



# The **OSPREY**

September/October, 2007 – Vol. XXXVII No. 5

## Nature Programs

Bob Adamo

Join us for nature programs and membership meetings at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Everyone is welcome. (Directions are on our website.)

7:15 PM – Nature Chat

7:30 PM – Chapter News

8:00 PM – Speaker or Main Event

Monday, September 10

### WILDLIFE OF THE SEYCHELLES

Anthony Graves

Anthony works for the Town of Brookhaven in environmental protection and open space. In 2005 and 2007, he traveled to the Indian Ocean and worked aboard a ship as a naturalist. He will show video and still pictures of marine and terrestrial life found throughout the Seychelles chain, including Al Dabra, the largest coral atoll in the world with the last flightless bird in the Indian Ocean and the Valle de Mai, home of the endangered black parrot and the rare Seychelles paradise flycatcher.

Monday, October 1

### MEMBERS NIGHT

Once again, we invite our members to participate by showing slides, reading passages from books or poems, displaying crafts, or whatever they would like to do. It's all in good fun, so don't be bashful. Try to contact Bob prior to the meeting (369-1958) if you would like to participate, but you will be welcome if you decide to present something as late as that evening.



## Searching for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

Jay Kuhlman

My adventure began when I received an email from a woman asking for a lift from Memphis to Arkansas. After my wife and I stopped laughing, I saw the letters IBWO. Then I remembered that a few months earlier, I had volunteered for the Cornell led search for the ivory-billed woodpecker in Arkansas. Having received no other notification, I rationalized that I hadn't been chosen because I was from New York, or too old, or not worthy. As it turned out, my computer's spam filter had caught the acceptance notice. When this got straightened out, I had fourteen days during which I had to work ten, go to a seminar in Washington, and get a whole set of camouflage clothes and waders. Luckily, Sierra Trading Post delivered on time.

### Getting there

La Guardia airport security was not impressed with my camo, prompting very thorough searches of my person and my baggage. In Memphis, I blended in and ate lunch with the locals at one of the three barbecue restaurants in the airport. I started driving and knew I was in Mississippi when the flat cotton fields and kudzu vines appeared, as well as riverboat casino ads and a sign that said: "I am not your mama. Pick it up."

I crossed a big river into Arkansas, got off the interstate, and felt as if I was in a fifty year time warp with abandoned farms and houses, Rexall drugstores, and empty shops. Beautiful cypress lakes and bayous were part of the roadside scenery. I crossed the White River into St. Charles, a 60% vacant cotton town. It had the obligatory statue commemorating a soldier or battle. This one was for the most deadly shot fired in the Civil War – the one that hit the boiler on a Union gun boat, the Mound City, and killed 125 soldiers.

A few miles away was the Redhead Hunting Lodge, where we would stay. It was situated by a lake with a loud chorus of frogs and toads. This was a steel frame building finished off with rough cut lumber. The décor was camo, couches, bedspreads, and shower curtains. Next to the large stone fireplace were the requisite bearskin and decoys. Only the dozen laptops and boxes of electrical equipment identified this as a research project. I unloaded my two weeks of supplies brought from a supermarket in Helena. The only food available here was the milk, eggs, bread, peanut butter, and jelly supplied by the project, with no stores within thirty

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## Field Trips – John McNeil

As autumn arrives, we will be looking forward to the fall migration of our feathered friends. I personally believe that the fall, winter, and spring seasons are the best birding and the most exciting. You never know what may appear right on your door step. Also, fall migration sometimes comes with surprises that make our hobby even more enjoyable, and with that in mind, I have outlined a field trip program to take advantage of some of the best hot spots. So please join me as your Field Trip Coordinator and sometimes your leader on these adventures.

### Saturday, September 8, 2007 *Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge*

See the vanguard of the fall migrants at one the best birding areas around with your trip leader John McNeil. We will meet at JBWR parking lot at 9 AM for birding around the West Pond and then, if possible, will walk over to the East Pond, where we will scope out what might be happening on the mud flats. Bring boots, because it can be muddy. Also remember to bring lunch and water.

*Directions: Southern State Parkway westbound to Belt Parkway. Continue West on Belt Parkway to Exit 17S (Cross Bay Boulevard). Stay on Cross Bay Boulevard southbound through Howard Beach, crossing over Congressman Joseph P. Addabbo Bridge. About 1.5 miles on your right, you will see the center parking lot.*

### Saturday, October 6, 2007 *Dune Road – Shinnecock to Moriches Inlet*

This will be an excellent time to bird along the barrier beach for land birds as well as hawk watching as the migration passes through the area. John McNeil will guide you along this route for a half or full day's outing. We will meet on the west side of Shinnecock Inlet at 9 AM in the parking lot situated on the bay.

