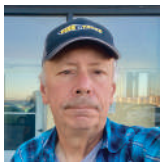




## Looking Up: Pelagic Persuasion

by Russ Comeau



Russ Comeau

From early July through mid-September, the Viking Fleet ([vikingfleet.com](http://vikingfleet.com)) and CRESLI ([cresli.org](http://cresli.org)) make afternoon

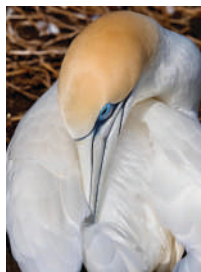
offshore whale-watching trips from Montauk Harbor to observe summering species of spouting whales, hard-charging dolphins, maybe a graceful sea turtle too. For birdwatchers aboard, dozens to hundreds, sometimes thousands of Great Shearwaters are possible.

A welcome sea breeze can bring a few to a few dozen Cory's Shearwaters. Perhaps a handful or two of Sooty Shearwaters. You may see a smattering of smaller Manx Shearwaters.

Watch for flurries of Wilson's Storm Petrels tap dancing over the churning swells. Perchance a Parasitic Jaeger or a string of Red or Red-necked Phalaropes. You never know. When inshore, scan for Gannets, Brown Pelicans, and rare Terns. Over the PA system, the naturalist aboard will point

everything out to you, identifying the different species of birds, so you get to see them all.

Come autumn, stiff gales blow pelagic birds up against Long Island's south shore where beachgoing birders can



Gannet by Tony Skerl

see them on the horizon for a few days before they return offshore again. A powerful spotting scope is necessary, from Breezy Point, Queens to Montauk Point and sea-watching

hot spots like Jones Beach, Fire Island, and Robert Moses.

Over winter, the American Princess out of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn ([americanprincesscruises.com](http://americanprincesscruises.com)) makes 8-, 10-, and 12-hour cruises far offshore where pelagic birds abound beyond sight of land. There, Razorbill, Dovekie, Common Murre, Thick-billed Murre, Black-legged Kittiwake, Atlantic Puffin, Northern Fulmar await you.

Hope for a rare Great Skua too. You'll spot Gannets galore, possibly with rare white winter gulls—Iceland and Glaucous. The American Princess makes 24-hour midsummer overnight pelagic trips to faraway Hudson Canyon too.

Some winters, Razorbills venture inshore where binoculars can provide good looks from the beaches and inlets. Dovekie, Common Murre, Thick-billed Murre as well. Popular shore spots include Breezy Point, Coney Island, Jones Inlet, and Montauk.

Black-legged Kittiwakes are best seen from shore in winter at Montauk where Black Guillemots are also best seen.

*Oceanic Birds of the World* by Steve Howell and Kirk Zufelt is an inclusive field guide for persons persuaded to venture offshore looking for Long Island's pelagics. ♦



Atlantic Puffin by Maisie Kane

### Save the Dates!

**4/22: Birds of the South Shore** with Jay Koolpix on Earth Day at 10 AM @ Long Beach Library, followed by a Bird Walk with SSAS on Nickerson Beach at 11:30.

**4/28: Visit the SSAS table** at the LI Natural History Conference at Suffolk County Environmental Center. Info at [seatuck.org](http://seatuck.org).

**6/11: SSAS Second Annual Picnic** at 11:30 AM @ Brady Park, Massapequa following our Sunday morning Bird Walk at Masapequa Preserve. Details to come.

### Coming Attractions

All programs start @ 7:30 PM ▪ Details on page 4

**How Birds Evolve ▪ Wednesday, 3/15**  
with Doug Futuyma ▪ Virtual Program

**Rescued Wildlife ▪ Tuesday, 4/11**  
with Bobby & Cathy Horvath ▪ In-Person Program

**Modern Birding ▪ Tuesday, 5/9**  
with A Couple Without Borders ▪ In-Person Program

*In-person programs take place at  
Freeport Memorial Library, 144 W. Merrick Road, Freeport, NY.*

### South Shore Skimmer

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- Betty Borowsky
- Jim Brown
- Russ Comeau
- Louise DeCesare
- Guy Jacob
- Joe Landesberg
- Brien Weiner

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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.

