



THE *OSPREY*

March/April 2017 — Vol. XLII, No. 2



Snowy Owls

ONE OF OUR FAVORITE WINTER VISITORS

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Grace Scalzo

Every year, a few of these glorious birds show up on our Long Island beaches to spend the winter. Some winters are called “irruption years” and more than the usual few are around. Photographers, birders, and casual beach-goers are attracted to them, probably more than any other species. What brings them here in the first place and exactly what fuels our fascination with this species? I have heard several theories regarding the cause of “irruption years”. The prevailing thoughts are that a good season of lemmings, their primary food source on the Arctic breeding grounds, has resulted in an abundance of young owls, who then find their way south for the winter to find food.

Whatever brings them here, they fascinate and attract us like no other species. The Harry Potter series made them popular and recognizable, but even before this story, there is something about them that draws our attention. Many are quite stoic, and when resting, they sometimes allow a reasonably close approach if done carefully and quietly.

They are strikingly beautiful and somewhat mysterious. The wonderfully produced show by “Nature” on PBS caught many viewers’ attention, especially as the young were shown growing, learning to forage and fly in the Arctic.

Unfortunately, this popularity has led to trouble for them. Owls need to rest and while they will hunt during the day if necessary, mostly they hunt at dusk and

dawn. When crowds of people gather around them to photograph, observe, etc., it causes them to be disturbed, sometimes even to fly. I have seen people

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The President's Corner

What will 2017 Bring?

Byron Young

As I look out my window at the gray sky with the wind rattling the bare tree branches in the yard it does not seem possible that Spring is only a few weeks away. The winter birds are fighting with the squirrels for birdseed. The squirrels didn't get the memo about sharing with the birds.

Pretty soon our winter birds will feel the urge to head north. The Snowy Owls will return to their summer homes on the Canadian tundra followed by the flocks of geese, ducks and finally the shorebirds. We will be heartened by the return of the Red-winged Blackbirds, Robins, Grackles, and the joyous sounds of birds welcoming the lengthening days and the warmer temperatures.

We all look forward to the coming year for the return of our feathered friends in hopes of finding a new life bird or two. More importantly discovering anew those old friends that return each year to brighten our birding trips. ELIAS has many birding trips in the planning stages for 2017. Please consider joining us on one. You can find a listing of upcoming bird walks in your *Osprey*. If anyone has a suggestion for new locations for one of our bird walks please feel free to pass it along.

2017 will again see us participate in Earth Day with the Quogue Wildlife Refuge and other partners in April. Watch for the announcements and if so moved please step up and help staff our booth for a portion of the day or help lead a bird walks around the Wildlife Refuge.

Members will continue to maintain and monitor the Bluebird trails at Sandy Pond Golf Course and Indian Island Golf Course. In addition, we will be working with the Town of Brookhaven as they consider setting up a Bluebird Trail in the Moriches Area.

Our Annual Dinner Committee will begin preparations for our October Annual Dinner in the not to distant future. They have their work cut out for them to keep up the high standards of success that

they have achieved over the past several years. I have no doubt that they will come up with another successful program and dinner location. Here again if anyone has any suggestions for a speaker or the dinner location please pass it along to one of our Board Members at a monthly meeting or simply drop us a note with your suggestion.

ELIAS Board members will be attending a number of local meetings over the course of the year. The first one each year is Senator LaValle's Environmental Round Table where we get to hear about the environmental concerns of East End Environmental Groups and what legislation the Senator and our Assemblymen are proposing. We will meeting with the other Long Island Audubon Chapters a couple of times this year to jointly discuss issues of concern to the Chapters and update each other on Chapter activities.

New York Audubon holds a couple of Statewide Audubon Chapter meetings

and will be sending along Chapter alerts on various State and Federal activities that we might be concerned about. On the local front we will continue our involvement with the EPCAL Property development, the North Fork Preserve Development and Plum Island. We will try to keep members up-to-date concerning these projects and others with articles in *The Osprey* or through our website.

I suspect that there could be a number of National environmental issues that we as a Chapter might want to weigh in on. As issues arise we will discuss them at our monthly meetings or in *The Osprey*. The ELIAS Board will take actions as necessary to respond to time sensitive issues and then report on them if necessary.

