

Butkereit at Jones Beach's Coast Guard Station (5:00 P.M.); or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot, 5:00 P.M.).

Saturday, May 8. Meet Elliott Kutner at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8 A.M.; Paul Butkereit at the Ryan Building behind Mercy Hospital at 6:30 A.M.; or Jim and Doreen Remsen at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore at 5:45 A.M. Other meeting places on Saturday for the Remsen/Grupp team will be: Muttontown Preserve (most likely the gate on Route 106) at 8 A.M., Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area at approximately 11 A.M., and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at approximately 1:15 P.M. Please try to notify me or Doreen before the Birdathon if you plan to go with one of these groups so they will know how many people to expect. Meeting times at Oceanside and Jamaica Bay for my team are estimates, because we can be as much as 15 minutes earlier or 30 minutes later, depending on traffic conditions.

For interested parties, we're also planning an informal post-Birdathon dinner on Saturday for all who would like to join (at a buffet or similar restaurant). This will be on a pay-as-you-go basis.

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!

Note on Submitting Pledges. Pledges submitted to me must be *received* (not mailed) by June 2. After then, pledges must be submitted to Doreen Remsen, as I will be away beginning June 4 and will not be at the annual dinner on June 9. If you want pledge forms, I can supply them. Let's make our 2004 Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

Birdathon Chairpersons: James Remsen, Jr., 8 Venetian Blvd., Lindenhurst NY 11757; Doreen Remsen, 3264 Park Avenue, Oceanside NY 11572.

Last Year's List (150 species seen by one or more teams)

Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Canada Goose, Brant, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, King Eider, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck,

Osprey, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Ring-necked Pheasant, Clapper Rail, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Piping Plover, Killdeer, American Oystercatcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Laughing Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Least Tern, Black Skimmer,

Rock Dove (now called Rock Pigeon), Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (pictured), Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker,



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling,

White-eyed Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler,

Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Boat-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

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NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER
My Elusive Bird

Joe Grupp

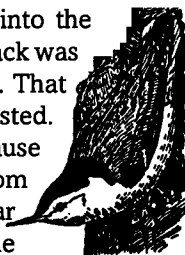
A bright blue-white point of light was suspended fairly high above the horizon in the night sky as we, my wife and I, carried our bags into a motel in Lewes, Delaware. I later confirmed my hunch that the light came from the planet Venus. It had caught my attention frequently, as we drove the 240-plus miles from home. Having the urge, over the previous few days, to explore a natural area we had never explored before, we squeezed this evening and the following day out of the rest of life to explore Delaware's Cape Henlopen State Park. Cape Henlopen is located across the Delaware Bay from Cape May, New Jersey. They stand as sentinels, one on either side of where the water of Delaware Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Cape Henlopen is a northward swoop of sand and sand dune that extends into Delaware Bay. As a state park it offers many things, including being a popular beach in season. In the usual confusion of not having a feel for a place we had never been to before, we stopped first at the park's Seaside Nature Center, which also acts as a visitors' center of sorts. After a short talk with a staff member, we had more information about the park's features than we could possibly cover in a day and the knowledge of a bird that is common there, the Brown-headed Nuthatch.

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is a fairly easy-to-find bird in the open pine woodlands of the southeastern United States. We have explored in its range and habitat over the years, but never for the sole purpose of finding the bird. Each time we completed our exploration, we were always left thinking that it would have been nice to have seen it. We entered the nature center focused on one goal, to explore a park we had never been to before. We left with a second goal, to find a Brown-headed Nuthatch.

Returning to the car, I paused to observe the activity on and around the center's feeder, which I just happened to park in line with and fairly close to. All of a sudden, a small bird shot from high in a surrounding tree down to a crossbar that held two feeders. I impulsively shouted to my wife: "That may be the bird!" and quickly reached for the binoculars. Sure enough, the bird that was so elusive to us for years was now dead center in the field of view of my binoculars, elusive no longer.

