



example, birdhouses and pot holders. If you have extra house plants, bring those. *Whatever* you can contribute will be very welcome. However, please do NOT bring: old computers or parts, or large appliances (small appliances, like can openers & microwaves, will be OK, since we'll have a generator on site to show that they work). If you are not sure, just call one of the co-chairs. Also, if the weather appears inclement, our rain date will be Saturday, May 7. Again, if you're not sure about the weather, call one of us:



Betty Borowsky, 764-3596;  
Wendy Murbach, 546-6303; or  
Judy Wolosoff, 678-1676

On the day of the sale we will need help to set up, to sell, and to clean up afterwards; we will also need some folding tables to hold our sales items. If you would like to work with us (we're fun people), give us a call; we'd love to have you.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY — AND  
LET'S HAVE FUN!  
SEE YOU MAY 1.**



All walks start at 9:30 A.M.; no walk if it rains. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667. Directions and summaries may be found at [ssaudubon.org](http://ssaudubon.org).

- Apr. 24 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- May 1\* Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- May 8 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
- May 15 & 22 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- May 29 *Memorial Day Weekend — No Walk*
- June 5 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge  
*Summer Break*
- Aug. 7 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Aug. 14 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Aug. 21 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
- Aug. 28 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Sep. 4 *Labor Day Weekend — No Walk*
- Sep. 11 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Sep. 18 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
- Sep. 25 Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
- Oct. 2 Hempstead Lake State Park (Exit 18, first lot south of Southern State Parkway, south end of lot)
- Oct. 9 Norman J. Levy Park and Preserve
- Oct. 16 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

*Traffic Note:* On May 1, a Loyalty Day Parade scheduled for 10 A.M. will close a mile of Broadway in the vicinity of the Southern State Parkway's exit. So, we recommend taking Sunrise Highway to Broadway instead.

## ANNUAL CENTRAL PARK WALK

Ann Marie Pozzini

On **Saturday, May 7**, SSAS will be in Central Park for our sixth annual early May bird walk. Once again, Chris Cooper and Lloyd Spitalnik (both turned onto birding many years ago by our own Elliott Kutner) have agreed to lead us through the twisting maze of the Ramble and adjoining areas of the park. In previous years, we've tallied 45 to 70-plus species in under three hours.

The cost of the walk is \$6 for members and \$8 for nonmembers. Please send your check payable to South Shore Audubon Society, along with your e-mail address and phone number (so that I can tell you where in Central Park we're meeting when the location has been determined), to: Ann Marie Pozzini, 93 Weaving Lane, Wantagh NY 11793. Registration is required prior to Friday, April 29. If you meet us on the train or in the park and have not previously registered, your cost will be \$8 if you're a member and \$10 if not, so register early! Per the SSAS Field Trip Guidelines published in the *Skimmer* a year ago, 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.

I prefer to be reached by e-mail ([rockgeek56@yahoo.com](mailto:rockgeek56@yahoo.com)); please put "Central Park" in the subject line so I don't delete your message. If you're not part of the information highway yet, you can call me at 579-3353.

For train schedule information, please contact the Long Island Rail Road at (516) 822-5477 or <http://lirr42.mta.info/index.asp>; there are a group of members that will be in one of the front cars of the Babylon line train that is scheduled to depart from Massapequa at 7:26 and arrive in Penn Station at 8:25. Please note that at many of the LIRR stations, including Massapequa, ticket windows are now closed on weekends. However, a penalty fare of \$4.75 to \$5.50 is applied if you do not purchase a ticket at a window or using the machines located at the stations. A \$4 MetroCard is required for the subway to and from Central Park; it too can be purchased from the LIRR's ticket agents or machines.

We will be meeting Chris & Lloyd in Central Park around 9:30 A.M. The walk usually ends around noon. 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!



*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.*



## YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL DINNER!

SSAS's 34th annual dinner will be held at Coral House in Baldwin, on **Tuesday, June 14**. Please see the enclosed flyer for details; advance registration is required by our contract and space is limited. If the flyer's missing, please e-mail [mssperling@optonline.net](mailto:mssperling@optonline.net) or call dinner committee chairperson Therese Lucas at 631-225-6377.