Finally, lets not forget to get outside and take a walk. The birds are preparing to return and will be looking for us to greet them.

Good Birding! 



Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 22nd, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Come and celebrate nature and our lovely planet at the Refuge during this all-day affair! The day will include guided Birding Walks by ELIAS, live animal presentations, crafts, environmental exhibitors, and self-guided kayaking and canoeing on Old Ice Pond. This celebration is offered by Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, Westhampton Beach Earth Day, & Quogue Wildlife Refuge. A great day for all ages! Check the QWR website for schedule of events. No reservations necessary. Rain or shine.

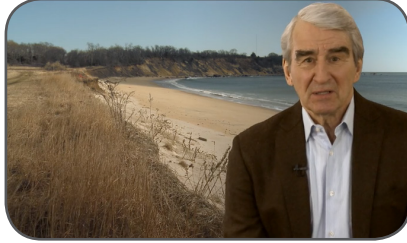
Speakers at ELIAS Meetings

Monday, March 6, 2017, at 7:15 pm

Campaign to Preserve Plum Island

Louise Harrison

Come see a short documentary film “Conservation on a Precious Island,” featuring Academy Award-nominee Sam Waterston, followed by a “virtual tour” of Plum Island, and learn the latest news on the Preserve Plum Island Coalition campaign. Learn how you can join the fight to protect Plum Island from commercial development.




Louise Harrison is Save the Sound’s New York outreach coordinator for the Plum Island campaign. She is a conservation biologist who has served on Long Island in federal, New York State, and Suffolk County agencies as well as in leadership and consulting positions for not-for-profit environmental organizations. She has led and advised open space preservation efforts and co-chaired a broad community movement that saved Stony Brook’s last forest. She was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service liaison to the Long Island Sound Study, where she concentrated on stewardship of Long Island Sound’s ecosystems, habitat restoration projects, and invasive species control. She has extensive field experience working in Long Island’s coastal communities and natural ecosystems, from the boroughs of New York City to the tips of the East End and has received numerous awards for open space preservation efforts. Louise lives and works in Southold

Monday, April 3, 2017, at 7:15 pm

The Long Journey Home: Nichols’ Eaglet

MaryLaura Lamont

In 2015, after an absence of about 80 years, American Bald Eagles have returned as nesters to the old homestead known as the Nichol’s Estate in Mastic. It is known today as the William Floyd Estate. This is the story of those Eagles and their chicks and their success, after such a long journey home!

MaryLaura Lamont is a ranger at the William Floyd Estate and spent a good deal of time observing the Eagles. 



STEVE SCHWARTZ

Winter Walks

Sally Newbert

A stop at Ditch Plains during the Montauk walk gave us good looks at Purple Sandpipers, and Bonaparte’s Gulls along with Common Loons, Eiders and a Horned Grebe.



At Swan Lake Preserve during the Lakes Around Patchogue walk there were Green-winged Teal, and Ruddy Duck at the Preserve and a view of 2 Bald Eagles soaring above Swan Lake.





Snowy Owls

ONE OF OUR FAVORITE WINTER VISITORS

Continued from page 1

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literally chasing them down the beach for a photograph. That is not fair as it causes the owls to spend energy unnecessarily. Also a picture of a bird flying away from you is never pleasing...it just reveals poor field techniques that caused him to fly.

Another sadly common practice in other places, but thankfully rarely seen here on Long Island is that of "baiting". This is when photographers bring live mice, purchased from a pet store, and feed the owls simply to obtain a photograph. While some might argue that this actually helps the owls by providing food, it does not. It habituates them to humans, which in turn can lead to dependence, can bring them unnaturally close to humans, and lead to vehicle collision injuries. The feeding of an unnatural food source is rarely good for a species. They don't need this food as they are quite capable of finding rabbits, ducks, voles, etc, all on their own. Sometimes stashing food for a later meal.

So how can we enjoy these beautiful creatures responsibly? Here are some thoughts.

✎ If you are fortunate enough to find one, be thoughtful in your approach. Slow down, control your excitement, and take literally a step at a time. Stay low and go slow. Use a long focal length to obtain your photos and crop. Unless you are

making a huge print, with today's modern cameras you will have enough pixels to have a fine image for your files, even with a large crop.

