

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 47, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2017

NEXT MEETING

Paul Stessel



- DATE: Tuesday, April 18, 2017
- REASON: Second Tuesday is Passover
- TIME: 7:30 P.M.
- PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)
- SPEAKER: Don Riepe
- TOPIC: Birds and Planes: A History of Jamaica Bay/JFK Airport Interactions

Bird strikes of aircraft is a major issue worldwide and specifically at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Due to its location along the Atlantic migratory bird flyway and adjacent to the National Park Service's Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, JFK Airport has had several serious collisions of aircraft with birds.

In 1975, a plane taking off struck a flock of Herring Gulls and the flight had to be aborted; there were no casualties but the plane burst into flames and was destroyed. In 1995, a Concorde making a landing struck a flock of Canada Geese and lost power in two engines; fortunately, the plane landed safely, but the damage cost several million dollars.

In 1985, the airport developed a task force that included our speaker, Don Riepe, representing the National Park Service. Don is still a member of the task force and will present an interesting history of actions, policies, issues, and events that have occurred over the last 35 years, along with photos of the many species of concern.

Don is the Director of the American Littoral Society's Northeast Chapter, which encompasses New York and New England. In 2003 he was named the Jamaica Bay Guardian by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; current projects include Jamaica Bay Clean Sweep, a project that includes annual beach cleanups and removal of derelict boats, wildlife surveys, annual Barn Owl and Osprey banding, marsh restoration planting, resource education programs and walks, and routine patrols of the bay. His past work included a 25-year career as a resource management specialist and manager of the

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. An avid photographer, his photographs and articles have been published in many magazines, including *National Wildlife*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Conservationist*, and in *The New York Times*. He is one of the main interviewees in the documentary "Saving Jamaica Bay," which was shown on Thirteen and WLIW21 in February.

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 *Better Birding: Tips, Tools & Concepts for the Field* by George L. Armistead and Brian L. Sullivan.

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.

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 •  IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE •
 • BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS. •
 • **SHADE-GROWN COFFEE PROTECTS RAINFORESTS!** •
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Bird Hot Spots – NOT

Betty Barowsky

Let's be perfectly clear. There is no such thing as a bird "hot spot." Birders use the term for relatively small geographic areas where birds tend to congregate. But developers use it differently; when they use it, they mean small geographic areas where birds permanently reside. Developers love the term because they can say "OK — we will not alter hot spots, only the surrounding areas. This will satisfy us, because we can expand into adjacent, currently undeveloped areas, and satisfy conservationists as well, because since the hot spots will be left alone the birds will not be harmed." The "hot spot" concept gives developers an excuse to destroy local habitat.

**OUR SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL
CENTRAL PARK WALK**

On **Saturday, May 6**, SSAS is planning to be in Central Park for our annual (weather permitting) early May bird walk. As usual, Chris Cooper (who was featured in HBO's 2012 documentary, "Birders: The Central Park Effect," and traces his birding roots to SSAS) has again agreed to lead us through the twisting, hilly maze of the Ramble and adjoining areas of the park.

In previous years, we've recorded from 31 to 70-plus species in under three hours. Last year, despite having an overcast day at the end of a migration-unfriendly soggy week, we had 49 species, 13 of which were warblers (and we missed the his-and-hers Blackburnian Warblers that we received tips about): Black-and-white, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blue-winged, Nashville, Palm, Prairie, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Northern Parula, Northern Waterthrush, and Ovenbird. The non-warblers included American Goldfinch, Baltimore Oriole, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Chimney Swift (pictured), at Crested Flycatcher, Hermit Thrush, Igo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruby-owned Kinglet, Veery, Warbling Vireo, and Wood Thrush.

The cost of the walk is \$5, which is a tax-deductible donation to SSAS (refundable if we rain out or you cancel in advance). Please send your check payable to South Shore Audubon Society, along with your phone number and address, to Joanne Del Prete, 20 Ceil Pl., Bethpage, NY 11714-4503 (jdelprete47@optonline.net, phone 433-0739).

A group of us will be aboard the local Babylon line train that is due in Penn Station at 8:09; you can look for Joanne on the platform in Massapequa, due to board there at 7:08. We aim to depart from Penn's LIRR waiting room at 8:30 to meet Chris at Belvedere Castle at around 9:15. Please buy a MetroCard for the subway. You can bring lunch, buy lunch in the park or elsewhere, or head back home after the walk if you prefer. Joanne's cell (476-3761) will be on that day only. Join us!

Staircase Alert: Our usual route to Belvedere Castle includes a 30-step climb from the 79th Street Transverse.



SAVE THE DATE – TUESDAY, JUNE 13

Please mark your calendars for SSAS's 46th Annual Dinner! Cocktail hour at Pompei Ristorante in West Hempstead will begin at 6:30, followed by our usual mix of raffle drawings, award presentations, and food and wine. Details and a registration form will be in the next *Skimmer*.



FROM BLAND TO GRAND

Paul Stessel

Not long ago, I felt that our Hempstead Lake State Park bulletin board needed some "freshening up," some "piz-zazz" if you will! Boy, was I right! Soon after this decision was made, I asked SSAS's Anne Mehlinger to come aboard to effect this "reboot." She was kind enough to agree — Anne to the rescue! In an instant (?), a revised bulletin board was born. Anne asked a friend to help us in this transformation; Jack Holly was kind enough to join our team. Jack, a longtime Audubon member, who has been an actor, art teacher, set designer, and prop wizard, went about the redesign with a vengeance. He suggested a foam backing material that would wear well under the park's environment in the outdoor display case. As Jack took measurements of the bulletin board and came up with a great background, this "Jack of all trades" went to work! He painted the foam board a sky blue and enhanced it with a swipe of a plastic bag to give it a beautiful shade as in a "birdie sky." It worked well!