### November 3, 2007 *Jones Beach State Park and Point Look Out*

This area is a catch basin for all types of birding and many surprises. We will try to catch the tail end of the fall migration as well as the beginning of our winter visitors from the north. Do not forget to bring a lunch.

First we will meet at the West End #2 parking lot at 9 AM, and then we will drive over to Point Look Out to scope out the jetties, and then drive back to JFK Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. After birding these areas, we will drive along

Ocean Parkway east to Robert Moses State Park, where we will park. If time permits, we will walk on the board walk to Fire Island Light House.

### December 2007 - No field trips are planned because of the Christmas Bird Counts.

### Saturday, January 5, 2008 *Lakes around Patchogue*

See our wintering waterfowl around the lakes in Patchogue. Your trip leader John McNeil will guide you around the area for either a half or full day excursion. We will meet at 9 AM at the Swan Lake club house at Swan Lake in East Patchogue.

### Saturday, February 2, 2008 *Montauk Point*

Montauk Point is the easternmost spot on Long Island to see large numbers of species that fly from the outer ocean. Colder is better, so bring warm cloths, long johns, mittens, and a warm hat. Be sure you wear several pairs of socks so your feet don't get cold. Now if only if the concession stand sold Starbucks! If time permits, we will check out other hot birding places around the area. We will meet at 9 AM at the parking lot at the point. Bring a lunch and hot drink to warm your insides.

### Saturday, March 1, 2008 *Orient Beach State Park*

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## Report from the Field



### Hunter's Garden, July 7 - Beth Gustin

Carl Starace led seven birders through the woods of Hunter's Garden on a beautiful warm summer morning. Twenty-two species were seen or heard, including veery, wood thrush, ovenbird, pine warbler, common yellowthroat, eastern wood pewee, eastern towhee, white-breasted nuthatch, house wren, scarlet tanager, Baltimore oriole, red-eyed vireo, yellow-billed cuckoo, and ruby-throated hummingbird. An unidentified toad was also seen, as well as numerous red admiral butterflies. Thanks to Carl for leading this trip.

Searching for the IBWO – continued from page 1

miles. I chose a room with only two bunk beds over the twenty bed dormitory. My roommate was Brad, a researcher who had recently graduated and done a project on the Mexican Spotted Owl. I met Ken Levenstein, the field supervisor, and his dog, Honey. He was finishing his thesis on the cooperative breeding behavior of the Galapagos Hawk.

### *Preparing the team*

Next morning, we learned the fine points of IBWO identification – white trailing edge of the wings, black chin, kent calls (vocalization), and double rap (the cadence of the drumming bill). The images and recordings from the Tanner expedition sixty years ago were used for reference. Foraging behavior and flight were discussed as well as the oval nest/roosting holes. The birds commonly mistaken for IBWOs were the pileated and redheaded woodpeckers, along with wood ducks flying from tree cavities. Filling out forms, map reading, and survey strategy were explained. The mantra was camcorder first and binoculars second, in hopes of getting the proof needed. The dangers of cotton mouth snakes, fast currents, and getting lost were discussed, but no mention of the movie *Deliverance*. In the afternoon, we had field practice with our GPS, marking waypoints, finding our way back, and map reading.

### *The search begins*

The next day, we split into two groups, with my group going twenty miles along a dike to a spot where a camper reported a recent sighting. We passed flickers, bluebirds, flocks of meadowlarks, a nesting eagle, at least a dozen species of ducks, and many types of sparrows. We reached our location in time for one of the two magic hours, the first and last hour of daylight. We would sit with a good vantage point, usually looking over the water. Many birds fly from their roosting areas to foraging areas or back at this time.

Daily pileated woodpecker counts averaged five to fifteen, often in groups. With every sighting, my pulse quickened, until the white chin or the black trailing edge of the wing was found. Barred owls called all day, often in duets. All of the southeastern woodpeckers were eventually seen, the most stunning being the yellow-bellied sapsuckers in fresh breeding plumage. While pushing through the water, winter wrens seemed everywhere, working the flotsam. The eerie call of the pied-billed grebe puzzled me for hours until I finally located the source.

Navigating the floating rafts of branches in waist to chest deep water was new to me. Avoiding submerged stumps, vines, and potholes, I kept my focus on my footing. The possibility of snakes at my waist was intriguing until I found out that they also sun themselves a foot or two

above water.

Keeping a GPS, binoculars, two cameras, and a cell phone dry while carrying a thirty pound back pack added to the challenge of looking for nesting holes and any movement. Trying to get a camera on fleeing wood ducks was good practice and showed how difficult it is to document a flying bird in the densely wooded bottomlands. Finding a woodpecker hole of the right size and shape meant the following: getting a telephoto image of the hole, an image of the whole tree showing a Xerox representation of an IBWO hole tacked to the tree, and recording the waypoints, aspect, and type of tree. This was necessary so that a remote camera could be set up at this spot, if warranted.