See [ssaudubon.org/bird-walks](http://ssaudubon.org/bird-walks) for the March schedule.

#### April

- Sunday, 4/2: Massapequa Preserve (Meet at East end of train station)
- Sunday, 4/9: Easter Sunday | No walk
- Saturday, 4/15: Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area
- Sunday, 4/23: Hempstead Lake State Park (Meet in parking lot #3)
- Sunday, 4/30: Norman J. Levy Park

#### May Sundays

- 5/7: Jones Beach Coast Guard Station (Meet in parking lot)
- 5/14: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh)
- 5/21: Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
- 5/28: Memorial Day Weekend | No walk

#### June Sundays

- 6/4: Hempstead Lake State Park (Meet at Parking Lot #3)
- 6/11: Massapequa Preserve (to be followed by a picnic at Brady Park, Massapequa)

#### Summer Break

#### August Sundays

- 8/20: Mill Pond Park (Bellmore/Wantagh)
- 8/27: Massapequa Preserve (Meet at East end of train station)

**For future Bird Walks, check our website & Facebook page:**  
[SSAudubon.org/bird-walks](http://SSAudubon.org/bird-walks) • [Facebook.com/SSAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SSAudubon)

**Directions:** [SSAudubon.org/directions.asp](http://SSAudubon.org/directions.asp)

### Second Annual SSAS Picnic! Save the Date!

Sunday, June 11 • 11:30 AM

Join us for a picnic at Brady Park, Massapequa directly after our Massapequa Preserve bird walk. Bring a bag lunch. SSAS will provide snacks, beverages, & prizes for our raffle. We hope to see you there!

RSVP: [Marilynexpl@yahoo.com](mailto:Marilynexpl@yahoo.com) or call (516) 799-7189



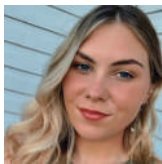
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# On the Record: Audrey Randazzo

*An Interview by Alene Scoblete*



Audrey Randazzo

A 2021 Delaware Valley University graduate, Audrey Randazzo is a field biologist who is passionate about helping birders and non-birders alike develop a better understanding of avian species and the phenomenon of migration. In this interview with the South Shore Skimmer, Audrey describes her journey from a nature-loving child to a professional in the birding world.

## **Did your family foster an interest in nature?**

AR: I have been interested in nature since childhood. I grew up doing outdoor activities with my family like hiking, skiing, and bonfires. I was outside any chance I got.

## **What experiences drew you to birds and birding?**

AR: It wasn't until late into college I became interested in ornithology. Senior year I volunteered at a wildlife rehabilitation center where most of the patients happened to be birds. There also were resident birds used for education.

After a while of taking care of them you got to see how each individual bird had their own personality and how intelligent they were. At the same time, I was taking an ornithology course at school. Getting to learn about avian species while also treating and handling them at the same time created an interest and understanding in ornithology.

## **How did your university studies shape your trajectory?**

AR: I majored in Conservation and Wildlife Management at Delaware Valley University (DeVal). DeVal is known for hands-on experience. At DeVal I was able to get an idea of what it would be like to work in different careers in my field. I gained hands-on experience like performing veterinary techniques, analyzing data in a research lab, collecting samples to test for chronic wasting disease with the PA Game Commission, and much more. However, my ornithology course is what interested me the most. I was fascinated by the world of ornithology and the amazing places this career field could take you.

## **Describe the work you did at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.**

AR: I always say Hawk Mountain is the foundation of my career. I learned many fundamental skills during my short time there as a Conservation Science Trainee. There was an umbrella of jobs and skills as a trainee.

My primary focus was to help during the fall migration. I would help engage and educate the public on fall migration and how to ID the species that would be flying overhead. We had lectures we would attend at the end of the day, learning about the current research in the raptor world. We helped on research projects and learned basic

field work, like banding raptors at field stations, capturing and tagging vultures, and conducting bird surveys. We even got to work on projects ourselves. I created a species account for publication on the HMS website.

