and garden partially wild — bees don't know the difference between cultivated flowers and weeds and the flowering weeds (such as dandelions) can supply food for them.

Write to your local, state, and federal elected officials to encourage them to fund honeybee research.

Buy local honey! There are so many different interesting varieties of honey — clover, wildflower, even blueberry and buckwheat! These honeys can be found at farm stands and shops in our area. Enjoy it and help the honeybees at the same time.



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Connecticut Warbler *Oporornis Agilis*

Carl Starace

The Genus name of the Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis Agilis*) is Latin, from the Greek word, *Opora*, meaning autumnal and *Ornis*, meaning a bird species, active, nimble. It was given its common name by Alexander Wilson, the great American naturalist/painter who discovered this bird in Connecticut in 1812. In 1883 E.T. Seton found the first nest known to ornithologists in Manitoba, Canada. This warbler's name is one of the most well known misnomers of a North American bird. Its only relation to Connecticut is its discovery there. The Connecticut Warbler is known to, "skulk" about in low vegetation which usually makes for difficult viewing.

Identification Its length is 5 to 5.9 inches which makes it one of the larger warblers and its bill is also heavier than other warblers. With yellow under parts, olive upper parts and a lack of wing bars, the Connecticut Warbler shares similarities with Macgillivrays, Mourning, and Nashville Warblers. But the Mourning and Macgillivrays both have black markings on their upper breasts and male Nashville's have yellow throats. The female and immature Connecticut have a complete white or buffy eye ring, whereas Mourning and Macgillivrays both have broken eye rings. The Nashville Warbler does have a complete eye ring but its a smaller bird and has a white belly and yellow breast. Connecticut have pink legs and long tails. Males have a grey hood, in females and immatures it is brownish, throats are white.

Nesting For breeding grounds it mainly chooses the edges of spruce, the Tamarack Spruce in the eastern portions of its range, bogs and wet meadows. In western Canada where it is more numerous, it inhabits Aspen and Poplar woods. Nesting begins in late May, extending into August with one brood a year. Observations of nests have been few as the parents both traverse thick cover to conceal the locations. This warbler nests across Canada, from British Columbia to Northern Ontario, N.W. Quebec. In the United States it nests in northern Minnesota, northern

Wisconsin, and northern Michigan. It has wandered west as far as Utah and Arizona.

Migration Like the Blackpoll Warbler, the Connecticut has an elliptical migration route to and from its wintering grounds in the western Amazon Basin. On their wintering grounds in South America they are found along forest edges in rainforest and above the tree line to 14,000 feet elevation. The bulk of the population heads to southeastern New England, then south along the east coast to Florida, over the West Indies to South America. In spring these warblers return to Florida, but then head in a northwesterly direction up the Mississippi Valley to their breeding grounds.

Food The Connecticut Warbler's food is primarily insects, with some seeds and berries in season. It is primarily a ground forager, but also uses low branches, walking along picking insects and spiders from crevices in the bark.

Song The song is a repeated and loud "beechee, beechee, beechee, beechee". Somewhat like the Ovenbird's song but with no rise in sound or pitch. A second song sounds like the Common Yellowthroat

"whippity, whippity whip" with the emphasis on the last syllable. Its call is a sharp, metallic "peek" or "plink".

.....
This is my last installment as we are all packed and bound for our new home in Idaho. I wish to thank Sally Newbert, our wonderful editor, and extend best wishes to the greater Eastern Long Island Audubon family. Birding with many of you in the field over these many years is something I will treasure always. Carl



SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, October 16

for the Annual Dinner.

More info to come

in the next issue.