Ivory-billed  
Woodpecker

### *More challenges*

On many days, my will and daring were tested, when the water got deeper and deeper. Everything had to be dry-bagged, and it was a dance to keep the 50 degree water out of my waders. I often thought this would be the time I needed my camera. The alternative would have been to backtrack and try again. Wading was quieter than walking through dry mud-caked leaves. The quiet was broken by bird songs, which were fun to identify. While wading, I came across a beaver nursing her pup, river otters, coyotes, armadillos, raccoons, and hundreds of frogs and toads.

Spring was just beginning, a pleasant change from the big snow in the northeast the week before. Wildflowers, redbuds, and dogwoods, new leaves on trees, and butterflies were emerging, still early for the spring migration.

One of the most exciting moments occurred when I heard a nest hole being excavated. After locating this hole, I found that it was large and oval, about forty feet up in a hackberry. I watched for ten minutes, while chips came out. Finally, a large pale bill came out of the shadows. My camera was already zoomed to the max, only to see the white chin and mustache of a pileated woodpecker. This scenario was repeated, with the wonderful anticipation of getting really lucky, or using the gambler's logic that next time will be the one.

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Finding a place to sit in the flooded bottomlands was a challenge. Often a fallen log or a place to hang my pack and equipment were appreciated. Dry land was a luxury on some days. Not speaking for four or five hours was an uncommon but rewarding experience.

On some days, we paired up and canoed in a river or bayou. Once we used a playback of an IBWO. This produced an interesting result. In some areas, the birds responded as if they had a memory of the kent call, while in others, they did not. Other days, we methodically crossed back and forth in a block, or would be dropped off by boat at intervals along a river. The tracks from our GPS would later be downloaded, so it was possible to see how well an area had been covered and what needed to be covered more. The remote cameras were set up at any promising call, bark scaling, or hole. By the end of the day, we would find a place to sit for our second magic hour. Then we hurried back to the pickup point and joined our fellow searchers. We saw many deer and cattle grazing on the dike, and one night we saw a bobcat.

Back at the lodge, there was a large room with two space heaters to dry out waders, clothes, and electrical equipment. We heard stories of people's trips getting to Arkansas. Dave saw all three rosy finches on a mountain top. Jim described leks in Colorado, where he saw two types of grouse. Ken talked about camping in the Galapagos. Eventually, the talk turned to the likelihood of finding an IBWO. There were different theories, but everyone agreed it would be a combination of difficulty and luck. We all thought it might happen.

On many occasions at the St. Charles Community Store's weekend crawfish or catfish dinners, or at other local businesses, people would ask if we were looking for "that bird." Our camo didn't fool these people. Many seemed to have a friend or relative, who had seen the bird while fishing or hunting. They wouldn't tell, because they wanted to collect the \$10,000 reward. Fortunately, this reward is only for a photo, not for a collected bird. They also feared that if there was a positive confirmation, their access to the area would be off limits.

### *Other adventures*

On our days off, we could follow our hunches and search where we wanted for IBWO, or just go birding. I went to Stuttgart, "rice capital of the world," and home of the army airfield, where they trained glider pilots for WW II. The airport was decommissioned and hardly used except for hunting season, when it was jammed. You were allowed to walk the runways, as long as you looked up while crossing them. We saw large flocks of meadowlarks and many types of sparrows including Leconte's. We found the Smith's longspur and the Sprague's pipit. Multiple short-eared owls came out late in the day to compete for the airspace with the harriers. Later, barn owls came out of the hangers. We saw the source of all the local camo by

visiting Mack's Prairie Wings, self-proclaimed world's largest waterfowl hunting store.

On another day, I went to the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock. This took place after looking at the area where the first IBWO occurred – the Cache River. I had lunch at Gene's Barbecue in Brinkley, where they served ivory-billed burgers, and I visited the Ivory-billed Gift Shop. Many hawks were seen on telephone poles as well as Eurasian collared doves and thousands of snow geese in the rice fields. One wet field held thirty Wilson's snipe. A roosting site for the red-cockaded woodpecker finished off my woodpecker list, except for the big one.

### *Reflections*

When I got home, unpacking and looking at the local foods I brought back, it was hard not to think about what was happening down there. I felt that I wanted to give one more day in the field to try and hit the jackpot.

