OUTH HORE KIMMER

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2000

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jonathan Staller

I joined SSAS because of the great bird walks that Elliott Kutner leads us on. I had a life list of six birds at that time. As each Sunday passed after that, my life list grew more steadily. When I received my first *Skimmer*, I found out that SSAS is more than just bird walks. Sandy Brenner then, and now Tom Torma, found excellent programs for our general meetings. Michael Sperling produces one of the nicest newsletters that I've ever seen. Betsy Gulottachairs the Brookside Preserve Committee; she oversees our preserve that we manage for Nassau County and makes sure that it's protected and kept forever wild so generations can walk through and see southern Nassau County the way it used to look.

Joe Grupp, Jim Remsen, and Paul Butkereit have been counting waterfowl for over 10 years now and have collected some amazing data on this subject. Jim is also in charge of the Birdathon; this past year we ranked 16th on a list of the top 75 throughout the country in raising money. Paul, when he's not counting ducks, is selling birdseed.

When I need information or advice about NAS and our chapter, I can count on Joan Butkereit. When I needed a pair of binoculars, Joe Lancer came to the rescue; he sells binocs, scopes, and field guides for our chapter. His wife Sue is our Education Chairperson.

When an important issue comes up and letters need to be written, Mary Jane Russell, our *Armchair Activist* Chairperson, gets the word out to our members (call her to get on the free mailing list). If an event needs to be announced in the newspapers, Diane Singer and Alice Blaustein come into the picture. Dolores Rogers knows every face in SSAS; she's the Welcoming Committee Chairperson and also chairs the committee that nominates new board members for our chapter.

The food and beverages at the general meetings would not be there for us if it weren't for Janice Howard. If you've been on any Saturday field trip lately, that was arranged

NEXT MEETING

Tom Torma

DATE: Tuesday, April 11, 2000

TIME: 8:00 P.M. ②

PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library

144 W. Merrick Rd. (at 5. Ocean Ave.)

SPEAKER: Seth Kalmowitz

TOPIC: Yosemite and Grand Teton National Parks

Photography has a long history in the creation of our national parks, and many people have admired images of our parks in both books and calendars. This month's guest speaker will be Seth Kalmowitz, an outstanding landscape photographer, who will present a photo excursion of Yosemite and Grand Teton National Parks.

Yosemite is one of the crown jewels of our National Park System. Yosemite Valley's towering granite domes, waterfalls, Merced River, and forests are a must-see for anyone who appreciates natural scenery. If you haven't seen El Capitan and Half Dome in person already, tonight's program will have you packing for California.

Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming features one of the most spectacular mountain ranges in the U.S.; there are no foothills between the quiet valley of the Snake River and the Teton Range that peaks 7,000 feet above it at 13,770 feet.

Join us and enjoy magnificent images of two national treasures. And come to our next meeting, too — on Tuesday, May 9th, same place, same time.

Pre-Meeting Birding ID Class. Scott Oglesby's topic for April's 7:30 P.M. birding class will be migration. Please bring your favorite field guide.

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS

by Joanne Del Prete. Betty Borowsky is in charge of conservation and has created a wonderful summer camp program that sends underprivileged children to Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary. Therese Lucas is out running all over town with our displays. Marge Jaeger does our Greening of Long Island fund-raiser and Nancy Frame counts all our money. Jackie Richichi brings in new members and Doreen Remsen, when she's not reminding us how many days till the Birdathon, is our most recent past President and makes sure that our newest President, me, takes SSAS into the next millennium at full steam.

From a bird walk to the President; you must be wondering how much money I get paid. I get paid very well, but not in cash or anything of monetary value. I get paid in the satisfaction of knowing that my board and I are doing great things for the environment in which we live.

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GUIDED WALKS AT MARINE NATURE STUDY AREA

The Town of Hempstead's Marine Nature Study Area in Oceanside began offering free bird walks on Saturdays at 9:30 A.M. on March 18th. Reservations are not necessary and the walks will continue weekly if there's a demand. Last year, SSAS made a donation to this chronically underfunded 52 acre sanctuary and included it in our Fall Bird Festival walks; we continue to raise our voices to protect its habitat. To get there, take Long Beach Road to Waukena Avenue and head east to Park Avenue. Turn south at Park Avenue's traffic light and follow the signs to the entrance. Call 766-1580 for more information.