✎ If you have the option, try looking for them during the weekdays when there are less people around.

✎ On the Long Island Wildlife Photography page on Facebook, a strict policy of "no locations" and "no pictures of owls" is in place. This was implemented

to keep some of the pressure off the birds. If you find an owl, consider carefully who you share the location with. Consider whether posting your photos on social media is in the owl's best interest and certainly keep location private.

✎ Keep a respectable distance. It is very hard to contain your excitement. We all have made field mistakes. Try and learn from them. Some birds are tolerant. The owl on page 1 was sitting on the snow fence while a dredging crew was working with heavy material and machines, the bird couldn't have cared less.

✎ If you see a crowd around an owl, don't be part of the problem. Come back another day. Mother Nature just might reward you.

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Grace Scalzo, is a wildlife photographer, an administrator for the Long Island Wildlife Photography page on Facebook and gives classes on wildlife photography.

This article also appeared in the blog: Fire Island and Beyond.

All the photos here were taken with a very long lens and heavily cropped. In most cases Grace was alone or with one other person and owl was not disturbed and was still in place when she left. ✎



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Early Spring Bird Walks

Saturday, March 4, 2017 – Meet at 8 am

Morton Wildlife Refuge

Eileen Schwinn

A big hit and a great way to enjoy the last bit of freezing cold winter weather!! We will meet at the Morton Wildlife Refuge parking lot at 8 am, and walk approximately 2 miles on this hike. Not



only do the birds eat right out of your hand the minute you get out of your car, but there are frequently pockets of over-wintering birds along the way. Dress warmly and appropriately. Bird seed will be provided. Contact Eileen Schwinn, beachmed@optonline.net for more information, and at 516-662-7751 the day of the trip.

Saturday, April 8 – Meet at 8:30 am

North Fork Preserve

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

North Fork Preserve is in Jamesport. It is now clearly marked with a sign on Sound Avenue, just east of Church Lane. Follow the long, paved driveway to the parking area by the former hunting lodge. Vernal ponds, meadows and wooded areas attract a variety of visiting migrants and nesting warblers, in addition to raptors, and thrushes. Each day is different during migration season. Dress for ticks, however, we will be on mowed paths for most of the walk.



Saturday, May 13 – Meet at 9 am

William Floyd Estate

**Leader: MaryLaura Lamont
(Estate phone 631-399-2030)**

MaryLaura will be leading this walk in celebration of **INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY**. The Estate has a variety of habitats: woods, fields, creeks and marshes that offer a host of choices for the birds. They tend to settle in for a day or two to rest and feed on their migration north. We hope to catch a glimpse of various migrating birds – and maybe a few surprises. Cleared pathways are the majority of walking areas for us, but ticks may be anywhere on Long Island – and this is no exception!

The Main Entrance Gate is at 245 Park Drive, in Mastic Beach proceed to the parking area.

Wednesday, May 17 Meet at 8 am

Hunters Garden, Eastport

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Located on the west side of Route 51 in Northampton (border of Brookhaven and Southampton Townships, just north of Sunrise Highway), Hunters Garden is a DEC managed area which is truly unique. Vernal ponds and dirt trails lead us in a rather hilly section of the South Shore. Cuckoo, Scarlet Tanager, Vireos, Wood and Hermit Thrush, Gnatcatchers, as well as many warblers, are likely to be seen. Dress for ticks, and bring a snack/water. We will meet at the clearing at the end of the dirt road (which will have an open yellow gate), approximately one mile from the Route 51 "entrance"

Saturday, May 20 - Meet at 9 am

Hallockville & Hallock State Park

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

The Hallockville Farm Museum and State Park is located at 163 Sound Ave, in Riverhead. During peak migration, there is a good chance to see thrushes, vireos, warblers and more. We will walk past farm fields into the woods leading up to views of Long Island Sound. There is a \$6 per person charge for this walk, which benefits the Hallockville Farm Museum Educational Program. Please call the Museum for information and a for a reservation at 631-298-5292

Additional trips will be scheduled for May. There will be more information in the next Osprey.

