



## It's Hawk Watching Season!

by Brien Weiner

*Anyone who has ever stopped to watch a hawk in flight will know that this is one of the natural world's most elegant phenomena. – John Burnside*

During fall migration, being in the right place at the right time—atop a mountain ridge or along a coastline with north winds—can reward us with a magnificent view of raptors.

Hawk counts are conducted at strategic locations, and since hawks are apex predators, the counts are a snapshot not only of raptor numbers, but of bird populations in general.

Hawkwatches enlist volunteers and visitors, and we can easily join the fun nearby.

Simply find a hawkwatch and see current and historical reports at <https://hawkcount.org/>

Learn how to identify hawks by general impression of size and shape (GISS or JIZZ) with guides such as *Hawks in Flight* by Pete Dunne or *Hawks from Every Angle* by Jerry Liguori.



Northern Harrier by Jay Koolpix

Visit a local hawkwatch at peak migration:

**Long Island:** Falcons are a specialty at Fire Island (Islip) and Fort Tilden (Queens): Peregrines, Merlins, and American Kestrels stream down the coast from mid-September through October.

Many fly low to hunt migrating songbirds—giving great views.

For hawk watching in the SSAS area, visit Jones Beach West End or Oceanside Marine Nature

Study Area. (See Bird Walks on p.2)

**Hudson Valley:** Quaker Ridge (Greenwich, CT) and Hook Mountain (Nyack, NY) feature kettles of Broad-winged Hawks in mid to late September.

Hit the big day and you can see hundreds, even thousands on the move.

They fly high, so choose a day with some clouds to back light them and avoid the blue sky of death, in which the birds seem invisible.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks migrate from September through October, Red-shouldered Hawks and the occasional Golden Eagle or Northern Goshawk from mid-October through November.

You can drive right up to the Quaker Ridge hawkwatch. Hook Mountain requires a moderate but scenic climb.♦

### And the Winners Are...

#### High School Scholarships:

Maia Goveia • Baldwin High School  
Stella Kasprzyk • Lynbrook Senior High School  
Markeila Maxwell • Freeport High School  
Elizabeth Vaupel • South Side High School, RVC

#### Evelyn & Jerry Bishop Environmental Scholarships:

Kelly Andreuzzi • Adelphi University  
Emma Strassberg • SUNY ESF

### Coming Attractions

*In-Person at Freeport Memorial Library @ 7 PM:*

**The Pantanal with A Couple Without Borders • 9/13**  
**Birds of Nassau County with Jay Koolpix • 10/11**

*Virtual Program @ 7:30 PM:*

**Wonderful World of Waterfowl with Mike Farina • 11/15**

*See Page 4 for Details!*

### South Shore Skimmer

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- Jim Brown
- Louise DeCesare
- Guy Jacob
- Joe Landesberg
- Brien Weiner

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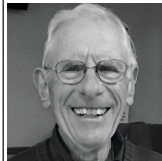
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The mission of the South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education; conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat; and to preserve and restore our environment through responsible activism for the benefit of both people and wildlife. ♦

## Bird Walks

by Joe Landesberg



Joe Landesberg

Join us on our Bird Walks! To register, text me your name and contact information at 516-467-9498. We follow COVID protocols in effect at time of walk. Bird Walks are free of charge and start at 9 AM. No walk if it rains. Text me regarding questionable conditions.

#### September:

- Sunday, 9/4: Massapequa Preserve (Meet at east end of train station)
- Sunday, 9/11: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh)
- Sunday, 9/18: Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Sunday, 9/25: Massapequa Lake (on Merrick Road)

#### October:

- Sunday, 10/2: Hempstead Lake State Park
- Saturday, 10/8: Oceanside Marine Study Area
- Sunday, 10/16: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station (Meet in parking lot)
- Sunday, 10/23: Point Lookout Town Park/Lido Preserve
- Sunday, 10/30: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh)

#### November:

- Sunday, 11/6: Massapequa Preserve (Meet at east end of train station)
- Sunday, 11/13: Hempstead Lake State Park
- Sunday, 11/20: Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- Sunday, 11/27: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station (Meet in parking lot)

#### December:

- Sunday, 12/4: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh)
- Sunday, 12/11: Point Lookout Town Park/Lido Preserve
- Sunday, 12/18: Hempstead Lake State Park
- Sunday, 12/25: No bird walk | Happy Holidays!