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is similar to the White-breasted Nuthatch common to our home area. The most obvious difference is the dull brown cap of the Brown-headed compared to the black cap of the White-breasted. It is an easy characteristic to see in good light and at the appropriate angle at which the bird is being viewed. At times, when our bird moved, the color of the cap was not immediately evident or was hidden. Closer scrutiny then revealed that its cap came down to the eye and was the distinguishing characteristic for identification, as the cap of the White-breasted (pictured) stops well above the eye. When the bird turned so its back was towards us, a pale dull-white spot which blended into the brown of the cap and blue-gray of the back was evident on the nape (back of the neck). That characteristic is absent in the White-breasted. I had picked up these characteristics because the bird we were observing was seldom still, as it moved from feeder to crossbar and back, or bent to pick a seed from the feeder or to hammer a seed open on the crossbar. The chance occurrence of seeing that bird was a great way to start our exploration of the park, even if my concept of a great way might differ from that of others.



Sand dunes roll out before the small parking area at the terminus of the road leading to the point of land jutting into the mingling waters of bay and ocean. The distance from the parking area to the point is fairly long, but we were not permitted to walk there because it was closed so that Piping Plovers, Least Terns, Oystercatchers, and other birds could nest without our interference. The sandy trail to the bay and the one to the ocean were open. We walked both while a pair of Osprey, one with a fish held in its talons, circled in the air above, sometimes close together, sometimes farther apart, all a part of the mating ritual I'm pretty sure.

Exploring further, we stopped and climbed to an observation platform built on a high dune above an old W.W.II military bunker. The platform was occupied by three members of the Cape Henlopen Hawkwatch, who we chatted with. They were observing and recording the spring migration of raptors passing the cape. None passed while we talked. We moved on, stopping at an old military observation tower, and climbed its 115 steps for the view of the cape and all that surrounds it. We noticed the ever-present Turkey Vultures, which at times flew low, rocking side to side, wings held in a sharp dihedral, and at other times flew high, in small groups, wings outstretched, circling effortlessly on a rising air column. Our day passed too quickly as we explored other areas by car and on foot.

Following a trail that is a little more than a mile long in open pine woodland, we attempted to find the Brown-headed Nuthatch again. There the bird was as elusive to us as it ever was before and we did not see one. We left satisfied, however, by the one we did see earlier, even though it was at a feeder.

WEED WATCHERS WANTED

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from a message that was forwarded to me by SSAS member Judy Hoyer. For further info, contact Stacey Goldyn at (631) 367-3384, ext. 131 or e-mail sgoldyn@tnc.org.

Established in 2002, the Long Island Weed Watchers program is a volunteer weed-management initiative sponsored by the Long Island Weed Management Area (LIWMA). Weed Watchers volunteers are trained and supported to identify, document, report, manage, and monitor new populations of invasive plants, also known as weeds. The purpose of Weed Watchers is to prevent new invasive plant populations from becoming established infestations that would adversely impact biodiversity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, scenic qualities, and crop production in Long Island's natural areas, parks, preserves, refuges, and farmland.



Weed Watchers volunteers are supervised by The Nature Conservancy in collaboration with a team of representatives from LIWMA. On project sites, the landowner or other land manager may supervise the volunteers. A small, specially trained core team of Weed Watchers volunteers works on a weekly basis to help direct and facilitate the activities of individuals and groups of volunteers engaged in identifying and managing weeds at high-priority sites on a periodic or occasional basis.

Weed Watchers volunteers are trained and supported to accomplish the following tasks:

- ✦ Identify and locate new, recent, and newly expanding populations of invasive plants, focusing on a short list of troublesome species in a given area.
- ✦ Document and record observations, using the methodology and forms provided.
- ✦ Report observations.
- ✦ Assist in the planning and implementation of management responses.
- ✦ Participate in weed management activities, such as controlling weeds by cutting or pulling.
- ✦ Monitor the results of weed management efforts.

