

there were two Great Horned Owls (pictured) being harassed by the jays. Then the owls took off, affording us spectacular views of these huge birds. When you see those owls fly, you can only gasp.

Walking around one shallow pond, we saw many, many birds; the usual residents, plus a mixed flock of passerines, including at least three species of warblers in their fall plumage, plus several Eastern Phoebes that were fly-catching over the spatterdock. Along the way were chipmunks; at McDonald Pond we saw giant freshwater apple snails and a raft (literally a raft) of red-eared sliders. We were also delighted to spot a tiny turtle (most likely also a red-eared slider) that undoubtedly hatched just this year.



Almost ready to end the walk, a shadow passed us, and, looking up, there was a Bald Eagle flying overhead. At the end of the walk someone said “what a great day.” I would say that any day with a Bald Eagle and a Great Horned Owl in it is a great day.

In the afternoon, I hesitated to tell the second group what we had seen in the morning, because I didn’t want them to be disappointed when they saw fewer glory birds. I finally did tell them though, because one of the great advantages of taking a nature walk with a group is that you have many eyes to help spot wildlife. But I needn’t have hesitated. To all of our delights, we saw everything in the afternoon that had been seen in the morning except for the owls. And, to compensate for no owls, we saw a muskrat swimming leisurely across the pond, and a Great Blue Heron no farther away than 20 feet. Viewed under the spotting scope, you could see each vibrant feather.

You don’t always see so much wildlife in the park. If you go to the park on a summer weekend, it is packed with picnickers; children are playing in the fields and fishing in McDonald Pond or enjoying the carousel; people are riding their bicycles everywhere; people are allowing their dogs to swim and run around in the dog walk area. But — and here is the point of this message — the wildlife is still there!

This very special refuge is perennially threatened by development. Several years ago a swath of it was turned into sports fields, and another swath, just north of the sports fields, was mowed down. The foliage that was mowed down was where Indigo Buntings nested every year. We knew where the nest was, and used to be able to spend as long as we liked enjoying these especially beautiful birds.

We cannot afford to lose any more of it — and we cannot afford to have it altered in any way that will harm its wildlife. But it seems like there is some new threat to it every year. The South Shore Audubon Society continues to work hard to protect this unique refuge. Our first job is to apprise you, our members and friends, about how critical the park is to wildlife conservation in our area. Our second is to notify you when there is a new threat to

it and to solicit your support to prevent it. We know we can count on you to support these efforts when the time comes to take action.



THE PROBLEM OF THE GRUMMAN-BETHPAGE PLUME

Jim Brown

SSAS has formulated a policy on seeking an environmentally sound solution to the Grumman–Bethpage Plume of Contaminated Water. Below is our official response to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s suggested alternatives for solving this long-standing threat to our water supply. [*Editor’s interruption: see last month’s Skimmer for my article about those alternatives.*]

The South Shore Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society that represents approximately 1300 households on Long Island. Following are comments we would like to address to the Department of Environmental Conservation regarding the Remedial Options Report/Grumman–Bethpage Facility:

Of the three remedial options discussed in detail in the report, we find option 1, involving discharge of water into Massapequa Creek, to be an especially problematic and harmful approach to the problem presented by the Bethpage Plume. Discharging such a huge amount of water into Massapequa Creek for many years is likely to have a negative impact on the environment and wildlife found within this important Nassau County Preserve. The South Shore Audubon Society objects to drastically altering the Preserve’s basic ecology in this way.

More generally, we feel that there are real problems with removing and sending to the ocean, either via Massapequa Creek or an outfall pipe, such a huge amount of freshwater, thereby adversely affecting the volume of water in our aquifers, our only source of drinking water. The report mentions positive aspects of “recharging treated groundwater” and “direct reuse of water after wellhead treatment.” We hope that these possibilities will be studied and pursued as a solution to the water contamination emanating from the Grumman–Bethpage facility.