When he was finished with his contribution, the three of us met at HLSP to finish this transformation. Anne went to work with completing the new look; she arranged the bird photos that our members (especially Bill Belford) took in the park, laminated the pictures as well as the text, and connected it all, tying it together in a completely new look! Finally, we all put it together. "Voilà!" — a brand new bulletin board was born. It looks great; check it out for yourselves! It has gone from "bland to grand!" Thanks to all who contributed! It's near McDonald Pond in the southern end of the park, very near the restrooms. Enjoy!



SSAS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Betsy Gulotta

Thanks to the much-appreciated support of longtime member Evelyn Bishop, South Shore Audubon Society is offering \$500 Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships this spring for two college juniors, seniors, or graduate students who are continuing their studies toward a degree in an area of biological or environmental science, such as wildlife management, forestry, animal behavior, ecology, marine biology, oceanography, mammalogy, or ornithology. Our annual college scholarship program began in 1994 and was named in memory of Jerry two years later. For information, call me at 546-8841 or send e-mail to betsy.gulotta@ncc.edu. Applications are due by **April 30**.



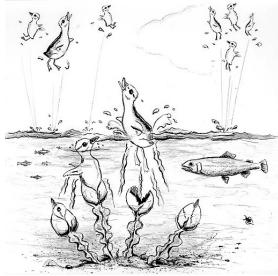
OUR E-LIST http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ssas_list



NASSAU COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE 571-6306



nearly seventy ducklings blasting into the air at once, this is a natural phenomenon that should not be missed. (Although Nautilus Ducks nest in several other Cape Cod ponds, Scargo Lake in Dennis is the only site that is easily accessible to the public.) By studying water samples, re-



searchers are able to pinpoint, within an hour or two, when this hatching will take place. The Scargo Lake birds are expected to hatch around 11:00 A.M. this coming Wednesday. If you've never seen this show before, you definitely should get down there. Plan to arrive

early because this event always draws a crowd. (Look for a small Scargo Lake sign on the south side of Rt. 6A in Dennis.) Also, if you have a small butterfly or fishing net, you should take it along. You may be asked to help pluck a duckling or two out of a bush. Remember, it's this coming Wednesday, April 1st.

Your editor again: There really is a Scargo Lake, and April Fools' Day was indeed on a Wednesday when this article appeared eight years ago.



BOOKS FOR BIRDERS

R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff

Let's get serious for a change! This month's book is perhaps the most serious book we've ever reviewed — the most important volume to come out since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*! Our book is *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change* by Elizabeth Kolbert. The author sends a powerful wake-up call to all of us concerned about birds, conservation, and our environment — more so in this age of "darkness"! Ms. Kolbert's narrative is part of a clarion call to action for all of us! It offers a clear view of the greatest dangers that humans have faced in a long, long time. This is very serious stuff, y'all!

While climate change is complex in its solution, she treats it with deft clarity. Her book is both gripping and well-paced. It is a wake-up call to us all; Washington, do you hear us? This book will become required reading for all of us deeply concerned with the future of our planet. It keeps a global perspective and, besides, is an extraordinary piece of environmental reporting. She offers us a journey around the world, giving us glimpses of what climate change is doing to our planet. These are the hard, cold facts about global warming and its effects on our future! Our environment is crucial to our very existence and that of all species near and dear to us.



Sy continues... This book outlines in vivid detail the changes that are undergoing at various places in the world by reporting on the actual events and interviewing the people in those places. One can argue the causes

but, with the evidence presented, cannot refute the fact that something ominous is taking place... and has been and is continuing! The shrinking glaciers and melting ice pack get a full review from numerous locations on the ground! Another chapter covers the CO₂ changes that are occurring all around us. Changing patterns in a butterfly's behavior started experiments on how increasing global warming was influencing the butterflies' evolution in order to accommodate these changes, referencing Darwin's work.

This is a wide-ranging exposition on the devastating effects of global warming. Weather changes have been around for a long time but this is different! The author brings up the demise of ancient civilizations, thought to be the result of changes in precipitation — prolonged drought. So, not all weather-related events in the past have been man-made. Nevertheless, their effects have been dire. All the topics covered are wide-ranging. The recent history of global treaties and politics in an effort to reduce carbon emissions is amply covered. Wind energy and other means of reducing the carbon footprint are enumerated. The section on tar sands is obviously part of the updating of the original book; this new section gives an excellent look at what it's all about from the viewpoint of consequences for not fixing the CO₂ problem.

To sum up, we're in deep trouble and there doesn't seem to be any effort to correct this problem! In conclusion, anyone interested in global warming and its consequences needs to read this book! It is an offering that gives an exceptionally clear picture of how deeply we've become emerged in this muck! This is only the beginning; if we don't act NOW, it will continue! What disasters are yet to come? Read it... be forewarned! Act NOW!!!



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SSAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Michael Sperling

In accordance with our bylaws, any member in good standing may suggest candidates for officers and directors for the fiscal year that will begin on July 1, who will be elected during our meeting in May. If you have suggestions (including yourself!), please contact me at mssperling@optonline.net or 221-3921 (evenings), or contact fellow committee members Marilyn Hametz or Wendy Murbach (see back page).