They may be lost, but birders were happy to find them!

Sally Newbert

Birding around Eastern Long Island has been pretty good this winter. Several species were worth making the extra effort to see and make your bird list that much more exciting. Among the rarities that showed up this winter was a Sandhill Crane. It has been hanging out near a pond and in a farm field in Wainscott. Usually when you see them, they are in large flocks in Upstate NY and are famous for the enormous numbers that can be seen on the Platte River in Nebraska, but to find one here on LI is pretty rare. Hopefully, this one will find its way to their breeding grounds are in central Canada.

Another rarity that has been extremely cooperative and has stayed most of the winter on North Sea Drive, near Hortons Point Lighthouse is a Townsend's Solitaire. To see this bird, is, well, not that special. It looks like a slim Mourning Dove with different markings. Note the eye ring and white patch on the side. The question is what is it doing here? This is a West Coast bird. When you look at the maps in the bird guides you will see they should be no where near here.

The one thing I noticed about both the Sandhill Crane and the Townsend's Solitaire is that they both found habitat that matches the habitats that are described in the birding guides. This Sandhill Crane has access to a pond with reeds to hide in and a farm field with corn stalks to feed in. The Solitaire (it is alone, as is suggested by its name) has surrounded itself with scrubby, scattered trees, and most importantly a large Juniper bush.

There was and perhaps still is a Common Moorhen on Cooper's Neck Pond in Southampton, found by Tom Moran just before the Christmas Bird Count. A near relative of the Coot, it was found in a group of Coot. When I was looking for it was on the south-east side of the pond and well hidden.

Ross's Geese seemed to make an appearance in several places, including the traffic circle by Robert Moses where they stood out nicely as they fed among

the Canada Geese. They are a rare visitor here and spend most of their time in the middle of the country and breed in Canada.

The Rufous Hummingbirds you read about in our last issue are still in Aquabogue and look like they are coming into their breeding plumage.

Other interesting sightings this winter include two Tundra Swans in Lake Ronkonakoma. If you are there check for the Common Mergansers also, a Black Guillemot, usually a northern bird was spotted in Lake Montauk.

To quote Eileen Schwinn "It's been a treat birding around these parts lately!!!"

Now, whose ready for Spring? 🦋



SALLY NEWBERT



BYRON YOUNG

(top) The Sandhill Crane standing tall in Wainscott.

(left) The Townsend's Solitaire perched.

(below) Ross's Geese at Robert Moses State Park.



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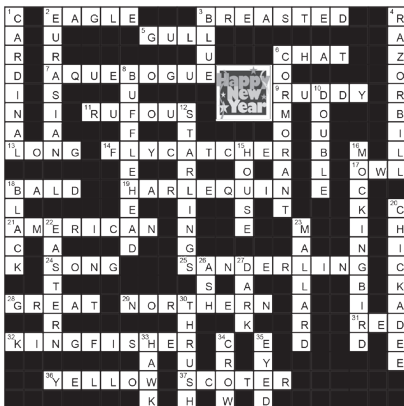
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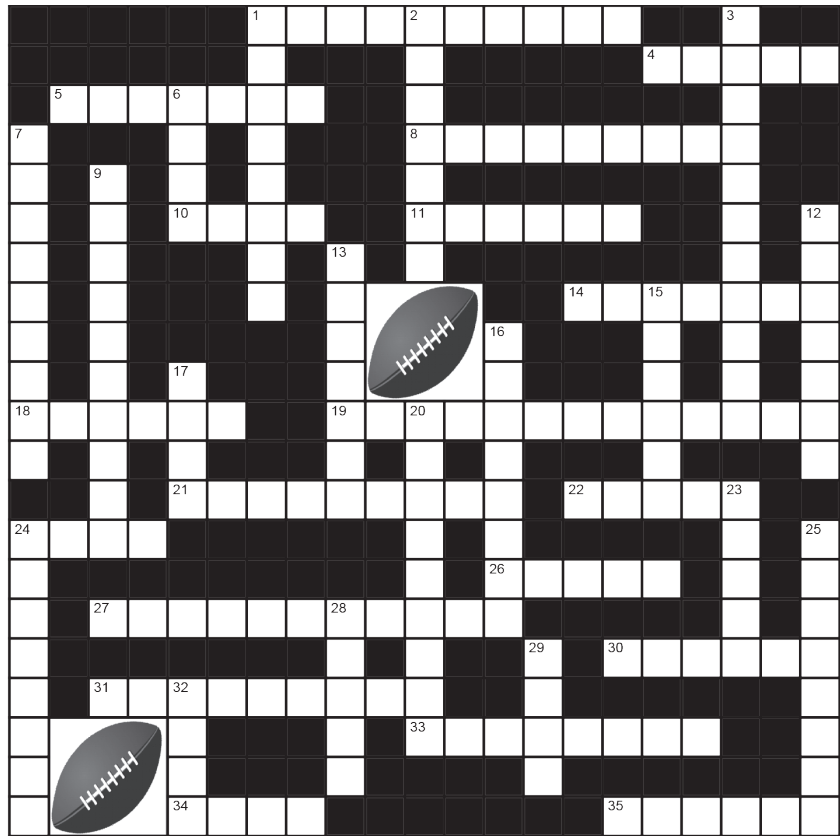
CORRECTION:

The Hummingbird that appeared as the picture for June on our calendar should have been identified as a Rufous Hummingbird, not a Ruby-throated.

Answers to last issue's puzzle Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer... by Tom Moran



Super Bowl Birds Tom Moran



Across

- 1 Belted _____, female is more colorful
- 4 Small mostly black-necked goose, here only in the winter
- 5 Boat-tailed or Common blackbird
- 8 Boreal if you're birding in the Daks
- 10 Winter _____ passé now that it's spring?
- 11 Philadelphia _____, lost to New England Patriots in the 2005 Super Bowl
- 14 American _____, small falcon
- 18 Black or Yellow-billed
- 19 American _____, shorebird with flamboyant red bill
- 21 _____ Solitaire, rare sighting on the North Fork this winter
- 22 Great-blue _____
- 24 Streamlined water birds, that unlike gulls, don't swim (singular)
- 26 Great or Snowy _____
- 27 To Kill a _____
- 30 _____-blue Heron, an unusual sighting at Cupsogue and Smith Point Marina last year
- 31 Ruddy _____
- 33 American _____, unlike Old World ones, the New World ones are warblers, the color is in the wing and tail
- 34 Is it a Red-throat or Common?
- 35 _____ Duck, seen at Swan Lake, Patchogue this winter

Down

- 1 Entertaining broken wing display
- 2 Northern _____, type of woodpecker
- 3 Louisiana has the longer, more pronounced eyebrow stripe
- 6 Often seen mobbing Red-tailed Hawks
- 7 American _____, a common local bird... not a mallard (2 words)
- 9 Ash-throated _____, seen at Fort Hill Cemetery, Montauk last year
- 12 Turkey or Black
- 13 Lost to New England Patriots in 2017 Super Bowl
- 15 Black, White-winged or Surf _____
- 16 White or Red-_____ Nuthatch
- 17 American _____, runs on water to take flight
- 20 Hmmm, Solitary or Spotted _____
- 23 Black or Yellow-crowned _____ Heron
- 24 Yellow-_____ Warbler
- 25 Eastern _____, NYS bird
- 28 Barnacle and Pink-footed were seen at Belmont Lake SP this winter, but not by me despite 4 tries?!
- 29 _____'s Gull seen in the Daks, and the Goose at Robert Moses tower among other places this winter
- 32 Clapper or Virginia

The 69th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association

Bob Adamo

The 69th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association was held on Sept. 9-11, 2016 at the Riverview Holiday Inn, situated along side the Chemung River, in Elmira, NY, and hosted by the Chemung Valley Audubon Society. Notable in this city's long past, was it's hosting of the over 20 summer vacations of Mark Twain, during which he penned many of his renowned books, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Elmira is also the author's final resting place.