Explore the coast with the

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK AQUARIUM (Saturday, April 1). Meet at 10 A.M. for a 2-1/2 hour special "Behind the Scenes" tour of the many indoor/outdoor exhibits. Cost: \$15 (kids \$8). Call Don.

FIRE ISLAND "SUNKEN FOREST" (Saturday, May 20). Meet at 10 A.M. at the ferry in Sayville for day trip to unique maritime forest on Fire Island. Hike the mile long boardwalk trail during peak spring bird migration. Cost: \$20 includes round trip ferry and guided hike. Bring lunch and binoculars. Leaders: Nancy Corona and Steve Finn. Call Nancy at (718) 318-8827.

ASSATEAGUE NATIONAL SEASHORE (May 18–21). Enjoy a wildlife bonanza on the Virginia coast. Hike trails of Chincoteague Refuge and beaches of Assateague National Seashore during peak spring bird migration. See wild ponies, Sika deer, river otter, bald eagle, shorebirds, and many species of warblers and other songbirds. Cost: \$275 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, Safari Bus Tour of back dune flats, boat tour of marshes, guided hikes, evening programs, and "All-you-can-eat" seafood buffet on Saturday night. Leaders: Mickey Cohen and Don Riepe.

MONTAUK SUMMER WEEKEND (June 2-4). 2 nights at luxurious Manor House, 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs, canoeing, seining, LIRR pickup, more. Cost: \$265.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 634-6467, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693

BROOKSIDE PRESERVE CLEANUP & LAWSUIT

On **April 9th**, beginning at 1 P.M., SSAS will have its annual spring cleanup at Brookside Preserve. Brookside is a 20-acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County and managed (and rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. With help from a state grant, we published a trail guide, educational freshwater wetland guide, and video; we continue to add plantings for wildlife.

The Preserve is located on the Freeport-Baldwin border, along Milburn Creek; park at the main entrance on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway (turn north at the traffic light that's just east of Freeport High School). Please bring gloves, rakes, bags, and/or friends (young and old).

Lawsuit Update. As reported last month, SSAS, for the first time in its history, is the plaintiff (along with LI Trout Unlimited chapter president John Fischer) in a lawsuit. Our lawsuit against Nassau County and Water Works Realty Corporation says that the 72 foot high nursing home project that is on the verge of being built right up to Brookside's southern border must undergo an environmental review under NYS law and that the emergency access right-of-way through Brookside which was granted by the lame-duck County Legislature for \$750 must be approved by the NYS Legislature as an alienation of parkland.

Shortly after pro bono attorney (and SSAS VP) Michael Goldsmith filed our suit, the developer asked to meet with us to discuss our concerns about the damage the project would do to Brookside Preserve and Milburn Creek. As this *Skimmer* was going to press, our lawsuit had been adjourned until March 24th while negotiations toward a settlement moved forward.

Come to the cleanup for an update and a chance to see what we're trying so hard to protect!

NOMINATIONS FOR 2000-2001 OFFICERS

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 9th, officers will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee, chaired by Dolores Rogers and including Jim Remsen, has recommended the following candidates:

President — Jonathan Staller
Vice President — Michael Goldsmith
Treasurer — Nancy Frame
Recording Secretary — Christine Schmitt
Corresponding Secretary — Alice Blaustein
Director (to June 2003) — George Peters
Director (to June 2003) — Doris Pirodsky



All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

Mar. 26	30th Anniversary Walk, Jones Beach Fishing Pier Parking Lot (Field #10 on the bay, just west of & across from Field #4)	
Apr. 2	Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first	
	lot south of Southern State Parkway,	
	south end of lot)	
Apr. 9	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
Apr. 16	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner	
Apr. 23	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner	
Apr. 30	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
May 7	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
May 14	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	
May 21	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
May 28	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	
June 4	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)	

EARTH DAY 2000

Jonathan Staller

This year Earth Day will be 30 years old, just like our chapter. South Shore Audubon Society is cohosting Earth Day with Tackapausha Museum on **Saturday**, **April 22nd** from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., rain or shine.

Come out and enjoy American Indian dancers or listen to local folk musicians perform. There will be bird walks through Tackapausha Preserve and cleanups also. Other environmental and Nassau County organizations will be there, including Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary with a live animal show. Light snacks and drinks will be served, but you're encouraged to bring your own lunch and sit on the grounds and enjoy this wonderful event.

Tackapausha is located on Washington Avenue in Seaford, just north of Merrick Road. Via Sunrise Highway, turn south on Washington Avenue, which is three traffic lights east of the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway. See you all there!