**For future Bird Walks, check our website & Facebook page:**  
SSAudubon.org/bird-walks • Facebook.com/SSAudubon

**Directions:** SSAudubon.org/directions.asp

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE

All South Shore Audubon memberships expire in September.

To renew your membership and receive the *Skimmer*, please use the form on the back page to send \$20.00 to South Shore Audubon Society at P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031. Thank you!

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## On the Record: Marcy Cottrell Houle

*An Interview by Alene Scoblete*



Marcy Houle

Author and speaker Marcy Cottrell Houle is a wildlife biologist whose field work contributed to the salvation of Peregrine Falcons and the preservation of the Zumwalt Prairie. Her works include the award-winning *Wings for My Flight* and *The Prairie Keepers*. Houle engages readers and audiences with her alternately humorous and harrowing—but always utterly fascinating—experiences in the great outdoors.

### **What experiences in your early life led you to a career in wildlife biology?**

MCH: I grew up outside the city limits of Portland, Oregon, surrounded by a 13-acre old growth woods. I loved nature from the start! We also spent time boating as a family around Vancouver Island, B.C.

My parents introduced me to the wonderful outdoors, and my interest in it, and in wildlife, only grew from there!

### **How did you handle being considered a woman in a man's job?**

MCH: Interestingly, I never even thought about it, even though I was the first woman wildlife biologist hired by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

I was very lucky to have been raised in a family where it was expected that a woman could do any job a man could do.

When this issue was brought up by others in the field, I let it roll off, so to speak, knowing I could do just as well.

### **What experiences helped you develop your fun and engaging writing style?**

MCH: I think I have always had a big imagination, an optimistic attitude, love people and nature, and often look at life as being a series of interesting stories.

I always wanted to be both a writer and a biologist, and studying fascinating wildlife always gave me plenty of stories to write about!

### **How did you handle the heartbreak that inevitably came with the loss of some birds you studied?**

MCH: I was really downhearted for a while when we lost Jenny and three of the Peregrine nestlings. In fact, studying Peregrine Falcons in a time when it looked as if they could go extinct definitely added a somber, serious attitude to my work.

Even today, I become very saddened by the loss of so many native birds—three billion in the last 50 years in North America alone—and the accelerating decline of so many species I love.

How do I handle this? By trying, through my writing to help others develop an awareness and concern about what is happening to our native wildlife and ecosystems, and from there to join together to work to save them.

### **What would you like our readers to know about Peregrine Falcons?**

MCH: They are beautiful and amazing creatures! As I note in *Wings for My Flight*, witnessing them fly is a magical experience—it changes forever the landscape.

Also, they are a seminal story showcasing the great value of the Endangered Species Act—a foundational law that helped to save a species from extinction.

**“As I learned from studying my birds, there is always hope.”**

### **What advice do you have for girls contemplating a career in the sciences?**

MCH: Go for it! I love science, and the sky is the limit for girls who pursue a career in one of the multitude of fascinating sciences. Both of our daughters are scientists and love their career paths. You will never grow bored; there is always something new to think about, to explore, to keep your sense of wonder alive!

### **Anything else you'd like to tell us?**

MCH: We are living in a time when our natural world seems to be tilting to despair. It is easy to feel so disillusioned that all we can do is give up. But this is not the time for that.

As I learned from studying my birds, there is always hope. We need to dig deep, work together, and when the setbacks come—and they will—to continue anyway. The planet and all the wondrous life it holds need us now more than ever! ♦

### **Thank you, Donors!**

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## Coming Attractions

In-Person Programs are at Freeport Memorial Library, 144 W. Merrick Road • Refreshments • Raffles

### The Pantanal with A Couple Without Borders

**Tuesday, September 13 @ 7 PM**

→ In-Person at Freeport Memorial Library

The Pantanal is a magical place in the heart of South America that boasts the largest concentration of wildlife in the Western Hemisphere. Robyn and Paul will share their birding and wildlife adventures through their photos and speak about the region, conservation, travel to the area, the Jaguar, birds, and other wildlife.