Friday afternoon's field trip kicked off the weekend's schedule, and it sure set the bar quite high for the meeting's remaining activities... when can you remember being led on a field trip by John James Audubon himself! During this walk along the Chemung River, he not only pointed out the abundant bird life, i.e., Bald Eagle, Caspian Tern, etc., but stopped to explain the significance of the larger-than-life, bronze sculpture of a Labrador Duck, found along the river! It was positively thrilling to have actor Brian "Fox" Ellis, not only dressed-up as John J. Audubon, but staying in character throughout the walk while using long-ago references and nuances. Adding to this amusing and quaint history lesson, was a fellow "field tripper" (Ms. Kellie Higgins, an Elmira resident and Education Coordinator for the Chemung County Historical Society) who gave us a taste of the talk she would be presenting

at the Paper Sessions on Saturday. It seems that Elmira's claim to have been where the last Labrador Duck was killed (making the species extinct) is somewhat suspect, but the telling of the story was delightful!

Friday evening's schedule started off with a yummy buffet, followed by a second encounter with John J. Audubon. It ended with two workshops that ran concurrently. The first, presented by Bob Spahn, dealt with the need for developing Regional Editors for *The Kingbird*, and also how to obtain information from ebird and add it to the regions submitted data to develop concise reports.

The second was by Gregory Budney of Cornell's Lab of Ornithology. It involved showing and commenting on the equipment used today to record bird sounds. He gave tips on some of the new equipment usage and how to contribute the recordings to the Lab's Macaulay Library.

There were 11 field trips offered throughout the weekend, with Friday's Chemung River walk being the only one I could make. On Sunday, field trips were set up so attendees could go on a field trip in the direction they would take to get home. A total of 122 bird species was recorded during this weekend.

Next year will be NYOSA's 70th Annual Meeting. It will be held on November 10-12, 2017 in Buffalo and hosted by The Buffalo Ornithological Society.

The delegates meeting, aka the business meeting, took place on Saturday morning. President Joan Collins gave an overview of NYOSA's activities since the last annual meeting. Next was Andy Mason's Treasurer's Report covering 12/31/14-12/31/15, followed by Bill Ostrander, chair of the Awards Committee, who announced the following award recipients:

The Stoner Award, given to one or more, student(s) to help finance their attendance at the Annual Meeting, was presented to Kai Victor. He is a very active young man, who, among his many activities involving the natural world, is President of the New York State Young Birders Club, and worked with biologist Eric Powers to help maintain Long Island's Northern Bobwhite population.

The Emanuel Levine Award, presented to the author of the article judged to be the best submitted for publication in *The Kingbird*, was awarded to Kathy Schneider, for "The Case for Adding Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) to the Checklist of the Birds of New York State.

Irving Cantor was presented **The President's Award** for his long service as a member, and Chairperson of the Auditing Committee.

Certificates of Appreciation
Almost every year NYSOA has the pleasure of awarding Certificates of Appreciation to people who have

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extended their hospitality to the birding community, either by hosting rare birds, or by convincing potential hosts to welcome responsible birders on to their property. This year Certificates were given to:

John & Marilyn Paarlberg of Loudonville, for hosting a Harris's Sparrow, while **Rich Guthrie** received his for being instrumental in getting the Paarlbergs to share their good fortune with the extended birding world.

The Prospect Park Alliance in Brooklyn received a Certificate for hosting a Painted Bunting, with **Rob Bate** also being feted for his efforts to insure the continued viewing of this rare bird, without damage to the park's plantings. **Laurie La Fond** was awarded a Certificate for her continuing work to support and advance the preservation of the Washington County Grasslands.

Conservation Committee

Andy Mason, the treasurer, wears another hat as the Conservation Committee Chair. Speaking as such, he discussed some of their ongoing interests:

- 1) Participation in the Plum Island Coalition
- 2) Involvement with the Calverton Grasslands preservation effort
- 3) Presented comments on the Environmental Assessment for the restoration of the West Pond at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
- 4) Submitted support for the proposed Great Thicket NW.R.
- 5) Met with the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation to "weigh-in" on the negative impact of lead ammunition on the state's wildlife.

Yearly Listing Project

Since 1992 NYSOA has sponsored a "County and State Yearly Listing Project", whereby members may submit bird totals for any species seen/heard within the states ten NYSOA bird regions and/or the 62 counties in which they have birded. Carena Pooth's report on these submissions contain some interesting items:

- 1) There were 103 reports submitted in 2015 – down from 114 in 2014.
- 2) Paul Buckley continues to lead the state in total species, with 446.
- 3) Anthony Collerton continues to have the highest yearly total, with 361 species.