Hawk Mountain was an amazing experience. I encourage everyone to visit even if you're not into birding. The views are spectacular!

## **How did you come to be an interpretive naturalist?**

AR: While working at HMS I realized how fun it is to get the public engaged in fall migration. I really liked educating visitors who may not have ever been birding before.

Pointing out the raptors flying right overhead and giving them tips and tricks on how to identify all the species is like a fun game. It's also really rewarding when you get to talk to a little kid and seeing how excited they get by the birds flying over. I realized that I could

be making an impactful memory of how they view and interact with nature from then on. Being an interpretive naturalist at the Cape May Bird Observatory was definitely on the bucket list. I got to experience all the amazing aspects of naturalizing again. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to work there this past fall.

## **What are your favorite birds and why?**

AR: I have a love for Northern Harriers. They are my favorite bird to see, especially during migration. A lot of raptor ID is by silhouette and they are, in my opinion, the most interesting. They can be shapeshifters having a few different silhouettes. Their plumage is also beautiful if you see them up close. I personally love juveniles. I call them pumpkin lattes because of their orangey colored plumage—perfect for fall.

Northern Saw-whet Owls also have a special place in my heart. At HMS I met Scott Weidensoul at a banding site for these special owls. He was demonstrating and gave me an amazing experience of listening to this little owl's heartbeat. Let's just say I will never forget that night of owl banding.

## **Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?**

AR: You don't have to be an expert to enjoy nature. Get out whenever you can. Nature is beautiful and we should appreciate it a little more. ♦

***“You don't have to be an expert to enjoy nature.”***



# Coming Attractions

## SSAS Nominating Committee *Help lead SSAS!*

Any member in good standing may suggest candidates for officers and directors for the 2023-2024 term, which starts in June 2023.

If you are interested in helping to lead SSAS, please contact Nominating Committee members Jim and Gail Brown at (516) 608-1446 or Betty Borowsky at (516) 764-3596.

## Scholarships

### For High School Students

SSAS awards **four \$250 scholarships to graduating high school seniors** who plan to pursue college studies related to the environment.

Candidates must reside on the South Shore of Nassau County to be eligible.

Applications available through your Guidance Counselor.

Scholarship winners are announced in June.

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[lenny@konskerandcompany.com](mailto:lenny@konskerandcompany.com)

## How Birds Evolve with Douglas J. Futuyma Wednesday, March 15 @ 7:30 PM

→ Virtual Program

Birds have been central to studies in evolutionary biology ever since Darwin. Doug will describe how evolutionary science illuminates and explains aspects of birds' plumages, life histories, behavior, geographic distributions, and diversity.

Doug Futuyma—Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Ecology and Evolution at Stony Brook University—is an enthusiastic naturalist whose research has focused on the evolution of species interactions. His writing includes *Science on Trial: The Case for Evolution* and *How Birds Evolve: What Science Reveals about Their Origin, Lives, and Diversity*. He has sought birds in over 50 countries and analyzes winter bird records in NYC and on LI for *The Kingbird*, the journal of the New York State Ornithological Association.



Doug Futuyma

## Rescued Wildlife with Bobby & Cathy Horvath Tuesday, April 11 @ 7:30 PM

→ In-Person at Freeport Memorial Library

Enjoy a meet-and-greet with live animals that the Horvaths have rescued and rehabilitated over the years under the nonprofit WINORR—Wildlife in Need of Rescue and Rehabilitation. Although unreleasable, these rescues serve as ambassadors and educators.

Bobby and Cathy have federal and state licenses to provide professional care for sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. They receive no funds from federal, state, or county agencies, and are totally dependent on donations, grants, and fundraisers to pay for their daily operation.

## Modern Birding: Using Tools & Apps to Identify Birds with A Couple Without Borders

Tuesday, May 9 @ 7:30 PM

→ In-Person at Freeport Memorial Library

Robyn and Paul will guide you through simple, but amazing and enjoyable apps that will boost your ability to identify birds both visually and by sound. Guaranteed fun for technophobes and technophiles alike. Bring your smart phone (iPhone or Android) for a hands-on experience.