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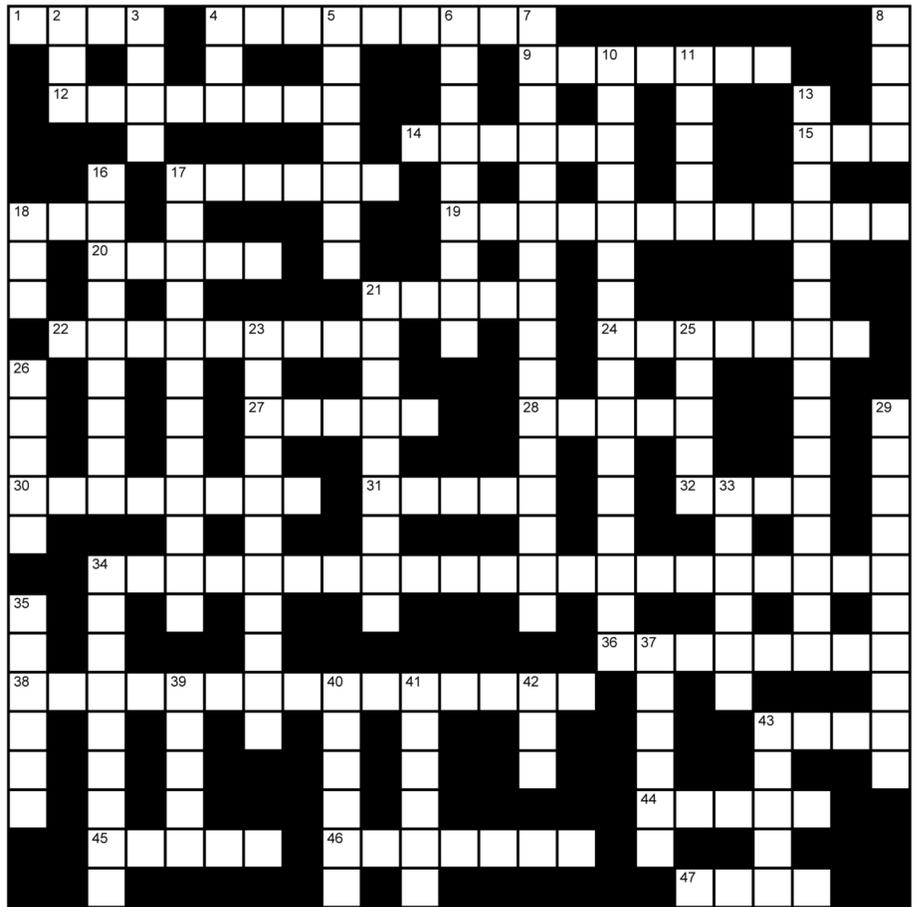
We would like

to hear from you. Contact:
eliasosprey@optonline.net.

Answers to last issue's puzzle Places to Spring Birding by Tom Moran



A Summer Puzzle by Tom Moran



Across

1. Red-tailed ____
4. Rock or willow _____
9. _____ Oriole
12. _____ Guineafowl, ready for battle?
14. _____ Egret, surprise late spring visitor this year
15. Northern Saw-whet ____
17. We would call it banded, the British would call it _____
18. Blue ____
19. _____ - _____ Flycatcher
20. American _____
21. _____ Chachalaca, a bird of Mexico and Southern Texas, named for its raucous call
22. Not 9 across, the other one
24. _____ Gull
27. Common _____, accidental shorebird
28. _____ Pelican
30. Similar to a Wood Duck, once common in Asia
31. _____-legged Hawk
32. _____ Goose, if you're lucky, you may see a blue morph
34. Red-billed shorebird
36. Not wild
38. _____ - _____ Grosbeak, rarely strays from Mexico to Texas
43. Rock ____
44. Canada _____
45. King or Common _____
46. _____ Grosbeak
47. _____ Phoebe

Down

2. ____-throated Flycatcher
3. _____ Gull, a black-backed gull found in Australia
4. Porcelain ____ Bird, a decoration put on top of a type of baked good
5. Similar to a Canvasback but grayer
6. _____ Owl, inhabits boreal forest in Canada
7. New World Quail that makes his name's sound (two-words)
8. Herring _____
10. _____ - _____ Longspur, a North American prairie bird
11. _____ Flycatcher
13. _____ - ____Owl
16. An unusual visitor to Gilgo this winter
17. _____ - _____ Hummingbird
18. Night _____, Common Poorwill for example
21. _____ Falcon
23. _____ Frigatebird
25. Common Hummingbird of in the Pacific Coast
26. Small Nuthatch of the west
29. Clark's _____, helps plant pine trees in the west
33. _____ Mannikin
34. Long-tailed woodland raptors with rounded wings
35. AKA auks
37. One of the colors of 22 across
39. Olive-_____ Flycatcher
40. Name of ELIAS newsletter
- 41/ _____ Black-backed Gull
42. Sparrow sized owl of the southwestern US
43. One of America's largest grouse, inhabits the west

Remembering Jim Clinton, Sr.

