

# SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 47, NUMBER 8 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

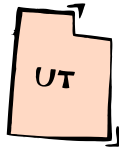
MAY–AUGUST 2017

## NEXT MEETING

*Paul Stessel*

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 9, 2017  
**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Freeport Memorial Library  
144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)  
**SPEAKER:** Travis Hammill  
**TOPIC:** Wild Utah: Red Rock Wilderness

There's nothing quite like the natural wonders of Utah with its vast network of canyons, steep snow-covered mountain slopes, unique monuments in the middle of open landscapes, and a rich cultural history in the cliffs and valleys. Much of the land in Utah is public land, managed by the federal government so as to be accessible for everyone to enjoy. Utah is unique; the state has more than 9 million acres of land that qualify as "wilderness" lands, which means they are pristine, untrammled areas that should be protected and preserved for the many ecological and climate-buffering functions they provide.



Unfortunately, multiple threats could destroy access to and the quality of these public lands. Mineral mining, oil-and-gas drilling leasing, oil-shale production, potash production, off-road vehicle use, privatization and closure, and vandalism are serious threats. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), based in Salt Lake City, works to galvanize wilderness advocates and activists to protect their public lands in Utah from these threats.

"Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness" is a short film, narrated by Robert Redford, that features images of Utah's redrock wilderness areas and music produced by Utahns who want to see these beautiful public lands protected. Travis Hammill, Eastern Grassroots Organizer for SUWA, will follow the film and discuss the current legislative issues that face the wilderness movement in Utah and what citizens across the United States can do.

Our guest speaker is stationed in SUWA's Washington, DC office and works closely with SUWA's legislative team, roaming the halls of Congress and ensuring that all Americans are able to access their lands.

Travis graduated from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia with a degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Before working with SUWA, he was employed by the retailer REI, focusing on the Outdoor Programs and Outreach division in his stores to build the connection between being an REI customer and being an advocate for the environment. He has visited Utah's canyon country many times in the past decade to go hiking, climbing, canyoneering, and kayaking. When he isn't in the office, you'll find him out on the trails. 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 *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change* by Elizabeth Kolbert.

**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!** •  
• • • • •

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Renewal

*Betty Barowsky*



It is spring again. Here in Nassau County, spring means looking forward to months of warm weather and especially to lots of time spent out of doors. The physical parameters of spring — lengthening days, warmer weather, and so on — make our plants green out, and our animals court and have their young; and they lift our spirits too. If you are a birder, of course, you enter a birding frenzy, and feel every minute inside is a minute lost because you are apart from the glorious warblers, tanagers (pictured), and so many other migrants that are passing through.





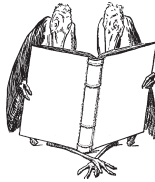


**BOOKS FOR BIRDERS**  
*R. U. Abyrdar II with Sy Schiff*

This month’s selection is a very “educational” addition to our SSAS reading list — “everything you wanted to know about birds but were afraid to venture further.” Here’s your opportunity! This book is from “across the pond,” by a British author, no less. You’ll be reading (I hope!) *Birds: A Complete Guide to their Biology and Behavior* by Jonathan Elphick. You’ll learn a lot! Sy’s wisdom begins now.

The book starts with a chapter labeled “Early Birds.” What follows are nine pages of discussion of 147 million years of bird evolution with illustrations. This 2016 book brings almost all the very latest paleontology on birds right up to date. Among other things, it raises the question “Are birds dinosaurs or are one group of the dinosaur family actually birds?”

After that thorough exposition, you’re invited to avian med school for an extensive course in anatomy and physiology. The skeleton and organs are described, and the various adaptations are covered. The section on plumage is most interesting. The structure and types of feathers are described and illustrated. Feather tracts are covered along with how individual feathers develop.



Flight is covered by descriptions of anatomy. “How Birds Fly” covers lift, drag, and the movement of the wings. Speed, types of flight, flight styles, and energy saving are covered in detail.

Food sources and feeding adaptations, along with bird behavior, are covered in sections based on food sources from insects to fish to bats to birds. This is followed by a chapter on breeding. The various ecological zones as they affect birds and migration are covered, as are habitats the birds reside in. The book ends with a small chapter on human–bird interactions.