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## NOMINATIONS FOR 2005-2006 SSAS BOARD

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 10, officers and directors 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 Wendy Murbach and including Betty Borowsky and Dolores Grupp) recommends the following candidates:

- President — Michael Sperling
- Vice President — Wendy Murbach
- Treasurer — Laurie Raisher
- Recording Secretary — Christine Schmitt
- Corresponding Secretary — Alice Blaustein
- Directors — Betty Borowsky, Jim Brown, Joseph Landesberg, and George Peters



**Bylaws Vote.** As explained in more detail in last month's *Skimmer*, at our May 10 general meeting, SSAS's Board will ask our members to approve the following amendment to our bylaws (revised language is in bold letters):

Article III, Section 5: A majority of the **elected Board members and Standing Committee chairpersons, combined**, shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.

*Explanation:* Article III is entitled "Board of Directors." We are seeking to replace the current wording, which has "members of the entire Board" instead of the bold type above, because recently your Board has been increasingly unable to reach a quorum at some of its meetings, primarily due to the infrequent attendance of many of the nonstanding committee chairpersons (the bylaws do not require these people to attend). The standing committees are Membership, Program, Conservation, Field Trip, Publications, and Education.

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## PUBLICITY CHAIRPERSON NEEDED!

South Shore Audubon Society has an immediate opening for a publicity chairperson. We'll provide you with a list of publications to contact via e-mail and regular mail, as well as with information on our upcoming bird walks and events, and we'll reimburse you for postage while you earn the same salary everyone else on the back page of the *Skimmer* gets — \$0 plus occasional gratitude! You'll be invited to attend our monthly board meetings, but attendance is not required. If you're interested, please call George Peters at 868-5480.



## PLOVER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

John Zarudsky

The Town of Hempstead's Department of Conservation and Waterways needs your help in insuring the protection and survival of Piping Plovers, Least and Common Terns, and Black Skimmers that nest between Point Lookout and Atlantic Beach. In New York State, Piping Plover is listed as endangered, Least Tern and Common Tern as threatened, and Black Skimmer as a species of special concern. The Piping Plover is a threatened species nationwide.

Audubon volunteers will help prevent disturbances to nesting areas, will record the presence of plover chicks and any incidents of predation, and can give beachgoers educational literature pertaining to Piping Plovers and terns. Help is particularly needed on evenings, weekends, and holidays from May through August. If you're interested and are able to volunteer regularly, please contact John Zarudsky, Conservation Biologist (and active SSAS member), at 897-4126 (work) or 486-5272 (home).

The plovers are already on the beach, setting up territories for nesting season. Last year was a good one in the Point Lookout to Lido Park district, with 15 pairs producing an average of 2.2 young per pair.

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## WHAT TO DO WITH DISPLACED YOUNG WILDLIFE

Most young wildlife that you come across are not orphaned. The parents are temporarily away finding food, or are staying away to avoid attracting predators and will later return. If you are concerned that a bird or animal may be orphaned, watch from a distance for a while to see if the parents return. If you have to chase it, it doesn't need your help!

A nestling songbird is only partially feathered and cannot yet run, hop, or move about easily. It should be returned to the nest. If you can't find or reach the nest, make one from a berry box or strainer (something with drainage), line it with grasses, and secure it up in a tree close to where you found the bird. The parents will continue to feed it.

If you are certain a young songbird is orphaned, leave a message for Volunteers for Wildlife at 631-423-0982 for assistance and follow the emergency instructions at [www.volunteersforwildlife.org](http://www.volunteersforwildlife.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

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## SHOREBIRD—HORSESHOE CRAB SIGHTINGS NEEDED

John Turner

As part of their ongoing effort to refine management strategies for horseshoe crabs, staff with the Bureau of Marine Resources of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), are very interested in better understanding the extent to which spawning horseshoe crabs (more particularly their eggs) serve as food for migrating shorebirds during their spring migration. As you may know, horseshoe crab eggs are a vital fuel source for hundreds of thousands of shorebirds (e.g., Red Knots, Ruddy Turnstones, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, etc.) that land along the shore of Delaware Bay each spring.