Robyn & Paul

Robyn & Paul are a local conservation-driven birding couple who explore the world and share it with their over 25K followers on Instagram—both virtually and with in-person meetups. These passionate birders participate in volunteer and community science projects and speak throughout the country. Robyn has a degree in biology and was a zookeeper for the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo. Visit them on Instagram @ acouplewithoutborders.

### Birds of Nassau County's South Shore with Jay Koolpix

**Tuesday, October 11 @ 7 PM**

→ In-Person at Freeport Memorial Library

In this fourth part of his series, Jay delights us with photos and videos of the daily life of resident and visiting birds. Jay captures what we mere mortals often miss, even with binoculars.



Jay Koolpix

Born in Spanish Harlem and raised in foster homes, Jay mostly worked two jobs at a time until his retirement. Once he discovered bird photography, he was hooked—and we're hooked on his work!

### The Wonderful World of Waterfowl with Mike Farina

**Tuesday, November 15 @ 7:30 PM**

→ Virtual Program (No program on Election Day)

As we enter autumn and temperatures cool, waterfowl from the North arrive and spend their fall and winter here on Long Island. Mike Farina from the Marine Nature Study Area (MNSA) will provide an in-depth look at some species and the adaptations that help them to survive in the temperate zone we call home as well as point us to places we can find them ourselves.



Mike Farina

A recipient of SSAS's Elliott Kutner Conservation Award in 2014, Mike provides opportunities for young people and students to have hands-on involvement in MNSA's daily activities, prompting many of them to continue in the field.

**Find program updates & links on [SSAudubon.org](http://SSAudubon.org) • [facebook.com/SSAudubon](https://facebook.com/SSAudubon) • [Twitter: @AudubonSS](https://twitter.com/AudubonSS)**

### Eco Tips & Tricks

- Save the planet and enhance your home dining experience by using cloth napkins instead of disposable ones.
- Skip the paper towels and use dishcloths to wipe up spills.

*You're doing laundry anyway, so just toss them in the washer.*

**Email Eco Tips & Tricks to [alene.scoblete@gmail.com](mailto:alene.scoblete@gmail.com)**

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### Help SSAS While Shopping

#### 1. Community Bag Donation

SSAS receives a \$1 donation any time you purchase the \$2.50 reusable Community Bag at any **Stop & Shop** if you specify South Shore Audubon Society on the Giving Tag.

#### 2. Amazon Smile

Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) > Log into your Amazon account > Choose SSAS as your charity > Shop as usual  
SSAS receives 0.5% of eligible purchases.

**Thank you for your support!**

## Lights Out for Fall Migration

by Brien Weiner

During fall migration, billions of birds fly south from their breeding grounds to their wintering grounds, facing innumerable threats along the way.

The majority migrate at night, using the night sky to help them navigate. During the day, they rest and refuel, relying on green space, water, and other necessary resources.



Photo: Kristina Paukshite

Artificial lights and skyglow around buildings result in millions of bird fatalities each year.

Some are casualties of nighttime collisions with windows and walls. Others are thrown off their migration paths, but bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste circling in confusion until they land in exhaustion and are then vulnerable to other urban threats.

In the U.S., 99% of the public will never see a natural night because of light pollution. It's not just a big city problem.

Audubon's **Lights Out** program urges building owners and managers to turn off excess lighting during the months that birds are migrating.

### We can help by taking the following actions:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish flood lights
- Turn off interior lighting especially on higher stories
- Draw window coverings
- Down-shield exterior lighting to eliminate horizontal glare and light directed upward
- Install automatic motion sensors and timers wherever possible
- When converting to new lighting assess the quality and quantity of light needed, avoiding over-lighting

A report published earlier this year by the Department of Energy stated that 99% of the light we emit has no clear purpose.

As for safety, various studies fail to show a correlation between more lights and lower crime; in fact, over-lighting makes victims and property more visible.

Consider also that an always-on light is less of an alert than a motion-activated light.

Artificial lighting at night disrupts entire ecosystems (including wildlife and trees), harms human health, and increases energy consumption and costs.