Recently, there was an article in *Birding* comparing the feelings of birders about the possibility of finding IBWO, in contrast to finding the Eskimo curlew, Bachman's warbler, bigfoot, and the Loch Ness monster. The possibility of IBWO existing seemed to be higher than the others, with roughly twice as many believing it would probably be found as opposed to possibly or definitely not. For me, I had heard stories while in Cuba from someone on a past expedition who felt he had a glimpse of one. Then one night at the lodge, I listened to Dave Luneau, whose video sparked so much controversy. He is sure he saw one.

All of this makes me unsure of where this search and others will lead, but my heart hopes for a second chance. This might spur on the reforestation of the Big Woods and help us as a nation to rethink our course, especially when it comes to extirpating a species.

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## **Election Slate**

The Nominating Committee has prepared the following slate:

President: Eileen Schwinn  
 Vice President: Beth Gustin  
 Treasurer: Evelyn Voulgarelis  
 Correspondence Secretary: John McNeil  
 Recording Secretary: (no candidate)  
 Director: Mary Laura Lamont



The election will be held at the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor. The new officers and board members will be installed at the October meeting.



## Membership Corner



John McNeil

Thanks to everyone who renewed their chapter membership.

### Annual Message to National Audubon Society (NAS) Members

When you joined NAS, they assigned you to our chapter, Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, and I sent a courtesy newsletter to you with a letter inviting you to join us at our monthly meetings. I also asked if you would like to join our chapter and receive the newsletter six times a year. Chapter membership dues (\$15) support the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter.

Some NAS members have chosen to join our chapter. If you did not, this is your once-a-year newsletter reminding you that you have a local chapter that will support you in your birding activities. If you have not joined our chapter and you would like to do so now, there is an application on page 11.

*Our meetings are open to everyone. You do not have to be a chapter member to join us at meetings or to participate in our field trips. You can also check our website for current chapter activities.*

## Autumn Birding for Beginners

John McNeil

Autumn is coming, and it's my favorite time of year. My bird feeders are getting a good cleaning for the first arrivals at my outdoor Bread and Breakfast, or should I say the all-day buffet.

In an internet article on "Fall Bird Feeding," Diane Porter said: "It is best to start in early autumn. Even if you do not see much bird activity around the feeders, they are scouting out their winter territories." With the onset of cold weather a bird's calorie requirements increase, and it's important to know where to find the local supermarket. For example, in a snow storm, the downy woodpecker must eat from a third to three quarters of its weight each day to maintain itself through a harsh winter like the one we had last year. So if you start putting seed out early (I perfect black oiled sun flower seeds), the birds will make a note that your place is worth visiting. When the first snow appears, they will show up hungry, chirping, and chattering, which will bring a smile to your face, while you watch from the warmth of your window. If you happen to have some thick evergreens for shelter in your yard, this

will attract nuthatches, chickadees, and titmice, to name a few. Generally, your yard will attract the most common species, but do not be surprised if something rare shows up – a redpoll maybe? (I am really dreaming.)

Having a bird book and binoculars near your window will help with identification of the most common birds early in the season. If you happen to see a species that is unfamiliar, study it closely and make a quick drawing before heading to the field guide.

Once you get into the habit of looking closely at birds, you will become more proficient in your identification skills. You will start to notice physical characteristics such as behavior, size, and shape of bill. Is the bird a seedeater such as sparrows and finches that have short and stubby bills? Cardinals and grosbeaks with thicker heavier bills can handle large seeds, while goldfinches like thistle seed. The scissor-like bills of crossbills enable them to extract seeds from pinecones. The woodpeckers with their strong bills that can be used like chisels are able to probe the bark of trees for insects. Wood warblers are primarily insect eaters, catching the insects on the fly with thin pointed bills.

What I have pointed out is just the beginning of your bird identification skills. Next you should get a notebook in which to record your observations. This will give you something to refer to in later years.

Other birds that start to migrate in the middle of July and peak in late August are the shorebirds. These species will start showing up along the tidal mud flats on Dune Road, Jones Beach, Jamaica Bay, and other places where they can probe for food to store in their fat cells for the flight to their wintering grounds. "Shorebird" is a collective term for plovers, sandpipers, and oystercatchers. By late August they should have all arrived before heading south over the Atlantic in September and October.

One of the easiest species to identify is the American oystercatcher with its large size and bright orange bill. They are often seen on the mussel beds right under the Ponquogue Bridge in Hampton Bays. Other large shorebirds that frequent the tidal mudflats are the willets and greater yellowlegs. Both are easy to identify. Willets have flashy white wing patches, and the greater yellowlegs, well I think you can figure out the primary identification on this one.

While writing this article, something came to mind that my mentor and good friend, Gil Raynor, once said to me: "During autumn, note who is feeding birds and where they are around your neighborhood. Then when the first snow appears, hit those feeders. Look for fox sparrows, pine siskins, evening grosbeaks, woodpeckers, and even a lingering pine warbler. You never know what you might find at these outside diners."