"NEW YORK'S LARGEST WILD BIRD SPECIALTY STORE"

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Betsy Guiotta

Thanks to the continued generosity of Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society will be awarding two \$750 Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships to students who are college juniors, seniors, or graduates and who are continuing their studies towards a degree in biological or environmental sciences, such as wildlife management, forestry, animal behavior, ecology, marine biology, oceanography, mammalogy, ornithology, etc. For information, call me at 572-7575 (daytime) or 546-8841; the deadline to apply is **April 7th**.

CALEB SMITH STATE PARK REMINDER

On **Saturday, April 1st,** weather permitting, SSAS will explore the Nissequogue River and surrounding ponds on the south side of the 543 acre Caleb Smith State Park Preserve in Smithtown (for approximately 2 hours) with a Park Ranger. We should see early spring arrivals (including Wood Ducks) and early bloomers.

We will meet at 9:30 A.M. in the south-side parking lot. There is a maximum of 25 people, so please call Joanne Del Prete at 433-0739 (evenings up to 10 P.M.) to find out if it's not too late to register and for help with carpooling. Cost is \$1.50 per adult and \$1 per child (17 and younger).

WEB PAGE www.audubon.org/chapter/ny/southshore
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NASSAU COUNTY POLLUTION HOTLINE 739-6666

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

SSAS Post Office Statement — South Shore Skimmer is published monthly from September through December and February through May by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

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OUR THIRTEENTH ANNUAL BIRDATHON!

James Remsen, Jr.

This year, SSAS will conduct its thirteenth annual Birdathon. SSAS raises funds through the Birdathon by having members get cash pledges for each species of bird identified during a 24-hour period in May, when the spring migration is at its height.

Mark the dates on your calendar — **Friday, May 12th** from 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 13th** at 5:00 P.M. — and join one of our intrepid leaders (or go it alone, in which case you choose the turf). Rain dates will be one week later at the same times.

IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING! First, in the event of questionable weather, I will decide by 3:00 P.M. on Friday, May 12th whether or not to cancel the Birdathon. If you have any uncertainty about whether it will be postponed, please call me no later than 3 o'clock on May 12th. This may save unnecessary trips.

Second, WE NEED BIRDATHON PRIZES! As we have done in the past, we wish to make everyone who brings in at least one pledge (sponsoring yourself counts) eligible

for a prize drawing to be held at our annual dinner. However, as of now we have very few prizes. If you would like to donate a prize, please contact me. Let's reward as many of our hard-working participants as we can!

Our schedule of starting places and leaders is as follows: Friday May 12th at 5:00 P.M. Meet (leader TBA) at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore; Paul Butkereit at Jones Beach's Coast Guard Station; or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot).

Saturday May 13th: Meet Elliott Kutner at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8:00 A.M.; Paul Butkereit at the Ryan Building behind Mercy Hospital at 6:00 A.M.; or Jim and Doreen Remsen at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore at 5:45 A.M. If you need directions to any meeting place, call me. Also please try to notify the team leader of your choice so that he/she will know how many people to expect (all phone numbers are on the back page of this newsletter).

If you aren't going with a team, why not try your own Birdathon? Do a variation on the usual theme of seeing as many species as you can during the count period. Use your imagination. Limit yourself to your backyard, a favorite park or preserve, or even a "couch potato" Birdathon. (For this one, you count as many bird species as you can on television during the 24 hours. Yes, people have really done it, but we suggest you make it clear to your sponsors if you decide to give it a try!)

Sponsors are the heart of the Birdathon. These are people who agree to give you 25¢, \$1, or any amount for each species you see (they may also give you a flat pledge not based on number of species). Ask anyone you know, and don't forget yourself!

Pledges are due no later than Monday, June 12th to be eligible for prizes, which will be awarded at our annual dinner the next night (assuming we can get enough prizes!). You can submit pledges on bird walks or mail them to me (due to other commitments, I have not been able to attend many bird walks this year, so mailing might be best). If you have questions, call me or speak to me at meetings. If you need extra pledge forms, I can supply them, too. Let's make our year 2000 Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

Birdathon Chairperson: James Remsen, Jr., 3264 Park Avenue, Oceanside NY 11572; phone 764-5168 after 8 P.M. Please note that I'm in the process of moving to a new address. However, all messages left for me at the above number will reach me. I can also be paged at (516) 517-7538 and a voice mail message left, if you have trouble reaching me by phone.