For more information, see [audubon.org/lights-out-program](http://audubon.org/lights-out-program) and [darksky.org/light-pollution/](http://darksky.org/light-pollution/) ♦

## Insights

by Jim Brown

### Exterminism vs. Ecological Survival

Recent climate news has been alarming.

Some examples:

- Historically high temperatures in Europe have led to more than 1,700 deaths in Spain and Portugal alone.
- A heatwave in Britain created temperatures reaching 40° C (104° F) for the first time in its recorded history, causing brushfires in London neighborhoods.
- Currently, wildfires in the U.S. West are having damaging impacts, threatening people, property and our national parks.
- During June in Arizona birds actually fell from the sky due to heat exhaustion. Arizona animal rehabilitators daily treated about 20 large birds for heat stroke with food and IV fluids. The extreme heat, approaching 120° F, caused many raptors to abandon nests. In May, during a similar heatwave, the same avian problem was observed in India.

Despite all this (and more!), world governments have recently seen fit to censor the findings of a recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientific report that stresses the need for rapid and systemic socio-economic transformations to solve the climate crisis.

The Congo government has recently proposed the opening of the world's second largest rain forest, home to endangered mountain gorillas, to fossil fuel leases.

President Biden has announced policies to similarly expand fossil fuel drilling in the U.S. As of late July, he has even refused to declare a climate emergency.

Our Supreme Court recently made it more difficult for the EPA to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

### These counterproductive responses of world leaders to this ongoing, unrelenting crisis are hastening the process of "exterminism."

Exterminism implies the elimination of many animal and plant species—not necessarily the destruction of all human life, but rather the annihilation of billions and the demise of humanity's current industrial civilization.

An overheated planet, lacking adequate biological diversity and ecological health, will be an extreme dystopia.

A change in course is needed now if we are to avoid exterminism and preserve a habitable civilization and ecological diversity! ♦



Jim Brown

## The Borowsky Report

by Betty Borowsky

### Evelyn & Jerry Bishop Scholarship Recipients

We are very pleased to announce that the Evelyn and Jerry Bishop College Scholarship had two truly outstanding applications this year.

Fortunately, since we did not award a scholarship last year, we were able to award a scholarship to both applicants.

The first winner is **Kelly Andreuzzi**, who is a junior at Adelphi University and is majoring in environmental science. Kelly has earned an A or better in all her ecology and environmental courses.

COVID hit in her second semester. "During the months of quarantine...I attended virtual workshops about climate justice and volunteered for organizations such as NY Renews and Long Island Progressive Coalition."

Kelly plans to use the money to decrease her work hours and devote more time to her studies and environmental activism.

The second winner is **Emma Strassburg** who attends SUNY's Environmental Science and Forestry School, where she is majoring in wildlife science. She also had only As in her ecology and environment-related science courses.

She used the money to help fund a field course in the Palau archipelago this summer. The course involved not only studying the ecology of Palau but helped local primary and secondary schools conduct surveys of their own environment.

Her letter of reference says "Emma is on track to be one of the top scholars in our entire biology program, not just within the wildlife science majors."

Both of our winners are working toward careers that will advance the mission of the South Shore Audubon Society and satisfy the intent of Evelyn and Jerry Bishop.

We are more than delighted to support them in their efforts! ♦

## Through Guy's Eyes

by Guy Jacob

### Love Your Gas Stove? Think Again!



Guy Jacob

When I was a teenager, a friend of mine committed suicide by running his car engine in a closed garage. Car exhaust has ever since given me an eerie feeling.

**Couldn't you just cringe thinking about starting an internal combustion engine indoors?**

In truth, every time you turn on your gas stove, it's like starting your car in an enclosed space. When you burn methane indoors, it emits many of the same substances as car exhaust:

- Nitrogen dioxide (NO2)
- Particulate matter (PM2.5)
- Carbon monoxide (CO)

Each of us has been near enough to automobile exhaust fumes to know in a second how unhealthy they must be.

Like idling an automobile in a confined location, current research confirms how much we endure substantial health costs because of our addiction to gas stoves, including—but far from limited to—asthma, dementia and heart disease.

