



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

THE *OSPREY*

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Jungle Jaguars to Upland Waterfalls:

A Warbler's Northbound Odyssey

Kevin Munroe

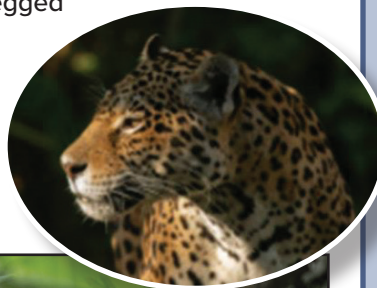
*Long Island Preserve Director,
The Nature Conservancy*

An orange-faced, tiny black and white bird with a thin pointed bill perfect for gleaning insects from treetops, watches a jaguar prowling the jungle far below. As the largest cat in the Americas moves in and out of shadow, our Blackburnian Warbler feels an irresistible urge to leave its winter home in the Peruvian tropics and fly 4,000 miles north to start a family. The changing length of days in March awakens this need to travel each year. He's also acutely aware of the Gray-bellied Hawk just yards away; a lightning fast, tropical raptor that specializes in hunting small birds, and is probably ready for breakfast. Has it spotted him? Should

he hide, or risk razor-sharp talons and start his north-bound odyssey?

There are dozens of species of neo-tropical migrants, making up millions of individual birds, that have two homes: a warm, insect-filled tropical winter home somewhere between Florida and Bolivia, and a cooler, but also insect-filled summer home in North America's Appalachian Mountains, one of the oldest mountain systems in the U.S. Their lives are as tied to insects as they are to breathing. The tropics are full of six-legged snacks all winter, and the

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**Monday evening
May 5 at 7 pm**

WORKING WITH WHALES

*The Extraordinary
Outcomes of CRESLI's
Longstanding
Opportunistic
Research Program*

Dr. Marianne McNamara

The local non-profit organization CRESLI (Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island) has been operating whale watching tours out of Montauk since 1996. In addition to educating and engaging the public, the tours provide an opportunity to collect data, improving our understanding of the habitat usage and population dynamics of the cetaceans frequenting our waters. Join

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The President's Corner

Winter Musings!

Byron Young

Sitting at my computer looking out the window watching the rain wash away the recent snow, my mind wanders off toward Spring when the migratory birds return, and the flowers begin to bloom. It doesn't make me feel any better, realizing that much of winter remains. When will winter release it's icy grip and let some warmer weather to return?

One saving grace during the winter months are the birds walks hosted by ELIAS. The weather may be chilly, but our intrepid bird walks leaders hold the annual waterfowl walk around the Lakes of Patchogue. This is followed by a walk around Shinnecock Inlet

and along Dune Road, hoping that the winters winds are light. For those two walks one cannot bundle up enough. However, everyone in attendance manages to find enough layers to fend off most of the chill. Folks do seem to be in a hurry to jump into their vehicles and turn up the heat at the end of the walk and not linger about. March brings us our Annual walk at the Morton Wildlife Refuge. March weather is always fickle, it can be bitter cold with a strong wind blowing off the Bay or it can be very pleasant day with visions of Spring in the air or anywhere in between. The local Morton Wildlife Refuge birds are always cooperative and brighten the day.

Following March, the weather moderates, and the early migrants, like the Osprey, begin to make their presence known and the pace of life quickens. The mornings are alive with a pleasant symphony of birds signaling their territories or are they just happy for the warming weather. The local Great Horned Owls will be feeding their brood of young along with the local Bald Eagles. The Osprey will be reestablishing their territories and rebuilding their nests for the upcoming season. Everyone feels the tug of spring with the first crocus or daffodil. Rather than looking out our windows we begin to venture outside more, cleaning our gardens, planning what to plant, and waiting for the bird migration to follow.

Winter is a good time to plan your spring gardens. Many of you are probably well ahead with your planning and preparations of established flower beds filled with native plants and plants that attract a variety of insects and birds. I try to challenge myself each spring with planting some new native plants and preparing my flower beds for plants that attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other insects. I do not always succeed but I try.

I would like to challenge everyone to look for a spot to plant a few more native flowers or plants this spring. I am always looking to turn an edge or corner of my lawn into a flower bed or find a spot for another shrub or small tree. Visiting Earth Day at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge is always good for the soul and to find some new plants or ideas for your yard.

Spring is one day closer, and the days are getting longer! Looking forward to seeing you at one of our meetings, or bird walks.

Good Birding!

Byron



Earth Day at Quogue

Come and celebrate nature and our lovely planet at the Refuge!

Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 12pm – 3pm

The day will include guided birding walks, live animal presentations, crafts, environmental exhibitors, and self-guided kayaking and canoeing on Old Ice Pond.

Bring e-waste and prescription medications for recycling, as well as clothing and textiles for reuse and recycling.

***This celebration is offered by
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society &
Quogue Wildlife Refuge.***

A great day for all ages!

No reservations necessary. Rain or shine.

Jungle Jaguars to Upland Waterfalls:

A Warbler's Northbound Odyssey

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far north with its long summer days produces billions of insects to feed their hungry young each spring. But first, they have to get there.

The Nature Conservancy has over 160 preserves in New York, waiting for their bright colors and quick hungry bills. Even more importantly, TNC has several hundred conservation sites migratory birds can explore between South America and New York on their seasonal pilgrimage. These include TNC's conservation sites in the North Central Selva region, a patchwork of indigenous lands and protected areas in eastern Peru where many migrants overwinter. The spring destination for many migrants are the Appalachians, which start in the hills of Alabama and stretch north into Canada. Together, we imagine what they might see and experience as we tag along on this extraordinary flight along seasonal sky-rivers, or "flyways".