The subtitle “A Complete Guide...” is right on. It almost appears that there is more here than you ever need to know. But then again, it’s all fascinating to read. It’s worth picking up the book just to read the comprehensive review of dinosaur to bird evolution that starts the book.



**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ON THE PROPOSED FEDERAL BUDGET!**

*Editor’s note:* The information below was presented on a slide by Audubon NY’s Government Relations Manager, Sasha Eisenstein, during the NYS Audubon Council’s meeting in March, at which I was one of four representatives from SSAS. To keep up to date with the federal budget and other issues (such as the Endangered Species Act), and to send e-mail to your Congressional delegation so that they know what you want them to do, go to **www.audubon.org/takeaction**.

*Environmental Protection Agency*  
Current funding: \$8.3B  
Proposed: \$5.7B (31% reduction)  
Impacts: Eliminates more than 50 EPA programs



*Great Lakes Restoration Initiative*  
Authorized at \$300 million in CR (continuing resolution from Congress, expiring April 28 — ed.)  
Proposed: Eliminates GLRI funding  
*“Categorical”/Regional Grants*  
Proposed: \$597M (decrease of \$482M)  
Impacts: Long Island Sound funding, Chesapeake Bay funding (\$0), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), State Wildlife Grant Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

*Clean Power Plan*  
Proposed: Discontinues funding (\$100M)  
*Water Infrastructure — State Revolving Fund*  
Current funding: \$1.9B  
Proposed: \$2.3B (\$400M increase)

*Your editor again:* You can find the proposed budget at [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/2018\\_blueprint.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/2018_blueprint.pdf) (“America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again”). In response, the National Audubon Society issued a press release on March 16, which is at <http://www.audubon.org/news/white-house-budget-would-put-americas-birds-chopping-block> and begins as follows:

“The budget proposal released today would be a death sentence for America’s long, bipartisan legacy of protecting our cherished natural places and the birds and other wildlife that depend on them,” said David Yarnold (@david\_yarnold), Audubon’s president and CEO. The White House budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2018 would mean crippling reductions to America’s most important conservation initiatives, many of which support Audubon’s efforts to protect birds and the places they need.



**NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2016–2017 BOARD**

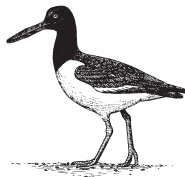
At South Shore Audubon Society’s general meeting on **May 9**, officers and directors will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee (Marilyn Hametz, and Wendy Murbach, and Michael Sperling) recommends the following candidates: Michael Sperling, president; Brien Weiner, vice president; Joe Landesberg, treasurer; Arlene Rawls, recording secretary; Therese Lucas, corresponding secretary; and two directors (for three-year terms).

**Directors & Officers Liability Insurance.** In accordance with state law, this paragraph informs our members prior to the election that SSAS obtained D&O insurance for its board at a cost of \$878.

**HAVE FUN THIS SUMMER – VOLUNTEER TO BE A GOOD EGG!**

*Jim Brown*

Join with fellow South Shore Audubon members and others in this summer's "Be a Good Egg" program! Volunteers spend the better part of a day at local South Shore beaches, spreading the important message that we should all be "good eggs," and share the beaches with threatened and endangered bird species such as Piping Plovers, Least Terns, and American Oystercatchers (pictured). Come to the beach and help our state organization, Audubon New York, get the word out, and have beachgoers sign the pledge to responsibly share the beach with our avian friends!



Our threatened and endangered shorebirds nest on the sand and raise their young right on the beach, oftentimes among a veritable sea of humanity. It is therefore critical that people going to our beaches give these birds a wide berth, allowing them to successfully nest and raise their young. Education of the general beach-going public is necessary if these shorebird species are to survive and flourish. Volunteers for the "Be a Good Egg Program" ask people coming to the beach to take a pledge — to be considerate of nesting shorebirds, and in essence to also become good stewards of our precious wildlife. The pledge is simple and straightforward: "1) Keep away from marked or fenced areas where birds are nesting. 2) Keep the beach clean by using proper receptacles or carrying out trash. 3) Keep my dog off of nesting beaches." Communicating these basic points to the general public goes a long way to protect these vulnerable birds from human disturbances and predators. We convey the view that we can all enjoy the beach and share it with shorebirds!