SSAS RETURNING TO FAHNESTOCK

SSAS's Mary Jane Russell has made arrangements for a fun-filled weekend of October 14 & 15.

11,000 acre Fahnestock State Park is the largest park in Putnam County and contains the Taconic Outdoor Environmental Center; oak, hickory, and hemlock forests; lakes; and ten miles of trails. The official bird checklist says the following species and more are abundant or common in fall: Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Tree

Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated

Green Warbler, Prairie Warbler, American Redstart (pictured), Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and American Goldfinch.

A \$65 check payable to South Shore Audubon Society will get you a bed in one of the rustic heated and lighted cabins (up to ten Auduboners per three-bedroom cabin), and four meals cooked by a Culinary Institute chef. Bring a sleeping bag if you have one, linens (or rent them), soap, etc., and a flashlight for nighttime excursions to the nearby plumbing facilities.

Please mark your calendars and, since there's a maximum of 70 people, mail your check early to Mary Jane Russell, 2470 Foxdale Avenue, Oceanside, NY 11572-1727. Include your phone number and, at the request of Fahnestock, your home address and the number of children coming with you (if any). We'd like to carpool—drivers and passengers are needed!

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT RESULTS

For those of you who don't have access to the web site at http://birdsource.org, here are the totals for only New York State in the February 18–21, 2000 Great Backyard Bird Count that was sponsored by National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants, as will be obvious from the list below and was explained in the February *Skimmer*, were allowed to count birds anywhere. They reported the largest number of birds of each species that they saw at one time during the weekend. I've listed the 123 species in order by how many people reported seeing them; the second number is the number of individual birds counted (e.g., 2793 New Yorkers saw 14,445 Black-capped Chickadees).

Black-capped Chickadee 2793/14,445 Mourning Dove 2230/16,883 Northern Cardinal 2196/7277 Dark-eyed Junco 2193/12,304 Downy Woodpecker 2048/3916 Blue Jay 2033/7262 American Crow 1961/23,064 White-breasted Nuthatch 1805/3324 Tufted Titmouse 1534/4218 House Sparrow 1357/14,097, House Finch 1309/9342 American Goldfinch 1280/9513, European Starling 1197/17,527 Hairy Woodpecker 929/1379, American Tree Sparrow 902/6219 Red-bellied Woodpecker 814/1044 Red-breasted Nuthatch 697/1110 Common Redpoll 646/13,656, White-throated Sparrow 520/2025 Song Sparrow 401/1502, Red-tailed Hawk 366/558 Rock Dove 350/5968, Canada Goose 332/32.947 Purple Finch 302/1479, American Robin 294/4449 Carolina Wren 217/283, Mallard 212/6423 Wild Turkey 207/3103, Northern Mockingbird 174/240 Brown Creeper 159/192, Common Grackle 144/1962 Northern Flicker 135/161, Sharp-shinned Hawk 119/123 Pileated Woodpecker 113/141, Herring Gull 112/2796 Evening Grosbeak 109/1784, Cedar Waxwing 89/2242 Cooper's Hawk 89/93, Ring-billed Gull 79/2924 Eastern Bluebird 79/281, American Black Duck 69/1844 Red-winged Blackbird 69/1025, Snow Bunting 56/4252 Pine Siskin 54/233, Brown-headed Cowbird 53/460 Ring-necked Pheasant 49/67, Fox Sparrow 46/100 Great Black-backed Gull 45/426, Red-headed Woodpecker 45/56 Great Blue Heron (Blue form) 41/65, Bald Eagle 40/117 White-crowned Sparrow 39/108, Bufflehead 34/811 Common Merganser 33/519, Winter Wren 33/88 Great Horned Owl 31/45, Field Sparrow 30/141, Mute Swan 30/115, Northern Harrier 29/37 American Kestrel 29/31, Horned Lark 28/1397 Turkey Vulture 28/68, Northern Shrike 27/27 Red-breasted Merganser 26/255, Rough-legged Hawk 25/32 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 25/30, Common Goldeneye 24/999 Ruffed Grouse 24/43, Eastern Screech-Owl 20/20 Hooded Merganser 19/104, American Coot 18/926 Northern Goshawk 16/18, Canvasback 14/2004 Gray Catbird 14/23, Hermit Thrush 13/16 Red-shouldered Hawk 13/13, Greater Scaup 12/1506 American Wigeon 12/148, Wood Duck 11/32 Eastern Towhee 11/16, Redhead 10/12,148 Ring-necked Duck 10/186, Oldsquaw 9/228