Luckily for our Blackburnian aviator, the hungry hawk was focused on a drowsy oriole, so his brave gambit to start his journey paid off as he launched his 4½ inch body of orange, white and black feathers into the dawn sky. Unlike most warblers, Blackburnians thrive in the sun-soaked forest canopy, rather than the denser understory. So, they sometimes avoid hawks by being just a few crucial feet above. He flew on, over the mountains of Peru and Ecuador and crossed Columbia's humid border, landing along the Rio Mira River, dotted with canoes and fishing boats. He began to notice other winged travelers also heading north. A small flock of north-bound Scarlet Tanagers joined him on the river's southern shore; globe skimmer dragonflies zipped along the same route to follow rain clouds north. And in the riparian forest, dozens of Mexican free-tailed bats began to wake and rustle as dusk approached and they envisioned a spring journey to Mexican caves.

For millennia, several distinct south-north routes that follow rivers, mountain ranges, coastlines and other natural landscapes have been followed by

endless winged migrants as they throw themselves into their shared northern odysseys to find mates, raise young and feed on the insects and flowers of a North American summer. And so, bats, butterflies, warblers, Whip-poor-wills, swallows and dragonflies often follow the same route. They create living sky-rivers that can sometimes be seen by the human eye as dark undulating lines weaving between mountains or along coasts. One result of shared journeys is that many songbirds, including warblers, migrate at night, in part to avoid hawks and falcons, some of which travel the same routes to follow their feathered meals north. Beaches on spring nights are often filled with nocturnal flight calls made by thousands of unseen songbirds

"talking" to each other as they fly overhead, hidden from diurnal predators and invigorated by the cool night air.

Until recently the "how" of bird migration was a mystery to us humans. But we now believe that birds use a combination of natural landmarks, the position of the sun, moon and stars, their sense of smell, and most incredibly, the Earth's magnetic field to guide their journeys. Some birds dramatically pre-shrink their internal organs, forgo food or water for days at a time, make special flight calls used on these journeys, and fly over 100 miles per day. Any bird that makes it from the tropics to northern

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The poster for the NYSOA 2025 conference features a blue background with a white border. At the top, the text "NYSOA 2025" is written in large, white, serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is "New York State Ornithological Association Conference ~ Ithaca, New York 2025". The central image shows a stylized illustration of a brown and white bird perched on a branch, looking towards a modern building with large windows and a clock tower in the background. The bottom section of the poster has a teal background with white text that reads "September 19 - 21, 2025", "Ithaca Downtown Conference Center", and "Hosted by the Cayuga Bird Club".

- ~ Keynote Speaker: Peter Kaestner, *In Search of the Orange-tufted Spiderhunter*
- ~ Friday Night Speaker: Adriaan Dokter, on *Birdcast*
- ~ Explore the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Visitor Center
- ~ Field Trips to Area Hotspots
- ~ Afternoon Papers Session
- ~ and more!

Conference is open to all!

www.nysoa2025.org

ELIAS Field Trips – May 2025

Sunday, May 4, 2025

EPCAL

Meeting at Veteran's Memorial Park Parking Lot, on Route 25, Calverton, this walk will follow the biking/hiking trail south toward the western runway. Byron Young and Rosemary Valente will co-lead this walk. Please be sure to register with Rosemary by email (hobbesmom4ever@gmail.com) or text message (631-882-2464)

Saturday, May 10, 2025

Hubbard County Park

Meet at 8:00 am at the trail head on Red Creek Road, Hampton Bays, this area features pine/oak forest, beetle-ravaged clearings, tidal creeks, high and low salt marsh and Peconic Bay. The walk is approximately 2.5 miles over level – but maybe muddy – trails. This exciting area to explore showed us a Red-headed Woodpecker last year, spotted initially by one of the walk participants! The leader, Brian Moldashel, describes this area as “a bit of a gem off the beaten path”. Please register with Eileen Schwinn for this trip (beachmed@optonline.net)

Monday, May 12, 2025 - Meet at Noon

Hunters Garden & Bald Hill

The walk begins at 12:00 Noon, meeting at the trailhead, Route 51, Northampton. Always a spring favorite, this has a late start due to DEC authorized Wild Turkey Hunt Season. Warblers and other migrating and summer resident/nesting birds are usually vocal and exciting to see in the old woods and vernal ponds of the wide walking trails – approximately 1.5 miles. We will move to Bald Hill after, which is located nearby. Register with Eileen Schwinn for this trip (beachmed@optonline.net)

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Bayard Cutting Arboretum

From 9:00-12:00

Meet at 9 am in the main parking lot near the small gate house. 440 Montauk Hwy. The Arboretum includes paths through woodlands, a farm and gardens, along the Connetquot River and marshes. The diversity of habitat allows us to find a variety of spring birds. Contact: Tom Moran, tjmoran101@gmail.com

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Shoreham Beach, Brookhaven Town Park

From 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

**143 N Country Rd,
Shoreham, NY 11786**

Park along the road inside the gate. We'll walk along the road to the beach looking for spring migrants. We'll have a very good chance of hearing the beautiful song of the Wood Thrush. The road is bounded on each side by forest with low shrubs. At the end of the road is a view of the Long Island Sound. The walk is approximately 1.8 miles. Contact: Tom Moran, tjmoran101@gmail.com

This is a Town of Brookhaven facility. Visitors are usually restricted to Town of Brookhaven residents with permits. ELIAS has obtained permission for non-residents to attend without charge but they will be required to register in advance, see the note below. Town residents will need to obtain an annual Town virtual permit, refer to the link provided below.