Robyn & Paul are a local conservation-driven birding couple who explore the world and share it with their over 25K followers on Instagram. These passionate birders participate in volunteer and community science projects, with speaking engagements 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.



Robyn & Paul

## More Programs Coming Your Way!

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

In-person programs are at Freeport Memorial Library, 144 W. Merrick Road, Freeport, NY.

# The Borowsky Report

by Betty Borowsky

## The Problem with Mockingbirds

Every spring the South Shore Audubon Society gets a few calls about dive-bombing mockingbirds. The caller will say something like, “Honestly, I think they’re aiming for me!” Sometimes it’s so bad the homeowners can’t even enter their yard. They ask us what they can do to stop it.

This behavior happens when the mockingbirds are nesting. At first, the birds just make a lot of noise when the homeowners come near the nest. Later, they become more aggressive—and dangerous. Eventually the minute the homeowners enter their yard, the birds try to strike them with their sharp beaks. If they connect, it hurts!

But are the birds aiming specifically at the homeowners? Can a bird really distinguish one human being from another?



Northern Mockingbird  
by Jay Koolpix

Humans have wonderful vision compared to most other animals. Folks with perfect vision (both natural and corrected) can detect not only the presence of light, but also distinguish details at a distance, detect movement, and have a fine color sense. In addition, we can accommodate—objects can be brought

into focus whether they are close to us or far away. But frankly, it’s often hard enough for us to tell one species of bird from another—never mind telling one individual from another within the same species.

A few years ago, I was in a pet shop when a woman came in with her cockatoo. Within seconds, that cockatoo began screeching, flapping wildly, diving off its owner’s arm so it was hanging upside down by its tether. I asked the owner what caused this behavior. She replied that the bird recognized the salesperson because the owner has boarded the bird at the pet shop from time to time.

This was an amazing revelation to me! First, that bird was able to distinguish the salesperson from all the other humans; second, the bird remembered the man specifically (it had no reaction when I got close, for example); and third, the bird associated the person with an unpleasant experience. We don’t know how widespread this faculty is among birds, but it evidently is present in two very different families—the Cacatuidae and the Mimidae—and it very well may be present in others.

So, the answer to the homeowner is: “no, you’re not paranoid: the bird probably is trying to get you.” The Internet is filled with suggestions for stopping this behavior, but most of them harm the birds in some way. The humane method is just to wait a while.

Once the hatchlings are fledged, the birds will abandon their nest and move on. ♦

# Insights

by Jim Brown

## Climate Change News & Notes: War & Corporate Profits

In my last column I noted that the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* had set their Doomsday Clock to 100 seconds to midnight. In late January the scientists moved it forward another 10 seconds, primarily because of deteriorating events in the War in Ukraine. The atomic scientists note that their metaphorical clock now stands at a mere 90 seconds to possible planetary destruction, not simply because of nuclear risks linked to the current European war.



Jim Brown

That war has propelled European nations to seek to diversify their sources of energy, spurring increased investment in natural gas. Fossil fuel infrastructure now being built will be with us for years, exacerbating global warming. Simply stated, the War in Ukraine is making it even more difficult to fight climate change.

Large fossil fuel corporations are booming in the current context of war and natural gas investments and trade, recently reporting record profits due to the wartime



Photo by Markus Spiske

increases in the price of natural gas. Shell’s profits doubled during 2022. Chevron announced profits of \$35 billion last year. Last year ExxonMobil made \$59 billion in profits, up 150% from 2021. War profiteering

has a long history, but given the ongoing climate crisis and the central role of fossil fuels in creating and prolonging that crisis, current natural gas profits are not only obscene, they’re dangerous to the planet.

Despite the announcements of these huge corporate financial gains there has been some positive climate action news lately. Environmental groups are pushing back against these very profits—and the excessive economic and political power they represent—by urging the U.S. Congress to pass a windfall profits tax. The President of Colombia announced that his country would no longer award new contracts for oil and gas drilling. And Lula da Silva, newly elected President of Brazil, has begun the process of reversing the destruction of the Amazon carried out by his predecessor.