While there is no evidence to suggest that Long Island's population of horseshoe crabs supports shorebird numbers on the scale seen along Delaware Bay, the DEC is nevertheless interested in documenting bird-crab dependence on Long Island during spring shorebird migration. If you have information or have seen shorebirds feeding on crab eggs or moving about breeding horseshoe crabs, please let either Kim McKown (DEC) or Matt Scalfani (CCE) know. Kim can be reached at (631) 444-0444 or kamckown@gw.dec.state.ny.us and Matt can be reached at (631) 854-5544 or ms332@cornell.edu.

Any information you can offer will be helpful in better understanding the dependence of these long-distance migrant shorebirds on horseshoe crabs.

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### BOND FUNDS FOR BROOKSIDE PRESERVE?

Nassau County's \$50 million Environmental Bond Act Program was approved last Election Day, resulting in the appointment of an 11-member Advisory Committee that will develop a list of priority projects. Christine Marzigliano (a member of our Brookside Preserve Committee), with assistance from George Peters and Betsy Gulotta, drafted two proposals that SSAS has submitted to the committee. One proposal applies to the open space and parkland acquisition portion of the bond act, while the other applies to the storm water quality improvement portion. Much of the wording below comes from our proposals.

① We have nominated the Brooklyn Water Works property for acquisition. The property is a four-acre site immediately adjacent to the County-owned 21-acre Brookside Preserve and contains the pumping station buildings (now in a severe state of deterioration and appraised by Nassau County as having \$0 value) that were originally used to pump Long Island's water to Brooklyn. The buildings were decommissioned when Nassau County was created in 1899. For almost 100 years the buildings lay vacant, but they were purchased by Mr. Gary Melius

with the original intention of building a nursing home and subsequently a condominium complex.

In 1988, SSAS was instrumental in the creation of Brookside Preserve, which we manage as an outdoor environmental resource via an agreement with Nassau County. When Brookside Preserve was created, the property that contained the pumping station buildings was apportioned off and not included in the preserve. We are now proposing that this property be purchased and annexed to the Brookside Preserve property.

The project would involve the purchase of these four acres, the demolition of the deteriorated Brooklyn Water Works pumping station buildings, and the rehabilitation of the property as a meadow (extending the present meadow of the preserve southward).

Because of the limitations in building on this property, there have been long delays in obtaining development permits for the owner. The property is long and narrow, requires setbacks from Brookside Avenue, is adjacent to a preserve (a shadow would be cast on the existing wildflower meadow if developed), and has a stream flowing through it. Mr. Melius stated that he would be interested in selling the property at the right price (currently \$8.5 million); the 2005-06 appraised value is \$1,911,650. The property is in imminent threat of development, should he complete his litigation regarding a tax lien sale and obtain the necessary construction permits for the condominium complex.

② SSAS has also nominated Brookside Preserve for improvement via the installation of storm water treatment devices, which would significantly improve the quality of the water flowing through the preserve by removing the floatables that enter via the storm drains of the adjacent streets in Freeport and Baldwin.

Milburn Creek, which runs through Brookside Preserve (and the Brooklyn Water Works property), is one of the few streams still flowing in Nassau County. It contains freshwater wetlands and upland woods, with some of Long Island's rarest species of trees. It also contains trout through the environmental efforts of Trout Unlimited and the Baldwin and Freeport High School Ecology Clubs. The installation of storm water treatment devices would help restore the natural aesthetic environmental characteristics to the preserve.



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### SSAS THANKS ITS HICKS VOLUNTEERS

SSAS thanks the members who greeted the public at our table at the Hicks Nurseries' Horticultural Fair on March 12 & 13: Louise Leonard, Therese Lucas, Wendy Murbach, Scott Oglesby, Chris Schmitt, and Michael Sperling.

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RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 979-3070

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# SSAS EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL BIRDATHON!