Town of Brookhaven residents will need to have paid for their annual passes prior to the walk. Here is the link for the Brookhaven residents to purchase their town permits. (stickers have been replaced by virtual/online permits). <https://www.brookhavenny.gov/223/Parking-Information>

Non-Brookhaven residents will need to provide their license plate numbers so they can be put in the system for the day. Please contact me for further information.

Sunday, May 18, 2025

Fire Island – Watch Hill

Certainly off the beaten path! At the end of the ferry trip across Great South Bay, we will walk a boardwalk to see/hear rails, vireos, wrens, and warblers, led by Debra Swamback and Paul Sweet. This field trip is limited to 15 participants. Details on ferry times will be provided as we get closer to the trip date. This field trip will be a little longer than most, and involve a fee for transportation. Please register - by email only - with Eileen Schwinn for this trip (beachmed@optonline.net)

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Terrell River County Park

From 8:00 am-12:00 pm

Meet in the parking lot across from Kaler's Pond, 43 Montauk Hwy, Center Moriches at 8:00 am. The walk is through forested habitat along the Terrell River to Moriches Bay which will permit us to see some forest and shore species. The walk is about 4 miles. Contact Tom Moran, tjmoran101@gmail.com

Saturday, May 24, 2025

Manorville Hills

Meet at 8:00 am in the first parking area from the main entrance off Rt 111. There is an overflow lot past this lot if needed. Primarily forested habitat where we'll find local residents and migrants. Distance covered is about 2.5 miles and should take about 3 hours. Contact: Tom Moran, tjmoran101@gmail.com

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Connectquot County Park

Meet at 8:30 am in the main parking lot. Gate opens at 8:00 am and there is an \$8.00 fee unless you have Empire Pass. We will be looking for migrating warblers and other spring visitors. Please be sure to register with Rosemary Vaente by email (hobbesmom4ever@gmail.com) or text message (631-882-2464).

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Join Gigi Spates for a walk around QWR. Currently on the Board of the Refuge, Gigi has been the Director there, and she knows all the secret spots the birds may be hiding in! Please register with Gigi (gspates@me.com)

LOOKING AHEAD TO JUNE

Saturday, June 14, 2025

South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) and ELIAS join together for the Eric Salzman Memorial Walk

Meet at 8:00 am, at the SoFo building, 377 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, Bridgehampton, for this annual walk around the open fields and bordering woods, in memory of Eric, a director of SoFo, and a long-time friend and mentor to many ELIAS members. The approximately 1.5 mile walk on wide and neatly mowed paths, we hope to encounter resident nesting warblers and song birds. Please register directly with South Fork Natural History Museum – Go to the website SoFo.org/Calendar, and click on the listing of the walk to register.

Elizabeth Morton Wildlife Refuge Bird Walk Report

Byron Young

On Saturday Morning, March 8, 2025, ten adventurous birders gathered at the Elizabeth Morton Wildlife Refuge in Sag Harbor. The morning started out chilly and overcast, but with no wind. The wind picked up as we marveled at the collection of Cardinals, White-throated Sparrows, Chickadees and a couple of Tufted Titmice and a Red-bellied Woodpecker near the entrance to the Refuge. With the wind freshening the clouds swiftly gave way to a bright blue sky. Strolling along the trail toward the Bay we enjoyed the birds coming to hand for a few sunflower seeds while discussing various topics including the changes that I had observed since I began visiting the Refuge in the late 1970's.

We made our way to the observation deck at the Bay in search of the reported Bald Eagle nest out on the peninsular. We did not find any signs of the Bald Eagle but did observe four deer swimming across Noyack Creek Bay. Three of them made the entire swim however the fourth decided about halfway across the bay that it was too far to swim so it turned around and swam back to the shore it left from. The deer then braved running in front of the very scary birders enjoying the scene.

Proceeding along our way we again found the hungry birds along the eastern leg of our journey. at the small bridge along this trail, we encountered a very nice mix of birds. Several Cardinals displayed their brilliant colors and in the mid-morning sunlight, equally brilliant were a couple of Blue Jays, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Black Birds, Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, and one very shy Eastern Towhee. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this display



and were reluctant to move on.

The remainder of our walk was rather quiet until we neared the parking

lot. We then encountered

a flock of five Tom Turkeys feeding along the edge of the pathway. It was a stand-off for a few minutes as the turkeys tried to decide which route to take to go around us and off down the pathway into the Refuge.

The Elizabeth Morton Wildlife Refuge walk has become an Annual March Walk to get everyone prepped for the upcoming Spring walks.

Photos: Bob Gunning & Dawn Decker
Good Birding!

Ten Years Gone

RTValente, June 2005
Along Route 27

Bleached by a decade of sun,
the skeletons of pitch pines stand,
gray beacons among a verdant sea,

Once they ruled, twisted and majestic,
over a kingdom of sand and scrub,
until firestorms raged and scoured
the smallest signs of life from this place.

The earth, scorched bare blackened and smoking,
is now covered by endless carpet of grasses:
where there was smoldering ash, wildflowers bloom.
And young trees now grow on the site of conflagration,
long-needled green phoenixes rising from their Pine Barrens pyre.

On either side of the road,
time has taken back the land.
The soil has forgotten.
The birds and deer have forgotten
Even people gazing out of passing car windows have forgotten.

Those ghostly pines,
the silent sentinels of the past,
remember.

**In 1995 wildfires raged through the Pine Barrens, leaving a random patchwork of burned-out forest for miles. Volunteer firefighters from all over Suffolk County battled high winds and flames for days to save this unique ecosystem and the homes and businesses in and around it. Without their valiant efforts the devastation would have been much worse. I send a special thank you to all those who run out in the dark of night, bad weather and holidays to help their neighbors when the siren goes off.*



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mountains is the equivalent of a gold-medal Olympian; only the Michael Phelps and Simone Biles of the bird world make it to our backyards and Nature Conservancy Preserves. They deserve our respect, awe and energetic support.