Natural gas is methane, a highly toxic, potent greenhouse gas that also contributes to the climate crisis.

For our families, for our future, we must rethink our reliance on and attachment to natural gas stoves, in much the same way that previous generations had to rethink their love affair with cigarettes.

New information requires rational, health-conscious people to change their behavior and interactions with technology. That's always the way we grow and prosper.

The best and most effective way to protect our personal health and the health of the planet is to switch to an induction stove.

#### READ MORE ABOUT IT • Links to Three Informative Articles

"Kill Your Gas Stove" | *The Atlantic*: [tinyurl.com/2bfsuj26](https://tinyurl.com/2bfsuj26)

"Invisible Toxins from Natural Gas Permeates Our Homes" | *StatesmanJournal.com*: [tinyurl.com/2v2h27v4](https://tinyurl.com/2v2h27v4)

"New Report Exposes the Dangers of Methane Gas" | *PowerPastFrackedGas.org*: [tinyurl.com/2p8p843c](https://tinyurl.com/2p8p843c) ♦



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# Going Native: Volunteer Gardeners Needed

by Betty Borowsky & Louise DeCesare



Betty Borowsky

This summer at Tackapausha Native Garden has been a challenging one. Although most of our natives are drought tolerant, the extreme heat and lack of rainfall stressed even our butterfly weed and coneflowers.

Watering cans in a garden this size are futile. We tried sprinklers in the past, but this too was problematic.

Watering from above is less efficient—it evaporates before it trickles down to the soil and reaches fewer plants.

Fortunately, the staff from Tackapausha Museum came to the rescue.

They obtained soaker hoses from Nassau County and installed them throughout the garden. The result has been nothing short of miraculous.

Even drought sensitive plants like hibiscus and hydrangea are flourishing with more blooms than in past years. The addition of fresh mulch has further helped retain moisture.

When trying to keep your garden well-watered during extreme heat, consider soaker hoses. They save water and deliver a slow-drip that roots can absorb more easily.

Mulching retains moisture uniformly, avoiding thirsty stressed-out plants. There are many kinds of mulch, but something that breaks down in the soil is best.

Thanks to SSAS volunteers Betty Borowsky, Louise DeCesare, Lily Goch, Marilyn Hammetz, Linda Ilan, Anne



Louise DeCesare

Mehlinger, Sue Scott and students Hannah Montuori and Matthew Zavelson.

Special thanks to Tackapausha Museum & Preserve staff members Dennis Fleury, Isabelle Fernandes, Alec, and Caroline for being our watering angels.

**Please consider volunteering.** Contact Louise DeCesare at [Lmdecesare128@gmail.com](mailto:Lmdecesare128@gmail.com) or (917) 548-6974. ♦

## Leave the Leaves!

You can help birds and other wildlife by leaving the leaves in your yard. Rotting leaves enrich the soil and provide places for bugs and birds to forage for food.

If a fully hands-off approach doesn't work for your yard, consider composting leaves, raking them from the lawn to your garden beds, or mulching them with a mower to nourish your lawn.

### The Wise Owl: Beware the Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly (SLF) is an invasive species that poses a significant threat to NYS agriculture and forests.

They feed on apples, grapes, and seventy other plant species.

They spread primarily by laying their eggs on vehicles, firewood, outdoor furniture, stone, and the like, which are then inadvertently transported to new areas.

#### You can help:

- ✓ Inspect outdoor items for egg masses, especially if you travel to areas with SLF
- ✓ Destroy the insect or egg masses
- ✓ Report SLF to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

#### Learn more at:

[dec.ny.gov/animals/113303.html](http://dec.ny.gov/animals/113303.html) ♦



Courtesy Danielle Scoblete

Wise Owl



Alec LoGerfo installs soaker hoses at Tackapausha Native Garden

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All SSAS Memberships Expire in September!  
*Renew your membership today!*

### Join South Shore Audubon Society!

Become a member of our local chapter for **only \$20 per year!** Receive our newsletter, *South Shore Skimmer*, which includes listings for our local outings and programs as well as the latest on environmental issues and initiatives.

To **join or renew** your membership, make your check payable to **South Shore Audubon Society** and send the form and check to: **PO Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.**

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