

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 46, NUMBER 4 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

DEC. 2015 & JAN. 2016

NEXT MEETING

Paul Stessel

DATE: Tuesday, December 8, 2015
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
 144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)
SPEAKER: Samantha Rosen
TOPIC: Winter Seal Rescue

Have you ever wondered which seals are in New York waters? Would you know what to do if you saw one stranded on a local beach? Join the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation's Samantha Rosen for a program on the various seal species and their unique behaviors. We will be answering commonly asked questions such as: What should I do if I see a seal on the beach? What happens to the seal once it is admitted into rehab?

The Riverhead Foundation runs New York's only marine mammal and sea turtle rescue program. Sam is their education coordinator and a stranding technician; she grew up in Oceanside and earned her biology degree in Maryland at Salisbury University a few years ago. Join us!

Pre-Meeting Book Discussion. Arrive a half-hour early to participate in a discussion led by R. U. Abyrdar II (aka Paul Stessel) of the book that he and Sy Schiff reviewed in the previous *Skimmer*. This meeting's book is *I'd Rather Be Birding* by June Osborne.

Parking Lots. In addition to the parking lot adjacent to the library, there's a lightly used, well-lit, and fairly close municipal lot on the east side of S. Ocean Ave., on the near (south) side of the gas station that borders Sunrise Highway.

•••••
 •  IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
 • BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS. •
 • **SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!** •
 •••••

◆◆◆◆◆
 LIKE US! <http://facebook.com/SSAudubon>
 ◆◆◆◆◆

NEXT MEETING AFTER NEXT MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, January 12, 2016
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
TOPIC: Annual Members' Night

Join us for a get-together of fun (including our traditional Jeop-Birdy!), food, and friendship. Show off your talents, hobbies, or skills, whether or not they are bird-related. If you can paint, play an instrument, imitate bird calls, knit, take photographs, sing, or have any other talents or interests, please share them with us. We would also appreciate finger foods from those of you who enjoy the culinary arts.

◆◆◆◆◆

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Population Bomb, Forty-Seven Years Later

Betty Borowsky

In 1968, Dr. Paul Ehrlich and his wife Anne wrote a book that changed our thinking about the future of the world.¹ These scientists had concluded that the number of people on the planet would increase so much in the following ten to twenty years that, among other dire consequences, there would be widespread famine ("hundreds of millions" of people would die of starvation), especially in undeveloped countries. This apocalyptic prediction seemed quite reasonable at the time, given the history of humans' population growth (see Figure 1, taken from www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/ocr_gateway/understanding_environment/population_pollutionrev1.shtml) and the then-current agricultural capacity of the world, and the predictions in the book led to measures to limit population growth in many countries.

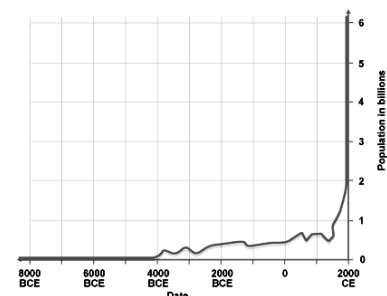


Figure 1. Increase in the Number of People on Earth Over the Past 10,000 Years

CONSERVATION ISSUES UPDATE

Jim Brown

The South Shore Audubon Society has been confronting a number of important conservation issues in recent weeks. Below are some of the issues and activities of our board and members.

Port Ambrose Vetoed by Governor Cuomo! On November 12, members of SSAS, along with many Long Island residents, public officials, and climate activists, witnessed an exciting event in Long Beach that was an important victory for the environment: Governor Cuomo listened to the people, did the right thing, and vetoed the Port Ambrose Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility! The hard work over many years of the anti-LNG coalition — including the South Shore Audubon Society, Clean Ocean Action, Surfrider Foundation, Green Party, Food and Water Watch, Sierra Club, and other groups — finally paid off with a victory!

Liberty Gas's planned deepwater port would have been built in waters roughly 18 miles off of Long Beach, constituting a threat to Long Island's wildlife, environment, and people. Aside from the physical danger posed by supercooled explosive gas and possible collisions with the huge tankers employed in delivering (and probably eventually exporting) LNG, liquefied natural gas is just one more dirty fossil fuel that contributes to global warming, sea level rise, and climate change.

Audubon scientists predict that more than half of 588 North American bird species — 314 in all — are at risk from climate change. Some of these birds may indeed be facing extinction if global warming is not halted. For this reason, and for all the reasons given by Governor Cuomo at his press conference — terrorism concerns, threat to the fishing and tourism industries, possible crises created by LNG facilities during storm events, etc. — we applaud his veto of Port Ambrose! The South Shore Audubon Society commends the Governor for taking a strong stand for the environment in opposing LNG, just as he did when he banned fracking in New York State. Thank you, Governor Cuomo!