Our tiny warbler is probably exhausted as he lands for an April night in the Yucatan, on the southern shores of the Gulf of America. There are three main routes that lead from Central America to the U.S. for neotropical migrants: southern Florida via Caribbean Islands, Texas via northern Mexico, or straight across the center of the Gulf into the southeastern U.S. This last route across miles of open saltwater is the most perilous, and the one chosen by most Blackburnians. Their half-ounce body, the weight of about three grapes, has to store and produce enough energy to span the Gulf's 900 miles. They must brave storms, hunting falcons, high waves and low planes, with very few places to land or rest.

Lighthouses, islands and large ships often find themselves covered with hundreds of tiny birds, too exhausted to move, as they catch a quick breath before leaping back into a tropical storm or a falcon's path. These "fallouts" are a birders dream, and a warbler's life-or-death chance to recharge. One of the most vital functions provided by the international network of Nature Conservancy Preserves is providing sites with dense shelter, clean water, and ample natural foods. This gives billions of birds a place each spring to quickly transform from near death to, "OK, I've got this – let's go!"

Our Blackburnian settles in just before dawn for a few hours of life-saving rest on the Georgia coast after a stormy pilgrimage across the Gulf. He falls asleep to the sound of other tired but successful travelers. A Whip-poor-will that spent the night with him along the Rio Mira River, and lost an eye to a Collared Forest Falcon in Belize, has regained her strength and focused her sight. She gives several of her soft, seldom heard quirt calls and gathers her strength to fly on, imagining her spring home in TNC's Calverton Ponds Preserve on Long Island. A cluster of monarchs, similar to the thousands he

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saw gliding north in Mexico, vibrate their wings to stay warm as they prepare to fly to TNC's Moody Forest Preserve in Georgia. The Blackburnian's dreams are focused on his mountain flyway through the ancient Appalachians of Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia, as he weaves his way through southern highlands to central New York.

After several adventure-filled weeks in the southern Appalachians, often flying all night and into the morning, our winged Olympian prepares to land at dawn in Virginia's highlands. The night was spent flying in loose flocks of other neotropical warblers, including Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Cerulean and a female Blackburnian he met over farmland in North Carolina. They were also joined by several northbound hoary bats, the largest and most colorful east-coast Chiropteran. Their 16-inch leathery wingspan dwarfs the warblers, as their sharp white teeth shine in the moonlight; luckily those teeth eat only insects, so bat and bird briefly share the same nocturnal flight. It's early May, time to reach his nesting ground and find a mate.

As he lands in the trees of a Virginia forest, he almost runs into an Eastern Screech Owl feeding on a Chestnut-sided Warbler she plucked from a branch just seconds before. These small owls focus on large insects and rodents, but have no problem grabbing dozing songbirds at night with their sharp talons. Our Blackburnian panics and drops into a dense hedgerow below, but his messy landing has not gone unnoticed. A Sharp-shinned Hawk, a small agile raptor, was following his dawn descent and stretches out a long leg as he steers into the same hedgerow. Luckily for the warbler, these shrubs are especially dense due to a recent regenerative fire, and he's shielded from the raptor's grasping feet by a life-saving layer of thick leaves. For the third year, he's found the safety of TNC's Warm Springs Mountain Preserve, resilient and lush with new growth from multiple controlled burns performed by TNC staff. Bringing fire back to the landscape creates diverse



Female Blackburnian Warbler makes the final choice of a mate. Both photos of the Blackburnian Warblers are from the National Audubon collection

habitats, perfect for millions of insects, hunting owls and shelter-seeking warblers, as well as dozens of other climate-threatened migratory species.

A female Blackburnian flying the same route since North Carolina, watches the brightly colored male barely evade the hawk. She arrived minutes earlier just before sunrise and dropped into a dense juniper for a quick nap. She's older and more street-wise than the male, with a bit more predator savvy. Her face and throat are sun-yellow opposed to the male's tangerine orange, but otherwise they share very similar markings. The abundant insects at this site are vital; she has to eat more than him on this journey, as she stores energy to create eggs and do most of the nest building herself.

Migrating warblers don't usually pair and mate until they've reached their nesting grounds. But males will energetically sing during migration, and in the case of Blackburnians, occasionally practice their elaborate mid-air, tumbling ballet. This acrobatic, aerial dance will soon be performed repeatedly with their mate during courtship. Whether they pair with the same or different mates each spring is unknown, but it's probably different individuals every year. When the final,

monogamous pairing occurs where they nest, the courtship becomes focused and intense, with increased aerial ballets, long bouts of song, mating and nest building. These two Blackburnians may be destined to mate and raise young several hundred miles north in New York, or they may each meet a different bright-faced individual in separate northern forests.

Just days away from his final destination, the Blackburnian navigates west of a very busy NYC, and makes one last rest-stop in central New York to nap and feed before his final flight north. He lands and recuperates in TNC's West Branch Preserve with hundreds of other colorful (and exhausted) neotropical migrants: orioles, flycatchers, vireos, hummingbirds, thrushes and even a pair of Broad-winged Hawks that wintered in Venezuela. He rests in maple, oak and pine forests above a fast stream, and hunts the canopy for early-season insects like gnats and flower flies, tiny native bees and tumbling flower beetles. He also practices his bright, high-pitched, buzzy song; a rapid *zip-zip-zip-zip-zip*, *titititi*, *tseeeeeeee*, with the final note so high that many cannot hear. He

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Short-eared Owl

**Article and photos by
Janis Hurley**

This year was a banner year for Short-eared Owls in Suffolk County, specifically at the EPCAL property in Calverton. This property is considered to be the last contiguous large parcel (1,050 acres) of grassland left on Long Island. It is one of the most extensive in downstate New York.