We recently heard that Jim Clinton, Sr. passed. He is remembered here by several who knew him well.

From Gigi Spates:

A quiet man, important in our Audubon chapter over many years, passed away last week just as quietly as his personality. Jim Clinton, Sr. He was also a stoic person: field trips and bird counts that he led even in the coldest weather were done so with only an open flannel shirt as a jacket, no gloves, no hat. He spoke in a soft, monotone voice rarely showing excitement even about the rarest of birds yet made it his business to know where to take the rest of us, where to find whatever we had not already found.

He became a great birder, one of Long Island's best: yet he had only one eye!

Jim was ELIAS's field trip leader for many, many years. He co-led them in later years with John Ruscica. They formed a Mutt and Jeff partnership, not in size difference but in emotional make-up: Jim, largely silent and unassuming, John, talkative and exuberant; both drawing interest in birds right out of us — or igniting bird infatuation might be a better way of putting it!

Those of us who have known Jim will remember him all of our days, perhaps because he was so unassuming, letting the birds speak for themselves.

One of my favorite memories of Jim was a time many years ago when I, a new birder, waited with Jim to meet up with other birders for a Christmas Bird Count. It was in the dark and silence of early morning that Jim and I heard an in-

triguing conversation between two Great Horned Owls. Jim pointed out that one was the call of the male, lower, deeper; the other, the call of the female, higher in pitch. It was a memorable experience for me both because of being at the right place at the right time for the owls' conversation and because of being with a great birding mentor to share it. Thanks, Jim, for all you gave us.

From Al Scherzer

Jim Sr. was a gentle, unassuming teacher who literally enabled many of us to truly become birders. He strengthened all of our counts, built much of the field trip programs we have today; was a major contributor to the Important Birding Areas (IBA), and on and on. It can be truly said that he was an important factor in maintaining the strength of ELIAS.

From Rosalind James

I am saddened to learn that Jim Clinton has passed away. He was always such a big part of Eastern Long Island and Moriches Bay Audubon. The patient teacher of so many of us for so many years, Jim's enthusiasm for the birds was contagious. I have fond memories of so many field trips.

MaryLaura and Eric Lamont

We are also saddened to learn of his passing. An icon in the birding field, and a quiet unassuming and humble fellow, he will be very much missed.

From Bob Adamo

Jim personified an idealistic, thoughtful, intelligent, unassuming and caring person.

I first met Jim in December, 1976, when I had the good fortune of a special bird

visiting my feeders in Wading River. This led to meeting many of the area's serious birder's, including the BNL contingent, led by Gil Raynor. They asked if I would like to take part in the Christmas Bird Count, and, as they say, the rest is history! There were many, many wonderful birding experiences to follow!

One that comes to mind, illustrates the spirit and endurance with which Jim approached the annual "Big Day", aka "The Century Run". This count, done in May, was an all day affair, starting for rails, bitterns, goatsuckers and owls before dawn and finishing after dark, looking and listening for what we missed in the AM. On this count it had rained all night, and didn't stop until about noon. With raingear not being what it is today, we were drenched by day-break! With Jim Sr. driving, Jim Jr. keeping score, and Clarence Swanson and myself praying for Jim Sr. to admit defeat, we "floated" out of Wading River and headed east, to cover the rest of the North Fork. Despite the weather, we recorded a fair number of species. Calverton, Baiting Hollow, Riverhead, Northville, Aquebogue, and Jamesport came and went, with the only thing not drenched being Sr's. enthusiasm! Lo and behold, the rain stopped in Laurel and the sun came out in Mattituck...and shined brightly for the rest of the day! We finished that day back in Riverhead, tallying up the day's species while we watched the overhead lights for Nighthawks. The final number escapes me, but we did very well—due primarily to Jim Sr's strong, quiet leadership.