Ruddy Duck 8/110, Rusty Blackbird 8/34 Gadwall 8/30, Horned Grebe 8/26 Short-eared Owl 8/22, Golden-crowned Kinglet 8/13 Lesser Scaup 7/2346, Common Loon 7/319 Swamp Sparrow 7/38, Barred Owl 7/9 Fish Crow 6/27, Killdeer 6/20 Belted Kingfisher 6/10, Northern Saw-whet Owl 6/8 Peregrine Falcon 6/6, Lesser Black-backed Gull 5/43 Ruby-crowned Kinglet 5/12, Pied-billed Grebe 5/8 Snow Goose 4/121, Tundra Swan 4/47 American Green-winged Teal 4/15, Great Cormorant 4/12 Northern Pintail 4/6, Eastern Meadowlark 4/5 Merlin 4/4, Yellow-rumped Warbler 3/37 Red Crossbill 3/13, Savannah Sparrow 3/11 Black Vulture 3/10, Double-crested Cormorant 3/8 White-winged Crossbill 3/4, White-winged Scoter 2/254 Iceland Gull 2/3, Surf Scoter 1/40 Glaucous Gull 1/5, American Woodcock 1/2 Great Egret 1/1, Long-eared Owl 1/1 Common Raven 1/1, Carolina Chickadee 1/1 ^

SSAS WALK IN CENTRAL PARK

Joanne Del Prete

On **Saturday, May 6th,** International Migratory Bird Day, SSAS members will meet at Belvedere Castle in Central Park at 9 A.M. (unless it rains) to explore the lakes, ponds, meadows, forests, and the diversity of species, all of which are located in the heart of Manhattan. These species include cuckoos, hummingbirds, pewees, flycatchers, nuthatches, vireos, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, orioles, and many migrants. Spring is the best time to visit — warblers are at their peak. Our escort will be NYC Park Ranger Bob DeCandido.

I will meet SSAS members at any of the following locations:

- ① LIRR station in Massapequa (Broadway and Sunrise Highway). We will take the 6:56 A.M. train (expected to become the 6:58 A.M. when the schedule is revised in April), which is currently due to arrive in Penn Station at 7:55 and makes local stops through Rockville Centre.
- ② Before 8:10 A.M. at Penn Station (LIRR Waiting Area). We will take the 8th Avenue subway's C train (under leadership of Scott Oglesby, an SSAS veteran NYC commuter).
- ® Belvedere Castle (mid-Park at 79th Street) by 9 A.M. I suggest you call me at 433-0739 if you want to join us at Massapequa or Penn Station so I can look for you.

To enhance your enjoyment of the outing, I recommend reading the book *Redtails in Love* by Marie Winn, which is a true, heartwarming, and amusing story about a dedicated group of Central Park birdwatchers who went to all lengths to protect the birds, particularly the Red-tailed Hawks, in Central Park. We will probably see or meet some of the characters.

Belvedere Castle can be reached at 212-772-0210; LIRR schedule info is available at 516-822-5477.

RED KITES AND THE BLACK ISLE

Tom Torma

The scenic overlook had a spectacular view, looking up the Moray Firth toward the snow-covered Scottish Highlands. Many birds could be seen along the coast. One bird caught my attention as it looped up and down, diving and working its way along the firth. It had a reddish underside and a forked tail; it as a raptor known as a Red Kite. The location was the Black Isle.

Nestled between the sea and the highlands on the east coast of Scotland near Inverness, the Black Isle is a most interesting place. First, it is not an island; it is actually a peninsula, with the Moray Firth to the south and the Cromarty Firth to the north. There is also nothing particularly black about the Black Isle. No one really knows how the area got its name. One theory is the isle got its name from the extremely dark forest that once covered the area. Others speculate that the name came from a corruption of the original name in a long-lost language. It is a rural area with rolling hills, fields, and patches of wood lots. Small



quaint villages like Cromarty have shopping, dining, hotels, and bed and breakfasts. It is a great place to watch nature. Along its shore I saw curlews and oystercatchers; lapwings (pictured) were in the fields, while buzzards flew

overhead. I watched white bottle-nosed dolphins hunt in the firth while harbor seals floated by.