The Short-eared Owl is considered a Migratory Bird of Conservation Concern in the Northeast, and in New York State it is listed as Endangered. The primary reason for the concern is loss of habitat and fragmentation, especially a decline of large open grasslands and marshes where the Short-eared Owls hunt and nest. They are a widely distributed raptor, found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Considered to be partially migratory, they move to the southern parts of their range in the winter. We were fortunate to have several SEOs turn up at the Calverton property beginning at the end of December this year. Some observers reported seeing up to five Owls at a time. I witnessed four Owls one evening.

The Short-eared Owl are crepuscular hunters, which means they are most

active at dawn and dusk. Their diet consists of small mammals such as voles and mice, lemmings, shrews, rabbits, gophers, occasionally bats, small birds, and muskrats. They will move around based on where there is the highest concentration of food. Competition for food may come from other animals that hunt in the same areas.

The Short-eared Owl can live from four-twelve years old in the wild. They reach breeding age at about one year old. Courtship consists of aerial displays by the male Owl with wing claps. SEOs are one of the few Owls that will nest on the ground in a small scrape lined with feathers and grass. They form seasonal pair bonds, but do not mate for life.

"Shorties" have prominent ear tufts, but their actual ears are on the sides of their heads. Their feathers are designed for silent flight making it difficult for prey to hear their approach. And although Owls have fixed eye sockets, their necks can rotate 270 degrees horizontally and they can tilt their heads 90 degrees vertically. This allows them to see behind them and to scan their

surroundings. They also employ head bobbing and swaying which assists them in judging distances and triangulate on objects, including prey. An efficiently designed animal indeed!

The Short-eared Owl's distinctive markings and custom of living in open terrain make this Owl easier to see than many other Owls. It's hunting behavior, flying low over open fields with buoyant and flexible wingbeats is very noticeable. We are so fortunate to witness these incredible owls in our own back yard!!

Until next winter...



*Confronted relentlessly by a
Northern Harrier for his vole*



*The Short-eared Owl
finally drops his meal*

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throws his head back, spreads his mouth wide and shakes his chest and sides to throw his song as far as possible from his sunlit, tree top perch. Anyone who's seen this spectacle will swear the Blackburnian's orange face is lit from within, putting off its own independent light. For many birders, spring has not arrived until they've witnessed this spectacular show.

Body rested and belly full, he completes his last leg north over a few lazy days and lands one morning in a towering sunlit hemlock he remembers well, within sight and sound of a shimmering waterfall. He was born here in Albany County four years ago, and has miraculously made it back three times to raise a family, each time meeting an equally miraculous and well-traveled mate. He's returned to TNC's Hannacroix Ravine Preserve, a 415-acre gem with hemlock, yellow birch, sugar maple and a carpet of native wildflowers in full May bloom.

Over the next few days, he sings, searches and dances until a recently arrived sun-faced female decides he's energetic enough to raise her babies; it's her choice, and some first-year males simply don't impress enough to be a female's choice. Her previous rest stop was outside Ithaca, in the diverse forests of TNC's Eldridge Wilderness Preserve. Now at Hannacroix, she enjoys her mate's aerial ballets and begins to zero in on where their nest will be – somewhere

safe in the canopy, near the end of narrow branch too thin for raccoons or even crows to follow. Most of the nest building is done by her expert engineering, with dry leaves, moss, lichen and spider webs. As they sing and work together they see and hear other winged migrants all around them: Scarlet Tanagers similar to the flock in Ecuador, a colorful female hoary bat with a newborn pup, common green darner dragonflies from North Carolina laying eggs in sunny pools, and a stunning Bay-breasted Warbler bathing in the waterfall. Our Blackburnians may be done, but the Bay-breasted has even further to fly; she must travel all the way to towering boreal forests that start on the New York-Quebec border.

As the Bay-breasted Warbler cleans her feathers for another long flight, the male Blackburnian throws another high-pitched song into the forest air. Below, on a winding dirt trail used by another kind of forest visitor, a human family with mom, dad and three kids walk beneath the singing Blackburnian. "Oh WOW, it's my favorite bird, kids! My grandfather used to wake me at dawn on May weekends to look for the 'Firethroat' - we'd spend all morning searching the tallest hemlocks. I can't believe you get to see this miracle on your FIRST bird walk!"

"Where mom? I can't see it! I think you're making it up!" As dad helped

them find the tiny, flame-faced troubadour, mom stood back and watched, memories flooding over her like quiet music. She knows this path, this bird, this scene - "I'm home", she thought. Our globe-trotting Blackburnian might be feeling the same. Although soon, on a New York summer night he may dream of the prowling jaguar in the tropical shadows of his equally wondrous southern, winter home.

In a few months, he and his new family will point their sharp bills south towards insect-filled jungles. It will soon be time to re-join millions of winged Olympians and throw themselves towards the equator, into yet another, millennia-old odyssey.

■ ■ ■

Conservation Status – Most birds are threatened by climate change, and Blackburnians are no exception. Some models predict they could lose 54% of their breeding range if the average temperature increases by 1.5 degrees (Celsius). However, as of 2024 their populations are considered relatively stable. Clearing of their winter forests in South America, human obstacles and disruptions along their migration route, and the effects of climate change on Appalachian ecosystems are their greatest threats.