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SSAS THANKS ITS HICKS VOLUNTEERS

SSAS thanks the members who greeted the public at our table at the Hicks Nurseries' Spring Flower & Garden Show on March 20 & 21: Alice Blaustein, Betty Borowsky, Enid Klein, Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, Chris Schmitt, and Michael Sperling.

SSAS THANKS ITS DONORS!

First, we'd like to thank *Cotten Coverage Insurance Agency, Inc.*, for their generous donation to our chapter.

Next, we'd like to thank all of the members who have responded to the fund-raising letter we mailed to you in March (the first one we've sent in two years). The contributions are still coming in, so here's a preliminary list:

<i>Mildred E. Ackerley</i>	<i>William F. Hanley</i>
<i>Anonymous (27)</i>	<i>Charles Hersh</i>
<i>Bruce J. Armour</i>	<i>Linda J. Ilan</i>
<i>Dr. & Mrs. Jerrold Axinn</i>	<i>Marion Kilfoyle</i>
<i>Gloria Berkowitz</i>	<i>Mr. & Mrs. T. A. Kimmons</i>
<i>Elaine T. Bermas</i>	<i>Geraldine Luisi</i>
<i>Jean Carvel Brennan</i>	<i>John D. & Jane E. Moore</i>
<i>Jim & Gail Brown</i>	<i>Carl J. Muller</i>
<i>Mr. & Mrs. Peter Bruno</i>	<i>Nancy A. Ohland</i>
<i>Joan M. Cihanek</i>	<i>Walter J. Peters</i>
<i>Beatrice A. Combs</i>	<i>Doris Pirodsky</i>
<i>Dorothy J. Donnally</i>	<i>Susan E. Pratt</i>
<i>Henry Drewitz</i>	<i>John Romanchek</i>
<i>John & Trisha Duffy</i>	<i>Charles Rowan</i>
<i>Edward & Jo-Ann Esrick Family</i>	<i>Gene Sanders</i>
<i>Seymour Faust</i>	<i>Norman Seastedt</i>
<i>Ida & Ira Feldman</i>	<i>Mr. & Mrs. George Warrin</i>
<i>Arlene Ferrante</i>	<i>Maxwell Wheat, Jr.</i>
<i>Mr. & Mrs. Leo Freed</i>	<i>Camilla C. Williams</i>
<i>Mark F. & Koyla Braun Greiner</i>	<i>Clem Wingert</i>
<i>Walter Grinspan</i>	<i>Dorothy J. Zondag</i>



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AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

ASSATEAGUE WEEKEND (May 20–23). Hike Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge trails and Assateague National Seashore beaches during peak spring bird migration. See nesting eagles & osprey, migrating shorebirds & herons, butterflies, Sika and white-tailed deer, river otter, red fox, black rat snake, Chincoteague ponies. Cost: \$325 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn (heated pool, jacuzzi), marsh boat tour, bus tour of back dune areas, guided hikes, evening lectures, and Saturday night seafood buffet. Leaders: Mickey Cohen & Don Riepe.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISES (May 29 and June 12). Leave Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn on 96' boat "Dorothy B VIII" at 5:30 P.M. for a three-hour tour of backwater marshes. Learn about the history and ecology of Jamaica Bay during peak nesting time. Cost: \$35 includes wine, cheese, snacks, guides.

HORSESHOE CRAB WALKS (June 2 and 16, 7:30 P.M.). Join Don Riepe at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to witness the annual mating ritual of the horseshoe crabs. Call Don to register.

MONTAUK SUMMER WEEKEND (June 4–6). Spend two nights at Manor House; hike "Walking Dunes," Montauk Bluffs, Accobonac Harbor, Montauk Beach & Lighthouse.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 318-9344, donriep@aol.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.alsnyc.org.

CENTRAL PARK TRIP REMINDER

Ann Marie Pazzini

On **Saturday, May 1**, SSAS will be in Central Park for our fifth annual early May bird walk. In previous years, we've tallied up to 70 species in less than three hours.