## TOWN PERSPECTIVES



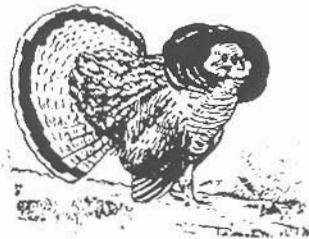
### *Ground-nesting Birds Have Taken a Beating*

Larry Penny  
Chief, East Hampton Natural Resources



Ground-nesting birds have been taking a beating this spring and summer. It's hard to know what's going on, but whip-poor-wills in East Hampton have been at their lowest numbers since the Town's Natural Resources Department started counting them four years ago. The larger species, the ring-necked pheasants and bobwhites, are also doing a disappearing act. One rarely hears the crow of the former and the soft whistles of the latter. The more senior readers may remember that the bobwhite's song was once used by on radio spots to sell Rinso. They went something like this: "Bob-bob white, bob-bob white, happy little washday song."

Very few kids on eastern Long Island would know the bobwhite's song the way we did in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, before they started the widespread applications of DDT and other pesticides. Most have never heard it. The ruffed grouse is another groundnester that is for all purposes long gone on the south and north forks. In Mattituck where the writer grew up, there was a large piece of undeveloped oak-hickory land on Mattituck Creek called Brower's Woods. We used to flush an occasional ruffed grouse from the underbrush there. Now that area is built up like so many other woodland areas on the north fork. These days, one has to go to the Central Pine Barrens to find a partridge, and one has to look and listen very hard to do so.



Ruffed grouse

It goes without saying that we will never see the heath hen, another former prominent groundnester on Long Island. It has been extinct for 85 years or so. The one bright spot among the larger groundnesters locally is the wild turkey, which presently on the south fork probably outnumbers whip-poor-wills, quail, pheasants and ruffed grouse combined. In East Hampton Town they are everywhere, from Montauk Point to Town Line Road, Southampton Town's eastern boundary. There isn't a hamlet—Montauk, Springs, Amagansett, Wainscott, Northwest—that doesn't

have its flocks of wild turkeys. They are even in the Village of East Hampton, the most built up place around.

Reintroduced in January of 1992 with upstate birds by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, it has been one of the most successful bringbacks in all America. The turkeys have survived epidemic numbers of foxes, raccoons, and feral cats. They show no sign of diminishing their growth in numbers. At this time of the year, most of the poults seen are more than three-quarters grown, but there are still some late bloomers around as well as mixed flocks with both small and half-grown young.

Most people enjoy them and like having them around, but a few are apprehensive and complain that they are messy (they are), aggressive (they can be), and raid gardens (occasionally they do). Turkey families and tribal groups will nonchalantly walk across back roads, frequently stopping traffic. Most drivers don't honk and let them pass unmolested. The writer has been keeping road kill records since 1980. Since the reintroduction of the wild turkey, he has recorded only two on thousands of miles of East Hampton roads traveling back and forth each day from home to work and around the town when doing field work.

In the winter of 2006 there wasn't a woodland in East Hampton that didn't have the telltale scratch marks of the wild turkey. They compete with squirrels, deer, and several birds for the mast that falls from the trees in fall. The gray squirrel population, which is outrageous because of all of the active bird feeding stations in the winter, may drop off a bit because of this competition and because the red-tailed hawk numbers are so high. Deer probably won't be bothered. They prefer landscaping to acorns and leaf buds, and they've learned to hit up the feeders. Yes, people, turkeys are back, and isn't it just grand.

### *Sea Turtles and the Great Shinnecock Bay Migration*

Elizabeth Jackson, Environmental Technician  
Town of Southampton



With warm waters, an abundance of fresh food, and plenty of coastal habitats to explore, it is easy to see why so many individuals migrate to The Shinnecock Bay each summer. Shorebirds, seabirds, and songbirds migrate into the area, ready for breeding and foraging in the bay. Evident by the increase in both property values and traffic flow, humans have also played a major role in this seasonal migration. The Shinnecock Bay provides a place of solitude and

relaxation along with fresh seafood and exciting recreation. As the water temperature rises, one more group of seasonal residents returns to the bay. World travelers, sea turtles migrate into Shinnecock Bay after having spent many mysterious years wandering around the Atlantic Ocean.