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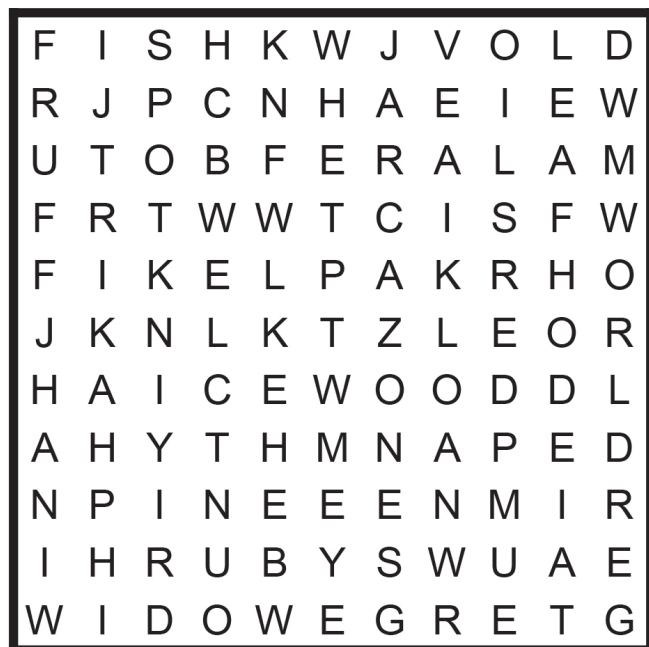
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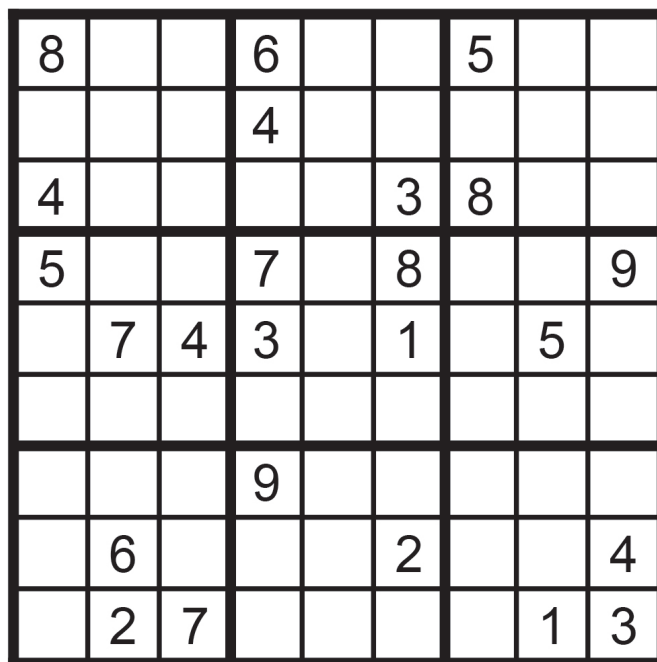
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Word Search - the Bird Version



Sudoku



ALDER	MEW	TRI
ANI	NAPED	WHET
ASH	NECKED	WHITETAILED
EGRET	NEW	WIDOW
ELF	NUT	WOOD
EYE	OLD	WORLD
FERAL	OWL	ZONE
FINCH	PIE	
FISH	PINE	
HILL	RED	
JAR	ROCK	
JAY	RUBY	
KELP	RUFF	
KITE	SAW	
MAG	SPOT	

The Laughing Gull

Q: What's it called when it's raining ducks and geese?

A: Fowl weather



Continued from page 1

one of CRESLI's naturalists, Dr. Marianne McNamara (Professor of Biology and Marine Biology at SCCC), as she shares insights into the data collection process, recent findings, and stunning photography, focusing on the humpback whale population off eastern Long Island.

Dr. McNamara is an avid photographer and SCUBA diver and formerly served as Executive Vice President of Long Island Divers Association, a non-profit organization which promotes and supports SCUBA and free diving on Long Island. She was awarded the Jerry R. Schubel Graduate Fellowship for her role in transmitting science into forms that are accessible to the public and has participated in several workshops demonstrating the use of improvisation theatre exercises to improve scientific communication with actor Alan Alda. She continues to promote scientific and ocean literacy as a traveling lecturer in SCCC's Professors on Wheels program and serves as a mentor to students interested in biology and marine biology.