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Index of suspicion

Bob Duchesne

I had never heard the birding term until Julie Keene used it during last year's bir-dathon. Julie and I are teammates on The Raven Loonatics – a squad of Maine Audubon birders who annually compete against other teams to see who can find the most birds in one day. The Loonatics are a formidable team, at least in our own minds.

I Googled the term and discovered that it is a routine phrase in medicine that is used to indicate how seriously a particular malady is being considered when making a diagnosis. It makes sense that Julie would use the term. She's a veterinarian at Veazie Vet Clinic.

But the term fits birders perfectly. Good birders are highly suspicious. In this case, an index of suspicion is a mental checklist of possibilities which helps to make an identification of a particular bird in a particular location, looking a particular way, doing particular things. The more a bird fits the description and pattern witnessed, the higher it is in the likelihood – the index – of being the correct identification. For instance, if you see a bird in a tree, you may think of many birds that it could be, but I guarantee that a loon is not on the list. It is not within your index of suspicion because there is no chance that a loon would be in a tree.

Everyone has an index of suspicion. The difference between newcomers and experts is just a matter of degree, informed by experience. When a brand new birder sees a bird the size of a chickadee, without even thinking he will eliminate crow

from the list of possibilities. Size matters.

Location matters. Most sparrows stay near the ground. Most warblers are up in trees. Even though they are roughly the same size, a bird in a tree is more likely to be a warbler than a sparrow and, as your brain starts to work on the ID, it will likely sort through the warbler possibilities first. Sparrows do sit and sing from tree tops, but they never feed there. If the mystery bird is feeding on something in the tree, sparrows drop completely off the index of suspicion. Behavior matters.

Behavior and location are handy clues. Somewhere back in grammar school we learned that if two species are competing in the exact same niche, one will eventually outcompete the other. Maine has a couple of dozen breeding warblers, all feeding on insects. How can we have so many warblers without one of the species eventually eliminating the competition?

The reality is that warblers have divided up the pie. Some feed at the top of the canopy, some at the bottom, some on the outside of the tree, some on the inside. Some fly out to catch insects, some stay on the branch and glean bugs from leaves. Some probe bark. Each warbler has a unique strategy that is different enough that it doesn't compete directly with neighbors. As a result, most warblers act just a little different from each other. Experts pick up on these clues.

So if I see a small bird feeding high in a mature tree, my index of suspicion places high canopy birds nearer the top of the list of candidates. These include Black-throated green, Pine, and Blackburnian

Warblers. Northern Parula is surely a possibility. But if I see it down low, near the ground, then Common Yellowthroat, Mourning Warbler, and Canada Warbler rise to the top of the index of suspicion. In fact, if the bird is midway between the two habitats – let's say in a high bush or low tree – American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Nashville Warbler, and Chestnut-side warbler nudge to the top of my index.

You can't have an index without knowing what birds are possible in the locale. I know Maine very well, but if you drop me in Costa Rica, I'm just another novice. I'm a Dewey Decimal System birder in a Library of Congress jungle. In order to avoid feeling completely helpless, I often review a field guide on the plane to my destination just to get a sense of what is possible upon arrival. I'm building my index of suspicion, as crude as it may be in an unfamiliar place.

You've got a more refined index of suspicion than you think you do. Even if all you do is feed birds, you know what comes to the feeder and you know when something is different. You're suspicious.

This article appeared in Bangor Daily News and is used with the author's permission.



Three warblers spotted this spring on Long Island. A Black and White Warbler, Pine Warbler and Yellow Warbler.



MATT MCCLUSKY



SALLY NEWBERT



SALLY NEWBERT

66th Annual NYSOA Meeting

What's different about this meeting?

It is being held near by and you are welcome to sign up.



Mark your calendars now for the 66th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) on November 1-3, 2013 at the Long Island Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Uniondale, western Nassau County, New York. Hosted by the Queens County Bird Club, the meeting will feature keynote speaker James Currie of Birding Adventures TV, exciting field trips, stimulating workshops and research papers, and the NYSOA business meeting and Awards Banquet. To celebrate the first NYSOA conference in southern New York State since 1994, we are calling this weekend The New York Birders Conference.