West Pond of Jamaica Bay — Breach Issue. As many SSAS members are aware, the breach at the West Pond of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge has yet to be repaired. However, there is reason for optimism in that the National Park Service (NPS) has chosen, as a preferred alternative, to close the breach and restore the area to its pre-Sandy condition. Following are the official comments written and submitted to the NPS on behalf of SSAS in support of the preferred plan to close the breach:

"The South Shore Audubon Society, a local chapter of the National Audubon Society representing approximately 1500 households on Long Island, supports the National Park Service's preferred Alternative B to fix the breach at Jamaica Bay's West Pond. Alternative B is designed to restore the West Pond and the loop trail to their pre-Sandy

condition, a result that our organization has sought since the original creation of the breach in the wake of the October 2012 superstorm.

"The restoration of the West Pond to its pre-Sandy environment is welcomed by our Audubon chapter. The SSAS has long realized what a treasure the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is. Until the formation of the saltwater breach, we routinely held well-attended bird walks around the Pond along the loop trail, enjoying the richness of birdlife attracted to the salt water of the bay, the fresh water of the West Pond, and birds inhabiting the surrounding forested areas. The South Shore Audubon Society looks forward to the acceptance of Alternative B for the restoration of the West Pond, and for speedy work to be accomplished to repair this worldwide acclaimed Important Bird Area. The repair should enable the West Pond to provide habitat supporting its former diversity of species and number of birds."

Protect Our Public Lands Act. SSAS is urging the passage of the Protect Our Public Lands Act (POPLA), H.R. 1902, introduced by Representative Mark Pocan of Wisconsin in April of this year. It has been referred to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. The bill seeks to ban hydrofracking on public lands. Public lands that have already been impacted by fracking or are threatened by fracking include Allegheny National



Forest (Pennsylvania), Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (Utah), Chaco Culture National Historic Park (New Mexico), and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (Pennsylvania

and New Jersey), among others. Audubon members are asked to call their U.S. Representatives (Long Island House members Peter King, Steve Israel, Kathleen Rice, or Gregory Meeks) and urge them to sign on as sponsors. There is no good reason why our national parks and other public lands should not be protected from the effects of the environmentally harmful technology that is fracking!

Feral Cats at Jones Beach. Given the problems with feral cats at Jones Beach, where a number of cats have been abandoned by their owners, our chapter is urging support of the American Bird Conservancy's petition to "remove feral cat colonies from Jones Beach State Park." The petition addresses Commissioner Rose Harvey, urging her "to immediately remove all feral and free-roaming cats at Jones Beach State Park. The continued presence of feral cats in this park constitutes a real threat to native wildlife, most importantly the threatened Piping Plover (50 C.F.R., 17.3). To protect these nesting, endangered birds, the cats need to be immediately removed, taken to a shelter, and given an opportunity to find a true forever home." The petition can be found at: <http://abcbirds.org/get-involved/take-action/> (scroll horizontally to the "No More Feral Cats at Jones Beach" link).



LONG ISLAND'S WATER SUPPLY NEEDS HELP

Marilyn Hametz

Long Island's Sole Source Aquifer, the groundwater under the island we live on, is our only drinking water supply. What happens in the aquifer also affects the surface rivers, streams, and ponds. The quality and, in some areas, the quantity of water is in steady decline. There are myriad pollution problems, the threat of saltwater intrusion, and millions of gallons of water wasted each year.

Our multiple water districts and suppliers deliver our drinking water, but the water quantity and quality crises must be resolved Island-wide if the drinking water supply is to remain sustainable. Yet, no centralized Long Island leadership capable of managing and protecting Long Island's water resources exists.

Water for Long Island, with which South Shore Audubon has been working, will be holding the **2015 Groundwater Symposium: A Lifeline for Long Island's Water – An Aquifer Compact?** on **December 4** at 9 A.M. at the South Huntington Public Library. The symposium will consider what is happening to groundwater across the Island and explore effective oversight alternatives being used elsewhere in New York State and across the U.S. For more information about Long Island's drinking water supply and registration for the symposium, visit www.waterforlongisland.org.



must be resolved Island-wide if the drinking water supply is to remain sustainable. Yet, no centralized Long Island leadership capable of managing and protecting Long Island's water resources exists.



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

DEAD HORSE BAY, NY'S BEST KEPT SECRET (Sun., Dec. 6, 10 A.M. to 12 P.M.). In Floyd Bennett Field, hike the trails & shoreline with Mickey Cohen. Explore the nature & fascinating history of this area. Sturdy footwear essential. For info & reservations, call (718) 474-0896; e-mail bmcohen2@gmail.com.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY (Sat., Dec. 12, 5 to 9 P.M.). Donation \$55 incl. food & drink (beer/wine), an "Ugly Auction," silent auction, flamenco dance group. At Presbyterian Church in Broad Channel. Nature walk at Jamaica Bay Refuge at 3 P.M.