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DISCOUNTED AUDUBON CALENDARS FROM SSAS

At our walks and meetings, we're selling three Audubon wall calendars for \$11 apiece (list price \$14.99): Songbirds & Other Backyard Birds, Nature, and Wildflowers.

The Songbirds picture-a-day calendar features a large photograph at the top of the page, plus smaller images throughout the grid. Accompanying the photographs is detailed text describing species characteristics, songs and calls, migration patterns, habitats, and more.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY AT TACKAPAUSHA

Marilyn Hametz

The South Shore Audubon Annual Holiday Party for Children with the Tackapausha Museum will be **Saturday, December 17**. At the party, from 1 to 4 P.M., we will be providing light refreshments and will have tables for nature crafts. Wildlife demonstrations are featured at the party.

If you would like to enjoy the event as a South Shore Audubon volunteer, please contact me at 799-7189 or marilynexpl@yahoo.com.

This special event is also a great time to visit the museum with your children or grandchildren. Admission is \$5 per person (adults & children).

Tackapausha Museum and Preserve is located at 2255 Washington Avenue (between Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway) in Seaford; telephone 571-7443.

SSAS CALENDAR

Marilyn Hametz

November 2016

- Brookside Preserve Fall Cleanup
Sunday, Nov. 13, 1 P.M.
- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7:30 P.M.
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27

December 2016

- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, Dec. 13, 7:30 P.M.
- Tackapausha Children's Holiday Party
Saturday, Dec. 17, 1 P.M.
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
Dec. 4, 11, 18

January 2017

- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, Jan. 10, 7:30 P.M.
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29

February 2017

- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, Feb. 14, 7:30 P.M.
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26

March 2017

- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, March 14, 7:30 P.M.
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
March 5, 12, 19, 26

April 2017

- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, April 18, 7:30 P.M.
- Flea Market
April 8 (rain date April 15)
- Brookside Preserve Cleanup (TBA)
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
April 2, 9, 23, 30

May 2017

- Central Park Bird Walk
Saturday, May 6
- General Meeting, Freeport Memorial Library
Tuesday, May 9, 7:30 P.M.
- Birdathon
Friday, May 12, 5 P.M. to Saturday, May 13, 5 P.M.
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
May 7, 14, 21, 28

June 2017

- Annual Dinner
Tuesday, June 13
- Bird Walks, Sundays, 9:00 A.M.
June 4, 11



*Explore the coast
with the*

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

WINTER WATERFOWL WORKSHOP (Sat., Nov. 19, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Enjoy a slide-illustrated program and hike around the ponds at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to look for migrating and wintering ducks and geese. Leaders: Don Riepe and Todd Winston. To reserve contact Don. Kids welcome. Free.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY (Sat., Dec. 10, 5 to 9 P.M.). Come celebrate the holiday season at a fun party held at the American Legion Hall in Broad Channel. Cost: \$75 incl. buffet dinner, drinks, Flamenco Dance group, door prizes, plus an "UGLY AUCTION." Nature walk at Jamaica Bay Refuge at 3 P.M.

NEW YEAR'S DAY BEACH WALK (11 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Meet at Bldg. 1 in Fort Tilden for brisk walk. Hike dunes, woods, and visit hawk watch platform on top of Battery Harris East for great views of ocean & bay with NYC skyline. Gather after walk at Rockaway Artists Alliance bldg. for coffee, cookies & champagne. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe. Free.

MONTAUK WINTER WEEKEND (Jan. 13-15). Join us during peak seal haulout & winter birding time. Cost: \$395 incl. two nights at luxurious Manor House (heated pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, spacious lobby, large suites), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs & star watch. Leaders: Mike Bottini, Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe. E-mail don@littoralsociety.org.

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.

South Shore Audubon Society
P.O. Box 31
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A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Americans Committed to Conservation



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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 R15 (South Shore Audubon Society)