The struggle continues. ♦

## Two Scholarships Available!

**Open to College Juniors, Seniors, or Grad Students**

**We are very happy to offer two \$1,000 college scholarships:**

Each will be awarded to a different **college junior, senior, or graduate student** who is taking courses to prepare for a degree in an **area of biological or environmental science.**

### Areas of Study Include:

- Sustainable Energy ▪ Renewable Energy ▪ Wildlife Management ▪ Forestry ▪ Animal Behavior ▪ Ecology ▪ Marine Biology ▪ Oceanography ▪ Mammalogy ▪ Ornithology ▪ & related fields

### **Jerry & Evelyn Bishop Environmental Scholarship:**

Applicants must be residents of one of the areas listed at [ssaudubon.org/areas-we-serve.asp](http://ssaudubon.org/areas-we-serve.asp) and/or attend a college in Nassau or Suffolk County. Application: [tinyurl.com/34pcabpy](http://tinyurl.com/34pcabpy)

### **Jay Koolpix Environmental Scholarship:**

Applicants must be residents of Nassau County and/or attend a college in Nassau or Suffolk County. Application: [tinyurl.com/57p4nwep](http://tinyurl.com/57p4nwep)

**Application Deadline:**  
May 31, 2023

**Submit Your Application:**  
Choose one method:

Email Betsy Gulotta:  
[eagulotta@optonline.net](mailto:eagulotta@optonline.net)  
Email Betty Borowsky:  
[bborow@optonline.net](mailto:bborow@optonline.net)  
Or mail a hard copy to Betsy Gulotta:  
2 Anding Ave, Merrick, NY 11566. ♦

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# Through Guy's Eyes

by Guy Jacob

## Oh, Deer! Impacts & Public Safety



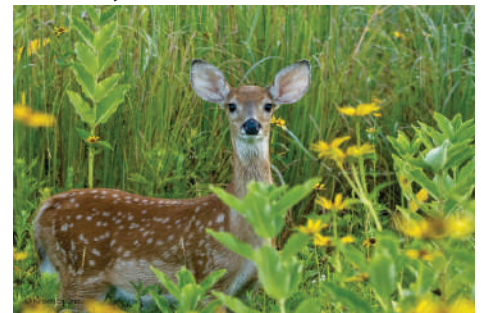
Guy Jacob

People often have strong feelings for or against hunting deer and other animals, and there are relevant arguments that can be made on either side of the issue.

However, the deer population on Long Island is increasing in Suffolk and migrating into Nassau, and there are increasing calls by *Newsday*, the NYSDEC, farmers, and hunters to expand the season and locations where hunting is allowed.

Currently bow and rifle hunting ends on January 31 in Suffolk and is not allowed in Nassau. For the safety of everyone in your party, when planning an outing to any public park or forest from October through January, check online or call the park's governing body to make sure the land you plan to visit does not allow hunting during these months. In some locations, signs are posted that prohibit hikers, birders, cyclists, and runners from entering trails during hunting season, but don't wait till you arrive to find out or risk missing a posting.

Population densities of all species are balanced and kept in check through normal predator-prey relationships. Our deer problem is a direct result of our eliminating that relationship by extirpating all large predators from Long Island. If a sizable coyote population were to take hold here, the problem might be mitigated in the future. But hunters have and will continue to play an important role as surrogate predators.



White-tailed Fawn by Kristin Spann

While hunting can be a public safety risk, our largest risk is animal-related traffic accidents. In 2021, Suffolk County ranked highest in NYS in this category, mostly involving deer: 1,368 accidents were reported, an increase of 20% since 2018.

Moreover, deer are wreaking havoc on our farms and forests. In summer, deer eat green twigs, shoots, buds, and leaves. During winter, deer rely primarily on woody and evergreen vegetation (woody browse). Consequently, our woodlands and agricultural lands are suffering from their overpopulation.