The cost is \$5 for members and \$6 for nonmembers. Please send your check payable to *South Shore Audubon Society*, along with your e-mail address and phone number, to: Joanne DelPrete, 20 Ceil Pl., Bethpage, NY 11714. Registration is required prior to April 28. If you meet us on the train or in the park and have not previously registered, your cost will be \$7 if you're a member and \$8 if not. Per the SSAS Field Trip Guidelines published in the March *Skimmer*, if you find that you cannot make the trip, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance to have your fee refunded. However, if the trip is canceled by the leaders or due to weather, all fees will be refunded.

Joanne prefers to be reached by e-mail (jdp4@erols.com); please put "Central Park" in the subject line so the message isn't deleted. If you're not online yet, you can call her at 433-0739.

For train schedule information, please contact the Long Island Rail Road at (516) 822-5477 or <http://lirr42.mta.info/index.asp>; a group of us will be in one of the front cars of the Babylon line train that is scheduled to depart from Massapequa at 7:28 and arrive in Penn Station at 8:25. A \$4 MetroCard is required for the subway. This can be purchased along with your train ticket at your local train station. We will meet in Penn at 8:30 (in front of the LIRR's waiting area) and at Belvedere Castle in the park at 9:30 (entering the park at W. 77th St. to look for warblers in the first few trees). Bring lunch and spend the day in the park, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. We look forward to seeing you there!

**THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL
THANK-YOU COLUMN**

Michael Sperling

Once again, it's time for your editor to thank everyone who contributed articles and info to this year's eight issues, made trips to F&B Printers in Island Park (Ruth Aptacker, Bill Eichholz, Christine & Brendan Kelly, Doreen Remsen a bunch of times, Dolores Rogers, and Chris Schmitt), brought Skimmers to the Freeport Post Office (George Peters), printed the labels (Wendy Murbach), and stuck labels on Skimmers (Alice Blaustein, Therese Lucas, Wendy, Laurie Raisher, and Chris). Thanks!

I'd also like to thank the Association for the Help of Retarded Children for stuffing and labeling our fund-raiser letter's envelopes, and particularly Marianne Peters for arranging to have AHRC do this (for free).

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP STATUS (800) 274-4201

NOMINATIONS FOR 2004-2005 OFFICERS

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 11, officers will be elected for our next fiscal year, and two directors will be elected to three-year terms. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee, chaired by Jim Remsen, has recommended the following candidates:

- President — George Peters
- Vice Presidents — Therese Lucas & Wendy Murbach
- Treasurer — Laurie Raisher
- Recording Secretary — Christine Schmitt
- Corresponding Secretary — Alice Blaustein
- Director (to June 2007) — Kathy Asmus
- Director (to June 2007) — Ralph Matragrano

**YOU'RE INVITED
TO SSAS'S ANNUAL DINNER!**

An enjoyable evening awaits everyone at our 33rd annual dinner, which will be held at Pompei Restaurant and Catering in West Hempstead on ~~Tuesday, June 9~~ **Wednesday, June 9**, starting with cocktails (open bar) and an hour of hot hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 P.M. Smoking will be prohibited, wine and soda will be unlimited, and once again we're planning a raffle/auction. Pompei is located at 401 Hempstead Ave. Take Southern State Parkway Exit 17 north about 1-1/2 miles. Please join your fellow South Shore members and bring your friends.

Advance registration is required; the cost is \$27 per person (\$22 for ages 18 and under), which also includes salad, cake, and coffee. Please mail the following form and your check, payable to *South Shore Audubon Society*, to: Shirley Kutner, 461 Dunster Ct., West Hempstead, NY 11552-2805. Any questions? Call Diane Singer at 561-6118 or Shirley at 486-7667.








NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

AMOUNT OF CHECK: _____

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: _____

NUMBER OF EACH MENU CHOICE:

-  Chicken Marsala _____
-  Grilled Chicken _____
-  Filet of Sole _____
-  Roast Beef _____
-  Eggplant Rollatini _____