My wife, Gail, and I have participated in this program, and we find it very rewarding. We get to spend a delightful day on the beach, with a comfortable canopy and chairs within reach. We enjoy the camaraderie with other volunteers and Audubon staff. We speak with many people coming to the beach about birds and the necessity of protecting them, especially the endangered and threatened ones. You meet many people, of all ages and interests, and it's fun to share with them our love of birds. Last year we were very lucky in that a family of American Oystercatchers was located right behind our canopy, dispensing with the need to consult our brochure to show potential "good eggs" what these birds looked like! Volunteers hand out bird-related materials and literature, and most people are very happy to sign the "Be a Good Egg Pledge." I urge everyone to come out to the beach this summer and have a great Audubon experience — Be a Good Egg and urge others to become good eggs as well!

To learn more and to sign up for one or more of the following South Shore beach dates (between 9 A.M. and

3 P.M.), contact Amanda Pachomski, Long Island Bird Conservation Program Manager, at apachomski@audubon.org.

**Saturday, June 17: Point Lookout**

**Sunday, June 18: Lido Beach**

**Saturday, July 1: Jones Beach**

**Sunday, July 2: Lido Beach**

**Saturday, July 15: Point Lookout**

**Sunday, July 16: Jones Beach**

If you would like to take the pledge yourself online, you can do so at <http://ny.audubon.org/birds-0birdsways-help/be-good-egg>.

*Editor's note:* If you volunteer, you'll be offering the good eggs their choice of the program's lip balm, magnet, can opener, or pin.

\*\*\*\*\*

Phone: (516) 931-1445

Fax: (516) 931-1467

E-Mail: [lgk1cpa@aol.com](mailto:lgk1cpa@aol.com)

**LEONARD G. KONSKER**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

Konsker and Company, LTD  
550 W. Old Country Rd., Suite 101  
Hicksville, New York 11801



*Explore the coast  
with the*

**AMERICAN  
LITTORAL SOCIETY**

**HORSESHOE CRAB FESTIVAL** (Sat., May 27, 9 A.M.). Meet at the Jamaica Bay Refuge and carpool to nearby site to see the annual mating ritual of the ancient horseshoe crabs. Other events during the day include children's program and lectures on horseshoe crabs topics. With NYC Audubon. Free.

**JAMAICA BAY SUNSET ECOLOGY CRUISE** (Sunday, May 28 (5–8 P.M.)). Join us aboard the 100 ft. boat "Golden Sunshine" out of Pier 8, Sheepshead Bay for a 3-hour cruise into the backwater marshes of Jamaica Bay. Learn about the history, ecology and wildlife & see nesting Osprey, terns, egrets, herons, oystercatchers & more. Cost: \$55 incl. narrated tour plus wine & cheese, drink, fruit, snacks. Leader: Don.

**MONTAUK SPRING WEEKEND** (June 2–4). Visit during peak heather and orchid bloom, and hike the bluffs, dunes, woods and beaches. Trip fee of \$395 incl. 2 nights at luxurious Manor House (double occ.), 5 meals, 5 guided hikes, 2 evening programs & star watch plus free pickup at LIRR station.

**CAPE ANN WHALE WATCH** (August 10–13). Spend three nights in lovely Gloucester, MA. Trip cost: \$425/person (double occ.) incl. 3 nights lodging, 1/2 day whale boat, Essex River Evening Cruise, lobster/seafood dinner, easy canoeing on Ipswich River & guided hike to scenic Halibut Point shoreline.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 474-0896, [don@littoralsociety.org](mailto:don@littoralsociety.org), 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693; [www.littoralsociety.org](http://www.littoralsociety.org).

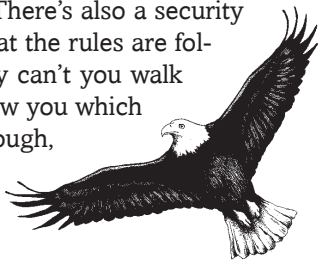
## NESTING BALD EAGLES AT MY DAUGHTER'S SCHOOL IN GREAT NECK

Jonathan Staller

There I was; so excited but where do I begin? It's a very big campus. There's a high school, a middle school, an admissions building, and other smaller structures scattered throughout the property. There are also ball fields, tennis courts, paths, walkways, driveways, and plenty of parking lots. Which one do I park at? I'm still pinching myself. A pair of Bald Eagles, our nation's bird, picked my daughter's school to make their home.