The Red Kite is a handsome predator common in the warmer parts of Europe. It had been extinct in Scotland, but was recently reintroduced on the Black Isle. It feeds on invertebrates, small vertebrates such as frogs and lizards, rodents, weak-flying birds, and even fish and carrion. Kite is a great name for a bird but, like the Black Isle, time has obscured the source of the bird's name. One source could be an old Indo-European word meaning "to shoot"; this could refer to the swooping action characteristic of how some kites hunt. The name kite has been used since 975 A.D. It is from the Greek meaning "to quarrel" and indicates the aggressive nature of these birds. In England, a kite is considered someone who takes advantage of or preys on another.

Kites also have a place in history. Egyptians believed it was a kite who brought the religious laws and customs to Thebes. Although many birds were eaten by ancient peoples, the Old Testament prohibited the eating of certain birds. Leviticus 11:13–14 states that it is an abomination to eat kites. An old Gypsy proverb says that "a carrion kite will never bring good luck." The toy flown by children also known as a kite was given that name because of the sudden twisting, diving, or rising in the wind, which is similar to how these birds fly.

There are 26 species of kites worldwide (one's pictured); five of them breed in North America. Kites come in many

different forms; some look like accipiters, while others have forms more like falcons (buteos), and the splendid Swallow-tailed Kite is unique. No two of our kites are the same genus; one feeds on insects, one on rodents, two on snails, and one is a generalist. Kites generally live in the southern half of the United States.

Seeing the Red Kites on the Black Isle was a memorable experience. It brought a new meaning to me for the old expression "go fly a kite."

ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN

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Elliatt Kulner

Editor's Note: The following is reprinted from an old but timeless SSAS information sheet.

Birds are one of our most splendid neighbors in the environment. They are accessible to all of us by joining and participating in the many bird walks and field trips offered in your area.

However, there is a special pleasure, for each of you, should you choose to share your gardens with these lovely creatures. I set up my garden to make it especially attractive to our resident birds and those on spring or fall migrations.

Try and set your viewing area with the sun over your shoulder. You should be able to look to the north—northeast. This puts full sun on the birds, giving you a full appreciation of color and appointments.

Birds must bathe and preen frequently in order to keep their feathers in top flight condition. I set up a stream in my garden to help them accomplish this. It is about 20 feet from my viewing window. It starts with a garden hose dripping water into a birdbath set in the ground — slightly tipped to allow the runoff to run down a streambed. The streambed runs for 30 feet and drains into a large hole about 3 feet deep. The stream width varies from 6 inches to 2 feet. The depth of the water varies from 1 to 3 inches. This allows birds of all sizes to be comfortable.

One of the critical tools to be used in attracting birds is the stick. I use tomato stakes as perches for the birds. They are 3 feet in length. Set the stakes at a 30–40° angle into the ground, starting at the stream edge. The stakes should reach up to your background shrubbery. The birds will first land on the bushes and then use the stakes down to the water.

Birds attract birds! Put your seed feeding area in the vicinity of your water. Besides feeders, spread feed on the ground; this will greatly improve both the quality and volume of birds. Plant viburnum, autumn olive, and firethorn; these plants bear fruit that will be available for the fall migration.

This description is a starting point for you. It includes all of the ingredients that have made my garden bird-watching a daily treasure. Try it, with your own variations on the suggested theme, and Great Birding!

MASHOMACK PRESERVE

Mike Higgiston

People have suggested for a long time that I visit the Nature Conservancy's Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island for its beauty and wildlife. So when I saw a notice for a guided walk at Mashomack last June, I decided to register. I was not disappointed.

Mashomack Preserve is a natural area of about 2100 acres that contains several different kinds of habitat. There are 10 miles of coastline, tidal creeks, woodlands, meadows, and salt marshes. Fourteen hundred acres of upland oak and beech forest are being allowed to develop into an old-growth forest, a habitat scarce in the Northeast.

There are four trails running through the Preserve. The red trail is 1½ miles and takes 45 minutes. The yellow trail is 3 miles and takes 1½ hours of leisurely walking. The green trail is a 6 mile loop and takes 2½ hours. The blue trail is 11 miles and is a 4 hour walk. Neither the red nor yellow trails were difficult to navigate, being mostly flat with some dips and inclines.

The bird life was very good at the visitor center at the forest edge, which is what you would expect. We saw Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Pewee (pictured), Ruby-throated

Hummingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, and a Tufted Titmouse feeding an insistent fledgling. Once on the walk, sightings in the forest were more difficult but a Green Heron was seen on a branch. A Prairie Warbler was heard singing, and American Redstart and Common Yellowthroat were about. A House Wren made his presence known.