Globally, there are only 7 different species of sea turtle. Impressively, The Shinnecock Bay region will regularly host representatives from 4 of these 7 species and plays an important role in helping these turtles develop into healthy mature adults. Loggerhead Sea Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) can grow to lengths of 3-4 ft and weigh 300 lbs at maturity. Loggerheads will use their large beaks to crush through hard shells as they enjoy mussels, clams, whelks, and crabs. Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) will grow to weigh between 330 and 500 lbs. With a much smaller head, Green Sea Turtles are (by design) herbivores. However, the juveniles that are found foraging in our region will opportunistically feed on both plants and animals. Known to traditionally nest on one stretch of beach in Mexico, the Kemp's Ridleys (*Lepidochelys kempii*) will reach full size at 80-110 lbs and measure only 2-2.5 ft. They are not only the smallest, but the most endangered species of sea turtle in the world.

The fourth species of sea turtle found in our region is the Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*). Growing to lengths of 5-8 ft and potentially weighing more than 2,000 lbs, these amazing animals are primarily found further offshore. Leatherback turtles have a soft leathery shell and unlike most other reptiles, Leatherbacks can partially thermoregulate their body temperature. This allows for them to maintain a more consistent body temperature while swimming in deeper, colder waters. By far the largest species of sea turtle, they are gelatinovours and eat primarily jellyfish or other gelatinous organisms.

Sea turtles do not nest on Long Island. Occasionally, individuals will report having seen nesting turtles or turtle eggs at the beach. Upon closer observation, one realizes these are not sea turtle nests. These eggs were deposited by Diamondback Terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*); a much smaller turtle found year-round in the estuary. The beaches along our coastline do not provide adequate incubation temperatures for sea turtles. The determination of sex in turtle hatchlings is temperature-dependant. Even if pivotal nesting temperatures could be met on Long Island, cooler temperatures would likely produce too many males to support future nesting populations.

Temperature-dependant sex determination is just one of the pieces of the puzzle. Unfortunately, research has historically been conducted on a rather limited demographic within the sea turtle population. International data have been collected from either nesting females or injured, sick, cold-stunned, and/or dead individuals. With the help of these early studies, turtle biologists have discovered that the conservation of sea

turtles requires a great deal of collaboration. Moreover, there are still major limitations to successful conservation efforts. Scientists are still unable to determine the sex of a living sea turtle, until it reaches maturity. Data historically linked to females will only tell us half of the story. Regardless of efforts to protect nesting sites, without a healthy and fertile male population, the species will remain endangered. Scientists are also unable to determine the actual age of a sea turtle. Without this information, we cannot be certain exactly what role Shinnecock Bay plays in the development and success of each of these species.

We do know that Shinnecock Bay is a *Critical Development Habitat for Juvenile Sea Turtles*. While operating New York State's Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Stranding Program for more than 10 years, biologists with The Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation have been continuously collecting data on individuals who are found injured, sick, cold-stunned, or dead. Healthy, rehabilitated turtles are returned to the ocean, specially equipped with small metal flipper tags, in addition to an inexpensive PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tag. This basic technology will help to identify a turtle as having made earlier contact with the Riverhead Foundation, if it were to be recovered sometime in the future by another biologist.

When funding is available, local biologists will also attach satellite transmitters to rehabilitated turtles. With this technology, it is possible to collect data on a turtle's location each time the turtle surfaces to breathe. This type of data will help biologists better understand where turtles migrate to next. Recently, the Riverhead Foundation teamed up with Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and The Wildlife Trust to tag and record data from healthy live turtles caught in pound nets inside Shinnecock Bay. This partnership could also allow for additional research into the movements of turtles within the bay. If funding were to become available, tagged healthy turtles could be tracked by satellite as they move around, foraging in the area.

Sea turtle biologists from around the world are eager to better understand the movements and behaviors of juveniles while they are foraging in our area. There is always the chance that the majority of the individuals could be all males or all females. When studying long-lived organisms, it is vital that data be collected over a long period of time. A continued commitment to baseline studies will help to facilitate a more rapid transition into future studies, as new procedures and technologies become available. Until then, the migration continues. Shinnecock Bay has been supporting these migrations for hundreds of years. Successful collaboration between residents, biologists, and government officials, together with the support of the public, should ensure that Shinnecock Bay will continue to provide a safe haven for migrating sea turtles for many generations to come.



## Kaler's Pond Nature Center



We held our spring event with Dr. Tanacredi speaking about horse shoe crabs. It was a beautiful evening with great food. The summer programs are going well and will continue through September. There will be two big events in September.

**21<sup>st</sup> International Coastal Cleanup:** We will meet at Kaler's Pond on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM and then clean up the beach at the Terrell River Park.

**Combined Public Lands Cleanup and Wildlife Festival:** On the 29<sup>th</sup>, we will clean up the area around the Kaler's Pond Nature Center including the gardens and trails. The afternoon will feature a live reptile demonstration with Pam Musk and an interactive presentation.

Other programs are being developed for the fall and winter.