Feeding deer is illegal in New York State. It's a mistaken kindness and we can do our part by never feeding them. Besides contributing to the spread of disease, inflating deer densities, and engendering malnutrition, feeding deer encourages them to lose their fear of humans, which could increase risks for more vehicular accidents. ♦

READ MORE ABOUT IT

**LI Public Hunting Areas Map:** [dec.ny.gov/outdoor/40399.html](http://dec.ny.gov/outdoor/40399.html)

**Hunting on LI:** [dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8373.html](http://dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8373.html)

**Prohibition of Feeding Deer:** [dec.ny.gov/animals/7197.html](http://dec.ny.gov/animals/7197.html)



# Going Native: Spring Clean-Up

by Betty Borowsky & Louise DeCesare

## Hempstead Plains



Betty Borowsky

South Shore Audubon Society maintains a Grasslands Demonstration Garden in front of the Hempstead Plains Educational Center. The garden has a variety of plants native to the Hempstead Plains, and is designed to encourage visitors to consider planting native species in their own gardens.

The Garden at the Plains is very different from the one at Tackapausha because their environments are so different. Volunteers will be able to examine native tall grasses in early spring—which is much more challenging than in the fall. The grasses and forbs—plants with broad leaves, as opposed to blades—tend to be less showy than the plants that can grow in wetter soil, but they are quite beautiful nevertheless.

**The cleanup will be on a Thursday afternoon in early April**, but the specific date has not been set as we go to press, as various other activities are scheduled for the Plains for about that time as well.

If you are interested, please call Betty Borowsky, at (516) 764-3596, or send an email to: bborow@optonline.net. That way I can keep you apprised as April approaches. I am sure you will enjoy the experience, and we sure can use your help. ♦

## Tackapausha



Louise DeCesare

Our work in the Tackapausha Native Garden is about to begin for spring cleaning. While the daffodils are starting to come up, the rest of the garden is rather barren with a lot of dead growth left over winter for the birds and other wildlife.

We will begin this season by cutting back dead growth and removing some leaf litter. All are invited to join in.

Our gardening schedule for the season is the **first Saturday of each month from 10 AM–Noon, and the third Thursday of the month, from 3 PM–5 PM.**

We hope you will consider volunteering. All skill levels are welcome.

For information, contact Louise DeCesare at Lmdecasare128@gmail.com or (917) 548-6974. ♦



Spring Daffodils by Louise DeCesare

### The Wise Owl: It's About the Journey

Courtesy Danielle Scoblete



Wise Owl

Audubon recently launched the **Bird Migration Explorer**, our guide to the heroic annual journeys made by over 450 bird species, and the challenges they face along the way.

To learn more about a species, the migratory birds at a specific location, or a conservation challenge birds face, visit [explorer.audubon.org](http://explorer.audubon.org).

The Explorer shows that 191 bird species face challenges in southern Nassau County, primarily from non-native plants, outdoor cats, and building collisions. By making our homes, yards, businesses, and green spaces bird-friendly, we can help birds throughout the year. ♦

### You Can Say That Again!

*One swallow does not  
make a summer,  
but one skein of geese,  
cleaving the murk of  
March thaw,  
is the Spring.*

—Aldo Leopold

### Thank You, Donors!

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- Mike Zito, Recording Sec'y: 507-9419
- Janice Basilicata, Corresponding Sec'y: 546-0275
- Betty Belford: 385-1759
- Bill Belford, Information & Research: 385-1759
- Betty Borowsky, Education: 764-3596
- Chris Braut: 631-834-6070
- Gail Brown, Hospitality: 608-1446
- Jim Brown, Conservation Co-Chair: 608-1446
- Bill Clifford: 631-991-7989
- Russ Comeau, Social Media: 928-614-9186
- Louise DeCesare, Native Plants: 917-548-6974
- Betsy Gulotta, College Scholarships: 546-8841
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- Linda Ilan, Programs: 935-1268
- Guy Jacob, Conservation Co-Chair: 312-3348
- Jay Koolpix: NaturePhotography7@gmail.com
- Richard Kopsco: 825-6792
- Wendy Murbach, Membership: 546-6303
- Dolores Rogers, Welcoming: 426-9012

### 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.**

→ **All memberships expire in September.** ←

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