At the gazebo off the red trail, we looked out over Miss Annie's Creek and saw an Eastern Kingbird fly-catching. There was an Osprey soaring over the meadow on the yellow trail. Mashomack has one of the most dense populations of breeding Osprey on the East Coast.

When this article was submitted to your editor last summer, Mashomack Preserve was open 7 days a week in July and August from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., closed at 4 P.M. from October to March, and closed on Tuesdays outside of July and August. There is a small gift shop. You may walk the trails at your leisure; there is no need for a guide to accompany you. It is well worth a visit. Call Mashomack at 631-749-1001 for more information.

SECOND ANNUAL FALL BIRD FESTIVAL

Jonathan Staller

Just an early announcement that on September 23rd SSAS will host its annual Fall Bird Festival. Volunteers are needed now through then. If you have any special talents or hobbies (wood carving, artwork, etc.) and would like to present them at our festival, please call me at 482-7963.

★★ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ★★

SSAS welcomes this month's 45 new members. We hope that you'll become active members of our very active chapter — join us at a meeting, weekly bird walk, or special event. Because our Membership Chairperson was unable to provide your names in time, we'll give you the official welcome in next month's issue by including your names in this column as usual.

[To receive an application for membership in National Audubon Society and SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Jackie Richichi, at 631-691-1855, or send email to Jacee13@aol.com. Introductory membership is \$20; \$15 for students and senior citizens.]

Shirley Kutner and Diane Singer have once again reserved a room at Pompei Restaurant & Catering in West Hempstead for SSAS's annual dinner, to be held on **Tuesday**, **June 13th**, starting with cocktails (open bar) and an hour of hors d'oeuvres at 6:30. Smoking will be prohibited. Pompei is at 401 Hempstead Avenue (take Southern State Parkway Exit 17 north about 1½ miles).

Advance registration is **required** for this celebration of our chapter's 30th anniversary (limit of 150 people); please enclose the following form with your \$25/person check payable to *South Shore Audubon Society* and mail them by June 1st to Diane Singer, 118 Kent Road, Valley Stream, NY 11580-3316.

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1999-2000 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Jonathan Staller, President	516-482-7963
Michael Goldsmith, Vice President	
Nancy Frame, Treasurer	516-520-9016
Christine Schmitt, Recording Secretary	516-887-7713
Alice Blaustein, Corresponding Secretary	516-221-1870
Sandy Brenner, Director (6/02)	516-249-4919
Scott Oglesby, Director (6/02)	516-798-4871
Therese Lucas, Director (6/01) & Environmental Festivals Coordinator	516-221-8654
Marcia Specht, Director (6/01) (to 9 P.M.)	516-694-8229
Michael Higgiston, Director (6/00)	516-538-8376
Judy Hoyer, Director (6/00)	516-775-0159
Mike Andersen, Youth Representative	516-546-5352
Betty Borowsky, Conservation Legislation Chairperson	516-764-3596
Paul Butkereit, Wild Bird Feed Savings Day	516-599-0395
Joanne Del Prete, Special Trips Chairperson	516-433-0739
Joseph Grupp, Duck Survey	516-481-4208
Betsy Gulotta, Brookside Preserve Committee Chairperson	516-546-8841
Janice Howard, Hospitality Chairperson	516-420-9468
Marge Jaeger, Fund-raising Chairperson	516-536-9166
Elliott Kutner, Birding / Field Trips Chairperson	516-486-7667
Joseph Lancer, Binocular / Book Sales (7 to 9 P.M.)	516-536-6574
Suzanne Lancer, Education Chairperson (7 to 9 P.M.)	516-536-6574
Annie F. McIntyre, Educational Media Chairperson	516-379-2206
Doreen Remsen, Past President	631-472-6830
James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon Chairperson	516-764-5168
Jackie Richichi, Membership Chairperson	631-691-1855
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming Committee Chairperson	516-599-1224
Mary Jane Russell, Armchair Activist Chairperson	516-766-7397
Diane Singer, Publicity (5 to 8 P.M.)	516-561-6118
Michael Sperling, Skimmer Editor	516-541-0805
Tom Torma, Program Chairperson	516-223-7947

South Shore Audubon Society P.O. Box 31 Freeport, NY 11520-0031

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