J. Kuhlman ([www.kalerspondaudubon.homestead.com](http://www.kalerspondaudubon.homestead.com))

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## Birding in Recovery

Eileen Schwinn



Recently, I found myself housebound, recovering from some minor surgery. I couldn't drive, couldn't take my long walks, couldn't do much more than sit in a lounge chair in the yard all day long. Naturally, I couldn't bird, or so I thought.

Over the past few years, I've put miles on my car and miles on my sneakers looking for birds along the shoreline, in preserves, and other distant hideouts. July is a slow month for birders. Migration north is over, and the fall trek back south hasn't begun. The leaves are blocking our views, and not much singing is going on out there. But sitting here in my own backyard, I rediscovered what made birds and birding so important to me in the first place – THE BABIES!

All of a sudden, my yard had turned into a nursery. With my binoculars, and from the comfort of my chair, I could see my backyard feeders had become an important part of the new generation. In turn, black-capped chickadee, cardinal, blue jay, tufted titmouse, grackle, downy woodpecker, and red-bellied woodpecker parents would snatch something from a feeder and answer the squeaks and squawks of their respective one, two, or three demanding youngsters by popping food into their gaping mouths. Even the house sparrows were good parents, although many folks feel we have enough of that prolific species. Young Baltimore orioles and robins made their appearance in the yard as well, no doubt drawn by all the action at the feeders.

Ordinary birds were doing an extraordinary job of dedicating their waking hours to the care of their nonstop eating machines. No wonder there's no singing – the parents are tired out. In a few days, the young learned to take a stab at the feeders themselves, usually just perching there, waiting for Mom or Dad to grab a seed and feed them. In time, Mom and Dad did what all good parents have to do – let the youngsters go out on their own.

I'm now happily back to driving, walking (until recently with a helper carrying my scope), and chasing the distant birds. But I'm sort of grateful for the time I was forced to stay home and enjoy the wonders taking place year after year in July that I've missed seeing for a long time. Don't tell my boss, but I may call in sick for a few weeks next summer.

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## Conservation Column



Beth Gustin

Fall migration is here, the time when many birds which breed on eastern Long Island make the long journey to Mexico, Central America, and even South America. Although we often think about land preservation here on Long Island, it is just as important that birds have habitat in which to spend their winters.

Many tropical countries depend on growing coffee to sustain their economies. Some farms consist of row after row of coffee shrubs that are intensely managed and of no value to wildlife. Other farms consist of coffee bushes mixed in with trees, which makes excellent habitat for birds and other wildlife. These are shade-grown coffee farms, and they are the winter homes to hundreds of species of long distance migrants.

**We can help to make sure our Long Island breeding birds have winter habitat by choosing shade-grown coffee.** There are many websites which offer shade-grown coffee, for example, [auduboncoffeeclub.com](http://auduboncoffeeclub.com) and [heinebroscoffee.com](http://heinebroscoffee.com). Shade-grown coffee for home brewing is also available at Wild Bird Crossing in Bridgehampton. "Think before you drink."

---

## Remembering Mike Marino

We were saddened to hear that Mike Marino died this past spring. Mike was on our Board of Directors from May 2005 until his illness made it impossible for him to continue. Although his time on the board was short, he left his mark as an exceptionally kind person who was always ready to pitch in.



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*This newsletter reaches over 500 households primarily in the Townships of Riverhead, Southampton, East Hampton, and Brookhaven. Our readers are a target audience for nature-friendly businesses. For rates, contact Eileen Schwinn at 631-728-8342 or beachmed@optonline.net.*

## Chapter Leadership Changes

**Bob Adamo** has resigned as Program Chairman. We are grateful for all the years he provided us with entertainment and education. He has been nominated as a Director of the New York State Ornithological Association. Congratulations Bob!

Welcome to two new ELIAS Directors. We look forward to their enthusiasm and new perspectives. **Christine Schmitt** joins us after many years as an active Director of South Shore Audubon Society. In addition to being a board member, **Brian O’Keeffe** has also agreed to be our new Program Director and Feeder Survey Coordinator. Thank you both for volunteering.

## FEEDER SURVEY REPORT FORMS

**REPORT FORMS:** Mail immediately after each survey period to Brian O’Keeffe, 12 Union Ave., Center Moriches, NY 11934. Or to send via the internet, go to easternlongislandaudubon.homestead.com and 1): Click on *Chapter Projects*; 2) Click on *Feeder Statistics*; 3) Click on *To submit via the internet, etc.*

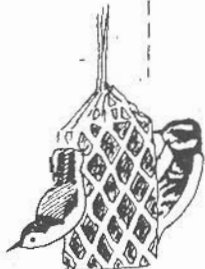
**PLEASE JOIN US:** We would welcome your help in monitoring the birds of our area. It’s simple. Just record the highest number of species you see in your count area at any one time.