Papers and talks throughout the weekend will appeal to birders of all levels as well as scientific audiences. Presenters include Dr. Mark Hauber, speaking about his research on recognition of brood parasites, John Turner, discussing the ecological importance of the Long Island Pine Barrens, and Susan Elbin, Director of Conservation and Science for NYC Audubon, presenting the latest findings from the NY Harbor Herons project.

The conference will also feature photography and bird identification workshops, including a Digiscoping Workshop with Clay Taylor of Swarovski Optik, and an introduction to bird photography with celebrated photographer Lloyd Spitalnik. Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle, authors of the forthcoming book, *The Warbler Guide*,

will present a workshop on “Using Often Overlooked ID Points to Identify Confusing Warblers”.

Young birders are welcome to participate in the conference. The New York State Young Birders club (NYSYBC), a special project of the NYS Ornithological Association for New York State birders between the ages of 10 and 19, will be holding its own special session, facilitated by Carena Pooth, NYSOA Adult Chair.

Field trips are always one of the highlights of NYSOA meetings. This year, participants will be selecting from field trips to Kissena Park, Alley Pond Park, Jones Beach, Robert Moses State Park, Fort Tilden, and Frances Purcell Preserve (all trips dependent on site condition). The New York City and Long Island area is known for its strong fall migration and rarities. In addition to looking for sparrows (a 10-sparrow day is not unusual), fall warblers, hawks, shorebirds, gulls, and grosbeaks, birders might come across rarities that have been seen in past years—Virginia’s Warbler, Common Ground-Dove, Cave Swallow, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, to name a few. Or, maybe add a new species to that list! Non-birding participants can enjoy a full day sightseeing field trip into Manhattan. Shopping and sightseeing options are also available locally or by nearby public transportation.

Keynote speaker James Currie’s presentation, “Not Your Grandmother’s Audubon,” is scheduled for the annual banquet, Saturday evening. A lifelong birder and native of

South Africa, Mr. Currie has many years experience in the birding and wildlife tourism arenas. He has led professional wildlife and birding tours for 15 years, his passion for birding, adventure and remote cultures taking him to nearly every corner of the globe. Mr. Currie has contributed to several publications, including the acclaimed *Southern African Birdfinder and Wild-watch*.

The members of the Queens County Bird Club and the New York City/Long Island birding community are excited to provide this opportunity for birders and researchers throughout the state to talk ornithology, conduct association business, explore our best birding areas, and celebrate the state of birding in New York State. In other words, “connecting the birders of our region”. We are also pleased that New York City Audubon, Swarovski Optik, Meopta Sports Optics, and Zeiss Optics are supporting the New York Birders Conference as Major Donors, and that The Linnaean Society of New York and The Brooklyn Bird Club are supporting us as contributors.

The meeting is open to NYSOA members and non-members. For more information and to register for the 66th Annual NYSOA Meeting/New York Birders Conference please visit our web site at <http://nybirdersconference.org>. Questions? Contact Seth Ausubel and our Planning Committee at: NYSOAinfo@gmail.com.



Listening for the Whippoorwill

Larry Penny

I heard my first Whippoorwill in the woods behind my grandfather's chicken farm in Mattituck when I was three years old. Once you've heard that magical three-syllable eerie chant coming out of the dark of a warm summer evening you're hard pressed to forget it. The Whippoorwill is one of seven members of the Goatsucker family, *Caprimulgiformes* (+goat-sucking forms) in the United States. Up until the latter part of the 1900s, we only had two species in New York State, the Nighthawk and Whippoorwill.

No one knows just why the Whippoorwill, celebrated in many a popular tune, has so thinned in numbers locally. Some blame it on development, or the growing popularity of residential night lights, perhaps, even, the years of spraying woods for gypsy moths in the 1950s, 1960s and later. Last year at about this time, when the evenings were a little warmer and fireflies began to spark, I did a drive-and-stop census of Whippoorwill in eastern Southampton Town and East Hampton Town west of Amagansett. I saw lots of fire flies sparkling on and off, but in four hours of stop-and-listen counting in excellent Whippoorwill habitat, I didn't come up with a single song, while in the 1970s and 1980s, I heard dozens while making similar rounds.