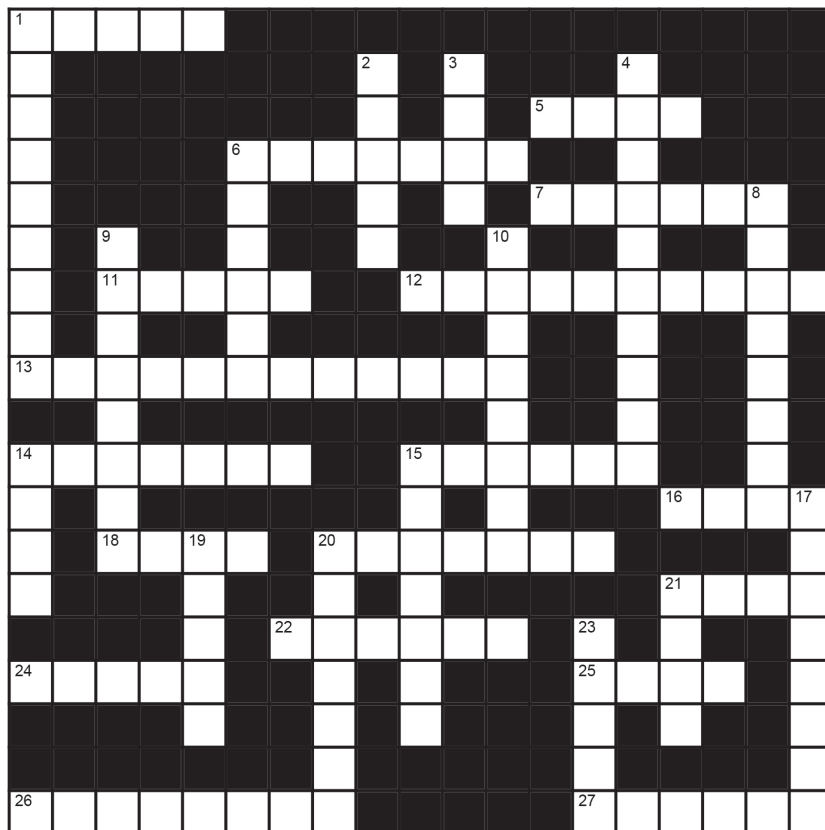
Monday Evening, June 2
Meet at 7:00 pm

An Evening at Quogue Wildlife Refuge

In place of a meeting we will be taking a walk around the Refuge enjoying the breeding birds that live at there. There will also be a group enjoying the porch that overlooks Old Ice Pond. Come see the Egrets that roost, the Eagles usually fly by as does the Osprey. After the walk we will join together and discuss the birds seen.

Meetings are open to the public, free, refreshments. The meetings take place at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge, 3 Old Country Road, Quogue, NY.

Recent and Current Sightings Tom Moran



Across

- 1 _____ Egret, should be a winter bird?
- 5 _____ bird, good place to cook dinner
- 6 Northern _____, rare sighting on the South Fork with an outrageous head plume.
- 7 _____ or won't it?
- 11 _____ sparrow or finch
- 12 Eastern here, or a _____ Lemon, a Globetrotters basketball player
- 13 _____ Grosbeak, about the same time as its namesake blooms.
- 14 Indigo _____, or what a batter is doing on a suicide squeeze
- 15 _____ Longspur, rare sighting coincidentally seen at Smith Pt County Park
- 16 _____ eating Warbler, yuk!
- 18 If spelled badly and repeated three times from the Book of Ecclesiastes
- 20 _____ O'Hara, or Tanager
- 21 _____ Eider, put on a good display at Shinnecock Inlet this winter
- 22 What a baker does to write letters on a cake or a _____ Plover
- 24 10 Down _____, a bird that can be seen in Florida or upstate that made an uncommon appearance on the South Fork this winter
- 25 _____ Duck, amazing plumage
- 26 Broken wing display
- 27 Northern _____, a warbler

Down

- 1 Look on the beach, or in fall, some are on sod farms
- 2 Not to be confused with Hairy
- 3 _____ footed Goose, several on LI this winter including Eastport Lake, or is it Seatuck Creek...
- 4 Is that bill short enough or long and upturned...
- 6 _____ - Black-backed Gull, West Point gray backed
- 8 Farm equipment that separates seed from stalk, or a heavy metal band, or a Brown _____
- 9 _____ sided Warbler
- 10 _____ 24 Across, another bird that can be seen in Florida that made a South Fork appearance this winter
- 14 A sad Grosbeak
- 15 _____ Sparrow, seen in saltmarshes with a splash of yellow over its eyes
- 17 _____ Warbler, ok, other trees, too
- 19 To quoth this bird...Nevermore
- 20 Black _____
- 21 Why...
- 23 _____ Sparrow, maybe should be called Marsh Sparrow here with attractive reddish brown in wings

Investing in the Future of the Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Preserve, Educate, Inspire

Kimberly Stever

Development Coordinator
Quogue Wildlife Refuge

For 90 years, the Quogue Wildlife Refuge has been a sanctuary where people of all ages connect with nature, discover wildlife, and explore Long Island's unique ecosystems. As we look ahead, we are excited to launch a project that will expand and improve the Refuge's facilities, ensuring we continue to educate and inspire for generations to come.

With over 150,000 annual visitors and more than 15,000 students and participants in our educational programs, the Refuge is a vital resource for our community. However, the Nature Center, built in 1970, can no longer meet the needs of our visitors, programs, and resident animals. That's why we've launched the Preserve, Educate, Inspire campaign to expand and update the Charles Banks Belt Nature Center.

A Vision for the Future

The project will double the Nature Center's usable space through a modest expansion of the first floor and the addition of a second story, formerly a small attic.

- **Enhanced Exhibits & Animal Enclosures:** Upgraded displays and enclosures will better showcase Long Island's natural history and provide improved care for our wildlife ambassadors.
- **Dedicated Classroom Building:** A separate, fully equipped classroom will host hands-on learning, field trips, workshops, and community programs.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** The new building will be LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), reflecting our commitment to conservation.
- **Improved Accessibility:** ADA-compliant entrances and expanded exhibit access will ensure a more inclusive experience for all visitors.

- **Updated Visitor Space** – Expanded educational & event space, updated technology, and a welcoming environment for visitors. All while maintaining the rustic charm and panoramic views of Old Ice Pond.

How You Can Help

Construction is scheduled to begin in Fall 2025, and we are now entering the final phase of fundraising. Thanks to generous early gifts, we've raised \$2.4 million of our \$3.5 million proposed goal. Every contribution brings us closer to making this vision a reality. Naming opportunities are available for those who wish to leave a lasting legacy.

To support this historic project, visit quoguewildliferefuge.org or contact us at 631.653.4771 or Development@quoguewildliferefuge.org for more information.

Together, we can ensure the Refuge remains a place of learning, conservation, and inspiration for generations to come.

A rendering of the new entrance and extended building.