It's not a coincidence that my nickname is the "Bird-man." I had to earn that name. Countless bird walks in all types of weather that Mother Nature would send my way. 15-degree treks through the dunes of Jones Beach to find Snowy Owls or 95–100 degree temperatures in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona to see a Harris's Hawk. Pelham Bay to find owls and Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine to see Atlantic Puffins (thanks to Dolores Rogers).

I parked my car in about the middle of the school property and grabbed my binoculars. From experience, I knew that eagles like to nest in tall coniferous trees. I'm walking at a quick pace, looking up and scanning each tree that I pass. After about 30 minutes of what seems like exercising more than bird-watching, I see a custodian. "Do you know anything about the Bald Eagles?" "Yes," he told me. "They arrived about 3 weeks ago and the nest is on the western side of the campus." After thanking him, I walked in that direction and came to a path that was roped off. There was a sign on a post in front of it: "U.S. Fish and Wildlife. No Trespassing. Nesting Bald Eagle Area. Keep Away from March–August. There's also a security guard there to make sure that the rules are followed; he told me, "not only can't you walk past the ropes, I will not show you which tree has the nest." He did, though, pull out his cell phone and showed me a picture of the two eagles perched above the nest.



Bald Eagle nests are huge but first-year nests aren't. As the birds return each year, they add more branches on top of the old nest and that's how they get so large. Some nests have been found with the dimensions of 12 feet deep and 6 feet wide.

I go back to my car and drive to another parking lot. I think that this one will be to my advantage to see them fly to and from the nest. There's a lake to the west of the school property. Now I'm thinking to myself, "come on Birdman, do your magic." Not too long after that thought, I catch a glimpse out of the corner of my eye.

I turn quickly and there I see one! "Oh my gosh," I say out loud as the eagle was flying about 25 feet above my head and majestically flapping its wings to gain more height. White head, white tail, and a brown body. The

wingspan had to be at least 7 feet across and wider than a female Red-Tailed Hawk. Female raptors (birds of prey) are larger than the males. I watched the eagle fly until I couldn't see it anymore.

I've seen Bald Eagles in Florida, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, and once in New York (Hempstead Lake State Park). The best thing about this pair, though, is that I can see them whenever I want; at my daughter's school.

*Editor's note:* Jon is a past president of SSAS.



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wendy Murbach

One of the wonderful perks that you get from an Audubon membership is the chance to be a part of your local Audubon chapter, South Shore Audubon Society.

You are automatically a valued member of this active and friendly chapter, so please come out to the next meeting at the Freeport Memorial Library from 7:30–9:30 P.M., usually on the second Tuesday of the month (September through May), to hear what you can do to help preserve your local environment's health and viability, to hear about local issues that you can help to solve, and to see an interesting program.

Whether you are a beginning birder or someone with a large life list, you will enjoy our weekly Sunday bird walks. Check out the special events that are mentioned in this *Skimmer*. Attend them yourself, and bring your family and friends too.

You are warmly invited to be an active participant in this vibrant all-volunteer organization comprised of persons who, like you, care about the earth we live on, about our local environment, and about the creatures that live alongside us.

Our new members since last month's *Skimmer* are:

- Baldwin ..... Ann Rochester, Joseph Villani
- Bellmore ..... Joyce Farley, John Luxmore, E. Maccone
- East Meadow ..... Christina Martinez
- East Rockaway ..... Margaret Jackiewicz
- Floral Park ..... Steven Kaiser, Michael Schweiger
- Garden City ..... Elizabeth M. Bailey, Joan H. Ripp
- Hempstead ..... Dan Jansen
- Levittown ..... Dorothy Smith
- Long Beach ..... Maura Kuohn
- Lynbrook ..... Thomas Malone
- Malverne ..... Frank T. Hunt, Kathi Paley
- Merrick ..... Anthony Ferrara, Robert M. Frank, Mary P. Lambert, James Sibree
- Oceanside ..... Maria Cacciuttolo, Kenneth Lawlor
- Old Bethpage ..... Rosalia Fusco
- Rockville Centre .... Janet S. Matthews
- Valley Stream ..... Marc Putz
- Wantagh ..... Mario Dicerbo, Janis Schroff, Robert Spicer
- West Hempstead ..... Elaine Carlson