Don’t include birds seen off premises or just flying through. Don’t add counts from previous sightings together.

Estimate the number of birds if the number is large. (Everyone has a different idea of the size of a “flock.”) Be specific with the species, e.g., don’t use sparrow, blackbird, or gull. We need to know what kind.

Send in surveys even if you only saw common birds. It is just as important to record them as it is the unusual birds. Don’t worry if you miss a survey because of other commitments, or if you can only watch before work, on weekends, etc. Your participation will still enlarge our database.

Survey Dates: October 2 – 9, 2007 Name _____ Address _____ Town _____ Phone _____	Survey Dates: November 6 – 13, 2007 Name _____ Address _____ Town _____ Phone _____																																																																																																																												
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## Bluebirds at Indian Island – Finally!



Evelyn Voulgarelis and Gigi Spates

Pinch us, so we'll know it's really happening. Perhaps you recall that in the Jan/Feb issue of this newsletter, we wrote about hopes of seeing nesting bluebirds in the ELIAS nest box trail on the Indian Island Golf Club course in Riverhead.

We had been monitoring this trail for six years without seeing a bluebird, and we were getting discouraged. Then in November, we spotted six bluebirds flitting among the leafless trees and feeding on the ground. That sighting gave us hope that they would nest here in the spring.

Finally, on June 21, rather late in the nesting season, we saw a bluebird nest, which ultimately became home to two

hatchlings. They were successfully fledged by July 26.

In another location, we found a previously used tree swallow nest which had been "refurbished" by bluebirds. Four beautiful blue eggs lay within. As of July 26, there was one very new hatchling along with intact eggs. We are hoping these youngsters will be back next year to nest and establish a viable bluebird population where, at one time, there were many.

Special thanks to Audrey Bandiera and Chris Schmitt, who just completed their first season monitoring a bluebird trail (they had great fun and interesting experiences but no bluebirds) and to Jim Clinton, who has been dedicated to this project for twelve years, monitoring two trails in Manorville. Thanks also to Joe Hennessey, Andy Murphy, and Jay Kuhlman, who check trails in Eastport, Westhampton, and Center Moriches respectively. As soon as we receive data from everyone, we will write a summary of the Bluebird Restoration Project for 2007.

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 Bluebird Restoration, Gigi Spates

*Please consider sending gift memberships to your friends.*

### NEWSLETTER EDITING & LAYOUT

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 Vero Beach, FL 32966

*The next deadline is October 1.*

## Events Calendar

### September

8 Field Trip – JBWR – p 2  
 10 Nature Program – p 1

### October

1 Nature Program – p 1  
 2 – 9 Feeder Survey – p 10  
 6 Field Trip Dune Rd – p 2  
 21 **BENEFIT LUNCH** – p 1

*Also see Kaler's Pond Nature Center Events on page 8.*

**Our Vision in a Nutshell** – To be an inspiration to those who feel a sense of kinship about Long Island by encouraging an appreciation for the natural world and a commitment to the environment.

### CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

For \$15 a year, you can receive 6 copies of this newsletter. You will also be supporting our local education and conservation activities. (Members of National Audubon who are not chapter members receive one copy of this newsletter per year.)

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Make check payable to Eastern Long Island Audubon and mail to ELIAS, PO Box 206, East Quogue, NY 11942-0206, Attn. Membership.

*40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

## Benefit Buffet Luncheon

- **Sunday, October 21 at 1 PM**
- **Indian Island Restaurant and Golf Course on CR 105, Riverhead**

Help us celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with cocktails (cash bar) and a buffet luncheon. Tickets are \$40 in advance (\$45 at the door). We hope this lunch pleases some of our older folks who do not like to drive at night.

Our speaker will be Michael Mackey, Manager of Wildbird Crossing in Bridgehampton and host of *Long Island Edition* on WLIU 88.3 FM.

Raffle tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25. Prizes include a Hampton Jitney Value Pack (12 tickets to NYC), a DVD player from Bob Stevens, a Tiffany glass pitcher, Dennis Puleston prints and books, and Crabtree & Evelyn cosmetics. Thanks to Suffolk County National Bank for underwriting the printing of the raffle tickets.

Invitations were mailed on August 10. If you have not received one and you would like to attend, please call Peg Caraher at 325-1237 or send your check to ELIAS, PO Box 206, East Quogue, NY 11942-0206.

## Annual Seed Sale

Please consider stocking up on bird seed at this sale, which will benefit both ELIAS and the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. An advance order form will be included in the next issue of this newsletter. Seed can be picked up on the sale dates – November 17 and 18.



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