Jim Remsen

This year, SSAS will conduct its eighteenth 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 and over 125 species may be identified by the two teams that visit about a half-dozen locations. Due to the decision by National Audubon to sharply decrease the amount of financial support given to chapters, the Birdathon is now one of our major sources of income. Many of you have been very generous with your time and pledges in recent years; we hope you will continue and increase your gift of either time or pledges this year.

Mark the dates on your calendar if you haven't already — **Friday, May 13** from 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 14** at 5:00 P.M. — and join one of our intrepid leaders (or go it alone, in which case you choose the turf). Birding expertise is not necessary and your teammates will point out the birds for you. Rain dates are one week later at the same times.

*Please note:* In the event of questionable weather, I will decide whether or not to cancel the Birdathon by 3 P.M. on Friday, May 13. If you have any uncertainty about whether it will be postponed, please call me at (631) 957-0949. This may save unnecessary trips.

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 (attendance not required). However, as of now we have very few prizes. If you would like to donate a prize, please contact Doreen Remsen or me. What we would really like to do is give some kind of reward to everyone who takes part, but we will need suggestions or donations to do this. Please see us at meetings or bird walks if you can help!

Our schedule of starting places and leaders is as follows:

*Friday, May 13 at 5 P.M.* Meet Elliott Kutner's team at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore (leaders Ken & Karen Wenzel, 546-7918); Paul Butkerei at Jones Beach's Coast Guard Station; or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot).

*Saturday, May 14.* Meet Elliott Kutner at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8 A.M.; Paul Butkerei 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!

Pledges are due no later than Monday, June 13 to be eligible for prizes. You can submit pledges on bird walks or mail them to me (address below). If you have questions, call me or speak to me at meetings and walks. If you need pledge forms, Doreen and I can supply them. Let's make our 2005 Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

Birdathon Chairperson: James Remsen, Jr., 8 Venetian Blvd., Lindenhurst NY 11757.

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\*\*\*\*\*

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## NATURE TALES FROM A WANDERER Late Winter and Downy Woodpeckers

Joe Grupp

On an overcast cold day in the middle of March, I took a walk in anticipation of perhaps coming across an early migrant or two, knowing all the while that it was probably wishful thinking but at least I might find some sign of the coming spring. I walked the south end of Massapequa Preserve, following the Greenbelt Trail north to Sunrise Highway and following the bike path back toward Merrick Road. A Red-winged Blackbird called once or twice and the Ruddy Ducks on the lake were changing into their rusty breeding plumage, partially supporting my wishful thinking about spring migrants and signs of spring, but after that it was almost all walk and no other signs of spring.

After leaving the lake that the beginning of the trail edges, I found no birds until I was heading back along the bike path. I was at least two-thirds of the way to the car when I heard a very faint but near pecking sound. I stopped, froze momentarily, and then, binoculars to the eyes, began searching for the bird that was doing the pecking. It took a good deal of searching to find a male Downy Woodpecker and it was a great surprise to find it close by, in plain sight and at eye level, on the crook of an inch-thick vine that was supported by a path-edge tree opposite where I was standing. I spent a few minutes watching the bird as it pecked and probed the bark. I did not see any chips fall as the bird foraged, yet occasionally it acted as if it had found a morsel of food to eat.

Standing there observing, it crossed my mind as to just how interesting Downy Woodpeckers really are. They are a backyard bird, especially if suet is being fed there. When I first begin to hang suet from a tree in my yard in the fall, after not providing it over the summer months, a Downy Woodpecker shows up to feast on it within a day or two or even on the same day. They are hardy birds. I have seen them in woodlands in the dead cold of a winter's day, never looking any worse for wear as they work the bark from tree to tree for food or in the same apparent comfort as they exploit our generous donation of suet. It is pretty incredible to realize that a living organism of that size can survive the deep cold and from all outward appearances be doing so comfortably.

As a species they are adept at exploiting a food supply. I've found them at all levels on trees, from the upper branches to the trunks at about ground level. It is also not unusual to find them in a tangle or at the base of some reed-type plants and it usually surprises me to see them, even knowing that they exploit the food resources of insects and grubs that reside there. In winter, the male is known to feed in the upper level of the trees, the female much lower. My bird might just have given me one of the signs of spring that I went walking for, because it was a male and it was feeding



at about eye level — or perhaps it was just a bird that did not know where it was supposed to be feeding and winter was still here.