On Sunday night, June 3, I covered 69 miles of choice Whippoorwill territory in Noyac, Bridgehampton, Water Mill, Tuckahoe, North Sea, Hampton Bays, Flanders, Quogue and Westhampton. I was out from eight until eleven-forty. I made 40 stop-and-listens and heard not a single Whippoorwill. On the same night Vicki Bustamante, her son Chris and his girlfriend Jennifer covered Montauk all the way to Napeague and came up empty handed or, should I say, empty eared. Vicki has ears as acute as an owl's, if a Whippoorwill called, even under its breath, she would have heard it.

It was disappointing, to say the least. I resolved to check for them on the following night, and so I found myself driving 54 miles making 31 stops beginning at around

8 pm at the West Overlook at Hither Hills's western end in Montauk, ending up on the Barcelona golf course east of Sag Harbor at 11:15. While Sunday night was breezy, Monday night was exceedingly still, to the degree that a fog had developed in the southern quarter of East Hampton.

I heard my first Whippoorwill song in five or six years at that first stop. At my next stop, the end of Napeague Harbor Road where the Walking Dunes are situated, I heard another Whippoorwill. I was beginning to think I was in Whippoorwill heaven. I made a fourth stop near the LIRR tracks on Napeague Harbor Road, I heard a Goatsucker singing alright, but it wasn't a Whippoorwill, it was a Chuck-wills-widow, another *Caprimulgid* with an onomatopoeic name that precisely matches its song. The Chuck-wills-widow is a southern member of the family that began breeding on Long Island and points north in the 1960s. Four stops, two Whippoorwill and one Chuck-wills-widow, I thought that my hypothesis that these crepuscular and nocturnal birds had all but disappeared would prove to be very ill conceived.

On to Napeague Meadow, Cranberry Hold, Lazy Point, and Shore Roads in north-central Napeague. Bango, stop number six at the junction of Lazy Point Road and Crassen Boulevard, not one, but two Whippoorwill calling back and forth from the south and the north. I had only made six stops and had already heard five calling.

But that was that for a long hiatus, the following 16 stops in Amagansett, Springs, and Northwest were met with silence, although there were some deer and a raccoon, to keep my interest up. Stop number 23 on Swamp Road a bit west of Northwest Landing Road in Northwest landed one more Whippoorwill call and that was that.

If I count the two Whippoorwill calling last Thursday evening reported by Bob Casper who lives at the end of Northwest Creek Landing Road, it makes seven in five days. On the following Wednesday night I covered North Haven and part of Noyac which I missed on Monday night. It was

warm, still and a perfect night for them. My last stop at Morton Wildlife Refuge was sure to produce one or two. There was single fire fly lighting up here and there on its way around, but no Whippoorwill.

There were a lot of residential night lights, a lot of motor vehicle whines and a lot of new construction in progress on all three trips. It was also a big weekend for helicopter flights back and forth over the moraine. It's too early to say for sure, but it may just be that Whippoorwill are on their way out on Eastern Long Island. After all, we had Ruffed Grouse well into the 20th century, and centuries earlier, a lot of Heath Hens, and not a few Labrador Ducks come winter. By the same token, wild geese and wild turkeys are not so wild any longer here on Long Island and deer and raccoons are almost as common as summer people.

Seen and noted



MATT MCCLUSKY

This Red-headed Woodpecker was a one-day wonder captured by Matt McClusky at the West End of Jones Beach.

Spring Birding with Eileen Schwinn

All the photos were taken here on Eastern Long Island from the end of April through June One doesn't have to travel far to see some pretty neat birds! Some a real surprise.



Tricolored Heron



Brown Thrasher



Bobolink



Great-crested Flycatcher



Black-bellied Plover in transitional plumage



Piping Plover



Rose-breasted Grosbeak



Willow Flycatcher



Short-billed Dowitcher



Red-necked Phalarope
Below, Northern Waterthrush
Silhouette, Rudy Turnstone



Blue-winged Warbler



Clapper Rail



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