WINTER BIRDS & SURVIVAL (Sat., Dec. 19, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Meet at Jamaica Bay Refuge for slide program and hike to see overwintering birds. Learn how they & other wildlife survive frigid conditions of winter. Contact Don to reserve. Free.

NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACHWALK (11 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Meet at Fort Tilden in Breezy Point for brisk hike along beach, dunes & woods. Look for Saw-whet and Snowy Owls. Champagne, coffee & cookies afterward. No reservation necessary. Free.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND: SEALS, SEABIRDS AND SEASHORE (Jan. 8–10). Cost: \$395 incl. two nights at luxurious Manor House (heated pool, Jacuzzi, spacious rooms & lobby), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs plus star watch. Leaders: Mike Bottini, Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 474-0896, donriepe@gmail.com, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; www.littoralsociety.org.

BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff

Enough of these endless birding tales — for a while, anyway. This month's book that we have chosen for review is National Geographic's *Birding Essentials: All the Tools, Techniques, and Tips You Need to Begin and Become a Better Birder* by Jonathan Alderfer and Jon L. Dunn. This book will make a better birder of all of us! However, it will benefit both novice and intermediate birders most of all!

Birding is the fastest-growing wildlife-based, nature-loving outdoor activity in the U.S. This book is both comprehensive and authoritative. It will give birders, like you and me, a general background on what birding is as well as what birding is all about. In the process, it attempts to give us an overview of our passionate hobby.

In the early sections, the authors begin with discussions of field guides and binoculars; excellent starter topics. The first helps us tell what we're seeing and the second helps us to see what we're looking at. The U.S. distribution maps and eBird type abundance distribution charts are well illustrated, with detailed explanations for their use; they help to point the way to where to find more information.



The section on "Parts of Birds" is not simply a few line drawings with arrows pointing to these parts as in most guides; instead, it's a long, comprehensive set of photographs. Each photo is very carefully labeled. This makes it very useful for learning anatomy and identification, which we all can find helpful. For example, two side-by-side Lesser and Greater Scaup photos name the parts and help us separate these ducks in the field. This is a bonus for what could have been a rather boring discussion. The section "How to ID Birds" follows a similar pattern (if it's successful, continue the same way).

"Variations in Birds" points out the difference in male and female plumage plus the difference between breeding and nonbreeding plumage. This means learning multiple visuals per species. All of these aspects are illustrated with plenty of pictures.

No book on "birding essentials" would be complete without a section on "ID Challenges." While this section is rather short, it does discuss ibises, flycatchers, hummingbirds, and terns, among others. This is not an ID book but the section is designed to point out the problems and pitfalls of identifying difficult birds and how to deal with them.

As the book winds down, the authors include an essay on "Nomenclature" — what it is, how it came about, and how it has been modified. All in all, this book is a pretty good introduction to "birding essentials." It is also a very interesting and useful "required" book! Read it... and learn how to become a better birder! We will all be the better for the effort.

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

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation



DATED MATERIAL

WWW.SSAUDUBON.ORG



U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Permit No. 1181
 NONPROFIT
 Freeport, NY

**2015-2016 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND
 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Betty Borowsky, President & Education	764-3596
Paul Stessel, VP, Programs & NAS Liaison	295-1137
Joe Landesberg, Treasurer & Field Trips.....	536-4808
Arlene Rawls, Recording Secretary	712-9514
Therese Lucas, Corresponding Secretary.....	221-3921
Mary Colway, Director (6/18) & Annual Dinner	887-0153
Anne Mehlinger, Director (6/18)	798-1412
Stacy & Kurt Meyerheinrich, Directors (6/17).....	796-7411
Emma Carpenter, Director (6/16)	637-4901
Richard Kopsco, Director (6/16)	
& Brookside Preserve.....	825-6792
Gail Brown, Hospitality.....	608-1446
Jim Brown, Conservation.....	608-1446
Anne-Marie Conn, Electronic Communications.....	671-7685
Joanne Del Prete, Trip Leader.....	433-0739
Joseph Grupp, Research.....	481-4208
Betsy Gulotta, College Scholarships.....	546-8841
Marilyn Hametz, Publicity.....	799-7189
Wendy Murbach, Membership	546-6303
James Remsen, Jr., Birdathon	631-957-0949
Dolores Rogers, Welcoming.....	599-1224
Michael Sperling, <i>Skimmer</i> Editor.....	221-3921

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

Option 1. You can join SSAS for a year by sending \$20 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 by joining Audubon through us for the same price that it costs if you join through NAS (we get \$0 from these dues 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.



Renewing? Please send NAS renewals directly to NAS.



Donations to SSAS are always welcome! \$ _____

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ (Zip+4)

PHONE NO.: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Chapter Code C5ZR150Z (South Shore Audubon Society)