As a species it is quite widespread, being a resident in all of the continental United States and occupying most of each of the states except for the tip of Florida, the southern reaches of the southwestern states, southwestern Texas, and the northern reaches of Alaska. Anyone who has birded away from home and happens to keep lists will most likely find a Downy Woodpecker on them. Checking my life list, I found that the first one I listed was not all that far from home. It was a female in a tree in Hendrickson Park, Valley Stream. I have a remark next to it, stating that "it was a good study."

Shortly before reaching my car, I stopped to investigate some soft noises coming from deep within a tangle of catbrier, a thorny green leafless vine during the winter months. The tangle was supported by a fungus-covered, fairly large branch of a black cherry tree. I shook my head in wonder as a male Downy Woodpecker emerged from the tangle and worked its way up the branch. Then I had to shake my head again as soft noise still came from the tangle and a short time later a female Downy Woodpecker emerged from the catbrier, more or less following the male. These observations of the Downy Woodpeckers were much different from the observation that became part of my life list, but every bit as good a study. They even may have been more of the signs of spring that I went walking for.



### Explore the coast with the **AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY**

**ASSATEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND** (May 19–22). Hike trails, beaches, and woods at Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge and Assateague National Seashore. Cost: \$325.

**HORSESHOE CRAB WALK** (May 23). Meet 7:30 p.m. at North Channel Bridge west parking lot on Cross Bay Blvd. (1.5 miles south of refuge visitor center). Call Don for reservations.

**JAMAICA BAY SUNSET CRUISES** (May 28 & June 11, 5 p.m.). Three-hour narrated tours of the backwater marshes of Jamaica Bay Refuge. Cost: \$35 includes wine, cheese, fruit, snacks. Boat leaves from Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn.

**FIRE ISLAND SUNKEN FOREST** (May 29). Hike the beach, dunes, and 1.5 mile boardwalk. Cost: \$20 incl. ferry & guide. Bring lunch & binoculars. Call Steve Finn, 631-821-2160.

**MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND** (June 3–5). Explore the beaches and bluffs of Montauk during peak orchid and heather blossom time. Visit the Walking Dunes, Montauk lighthouse and bluffs, Napeague Beach, and Accabonac Harbor (optional canoeing). Cost: \$325 includes 2 nights at the luxurious Montauk Manor House (pools, Jacuzzi, sauna, spacious lobby), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs and star watch, plus free pickup at LIRR station.

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

**South Shore Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 31**  
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A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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- Wendy Murbach, co-Vice Pres. & Membership ... 546-6303
- Laurie Luxner Raisher, Treasurer ..... 378-4025
- Christine Schmitt, Recording Secy. & Educ. .... 887-7713
- Alice Blaustein, Corresponding Secretary ..... 221-1870
- Kathy Asmus, Director (6/07) ..... 631-205-1163
- Doreen Remsen, Director (6/06) & Birdathon ..... 764-5168
- Michael Sperling, Dir. (6/06) & *Skimmer* Editor ... 541-0805
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- Dolores Rogers, Welcoming ..... 599-1224
- Mary Jane Russell, *Armchair Activist* & Hospitality ... 766-7397

**BECOME A MEMBER OF SSAS**  
**Think Globally, but Join Locally!**

*Option 1.* You can join SSAS for a year by sending \$15 payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** using the form below. Our address is P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

*Option 2.* To join NAS and your all-volunteer local chapter, you can help SSAS survive NAS's major dues-share cutbacks by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS (we get \$0 unless you join through us). Mail the form below and your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to SSAS at the address above. The special rate for the first year is \$20 per household; \$15 for students and seniors.

➔ **Renewing?** Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS (we now get \$0 for all NAS renewals).

**Donations to SSAS are always welcome!**



Yes, I'd like to join:  SSAS only  National Audubon too

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

*Chapter Code R15 TXCH (South Shore Audubon Society)*