FOOTNOTES: Eskimo Curlew

for Maxwell C. Wheat

By George Fisher

Plate I, watercolor by R.V. Clem, wetlands, silhouette
at sunset, epitaph

♂ ♀ alike in all flying stages,
in all seasons" ¹

fute, doughbird, akpingak, numenius
borealis, smaller than whimbrel, shorter bill, legs
dark green, cinnamon-buff under wing;
call, a tee-dee tee-dee tee-dee

"like wind whistling through a ship's rigging, or a vast jingling
of sleighbells" ²

August 1833, Audubon
in Labrador paints one curlew dead, another curious,
craning neck, prophetic

"the sole instance

in which Audubon resorted to such a measure" ³

though unmolested in Arctic breeding grounds,
thousands shot in Fall through the Maritimes &
New England

then five months under guns

in the Chilean winter, Texas & the Prairie States
in Spring:

few survived, now
"virtually extinct" ⁴

but

"several sight records in recent years" ⁵

"look for them

on Long Island barrier beaches

after sustained easterly gales

in September" ⁶

Max, let's go this year

"to the drier parts of salt and brackish
marshes" ⁷

we'll look among the plover,
trace a path to Miracle, run
shouting back to the world

YES!

YES!

they are HERE!

From Raining Leaves anthology, Great South Bay Poetry Coop, 1986



FYI

Maxwell Corydon Wheat, Jr. was acclaimed Nassau County Poet Laureate on June 24, 2007 by the poetry community of Nassau County, with the support of poets from the greater Long Island area.

Robert Verity Clem (1933-2010) was a New England artist based in Chatham, Massachusetts. He was self-taught but heavily influenced by the work of Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874-1927). He published his definitive work, "The Shorebirds of North America," in 1967. He is known for the exactitude of his detail and the sparseness of his pallet.

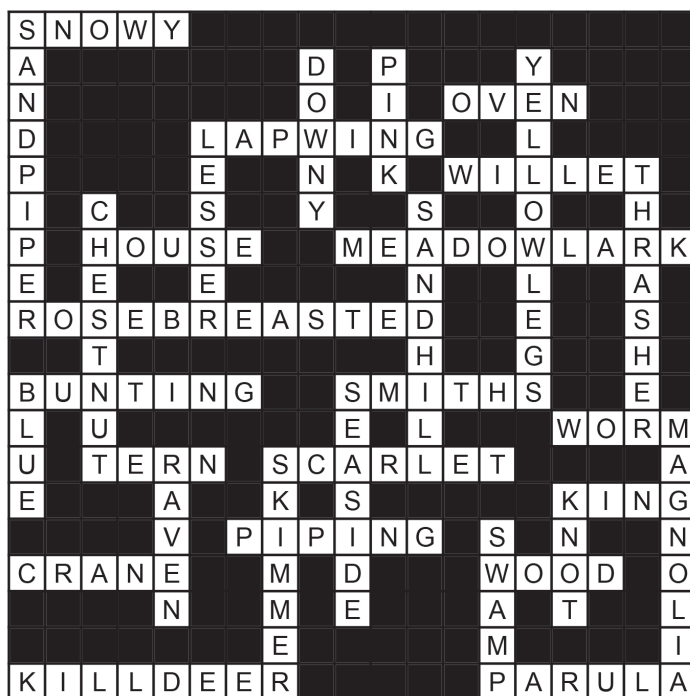
1. Shorebirds of North America, Peter Mathiessen
2. The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds ed. John K. Terres
3. Birds of America J.J. Audubon (American Heritage Edition)
4. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds
5. Birds of the Eastern United States Roger Tory Peterson
6. Birds of the New York Area John Bull
7. The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding Vol 1

Happy Spring Birding

Warblers are coming !

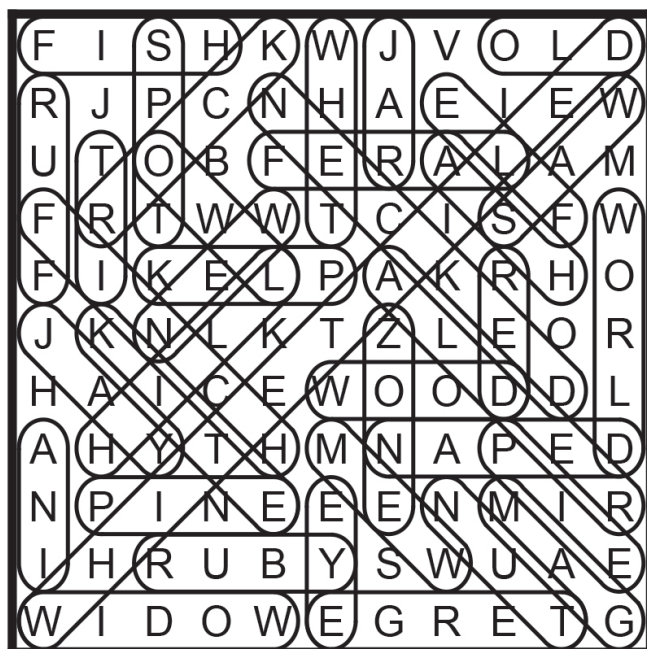
Check
<https://birdcast.info>
each morning during migration season
to find out how busy the skies were
overnight.

Answers to Crossword
Recent and Sightings
on page 10
Puzzle by Tom Moran



Answers to puzzles on page 11

8	9	3	6	1	7	5	4	2
7	5	2	4	8	9	1	3	6
4	1	6	2	5	3	8	9	7
5	3	1	7	2	8	4	6	9
6	7	4	3	9	1	2	5	8
2	8	9	5	6	4	3	7	1
1	4	8	9	3	6	7	2	5
3	6	5	1	7	2	9	8	4
9	2	7	8	4	5	6	1	3



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2025 Chapter Renewal/Membership

Membership is \$20 a year. You will receive *The Osprey* and you will be supporting our education and conservation activities.

This is a ☐ Renewal ☐ New Membership

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