4) A new birding zone was created this year for Pelagic species. Dave Klauber took first place among the 16 participants, with a high total of 80 species.

5) All 62 of our counties were listed by 15 observers. Bill Cook & Dave Klauber got at least 50 birds in every last one of them!

6) Four participants reported getting at least 100 species in all of our state's 10 birding regions.

7) The NYSYBC was represented by 2 participants, both under 18 years of age.

The Marketing, Publicity & Field Trip Committee

The Marketing, Publicity & Field Trip Committee has been busy this past year, even giving every Annual Meeting attendee a "spiffy" NYSOA water bottle!

In order to help publicize the ongoing work our organization does throughout the year, the creation of a list of media outlets and email addresses was cultivated in the hope of possibly growing our membership base. The two field trips organized by this committee (a winter weekend in the Adirondacks, and a spring weekend at the Derby Hill Hawk Watch west of Oswego, NY) were both heavily attended and greatly enjoyed!

The Membership Committee

The Membership Committee Report indicated a slight increase during 2016, with 497 individual members, 42 life members and 42 club & organization members.

The NYS Avian Records Committee

The New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) has added six new species to the NYS. Bird List, bringing the total to 490. The additions are: Willow Ptarmigan; Fea's Petrel; Neotropic Cormorant; Elegant Tern; Couch's Kingbird and Kirtland's Warbler.

NYS Young Birders Club

One of Carena Pooth's many hats is that of Adult Chair to the NYSYBC. This year's report, once again is highlighted by the continued rise in most categories of membership. The Youth contingent (ages 10-19) 56, up from 52 in 2015. The Supporting Adults (including 8 former youth members) 42, up from 40 a year ago. The Partner Organizations, however, was down one from last year, to 21. Six of this group has been part of the YBC

for all the 10 years of its existence... with ELIAS being part of this loyal group! This year's young birders group is made up of 44 boys & 12 girls, with an average age of 14.6 years. They went on eleven field trips this past year, visiting many of NYSOA's 10 birding regions.

NYSOA Organizational Handbook

Mike De Sha's ongoing update of our Organizational Handbook (which defines the responsibilities of our leadership positions) has greatly helped the process which culminates with the installation of new members to our Board of Directors and various committees.

Publications

NYSOA's publications continue to be timely, factual and exciting! Our journal, *The Kingbird* is published 4 times a year, under Shai Mitra, Editor and Pat Lindsay, Managing Editor, with Bob Spahn providing help to the Regional Editors, as needed. Joan Collins, our busy President, is also Editor of *NY Birders*, NYSOA's newsletter, that is also published quarterly. It is a much appreciated potpourri of birding topics, which can range, as in the case of the April 2016 edition, from an article on a NYSOA sponsored field trip in the Adirondacks, to a poem about a bird species, that just happened to be seen on that rewarding weekend! The 23 species recorded by the 21 participants during Jan.30-31, included Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee and Common Raven, with the latter species being the subject of the afore mentioned poem. It's title is "Raven with Crows", was written by Mary Oliver, and well-worth reading!

Research Committee

NYSOA's efforts regarding the purposed 3rd NYS. Bird Atlas Project, NY eBird, and the NYS Waterfowl Count are directed by it's Research Committee, chaired by Kevin Griffith. The Atlas Committee has already met a number of times at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology to plan for this project, set to begin in 2020. If it comes to fruition, NY will be the third state in the U.S.A. to use eBird as a portal for Atlas data.

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Report

The Annual Report of the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation was presented by Mike Wasilco. The subjects included:

1) Leadership changes within the organization, ie, Basil Seggos designated as new Commissioner.

2) Partnering on the steering committee for the proposed Third Breeding Bird Atlas Census.

3) Bald Eagle Conservation Plan. The population now numbers at least 200 breeding pairs. Their nests are legally protected by a 300' buffer zone.

4) Combating lead poisoning in raptors. The DEC is advocating the use of non-lead ammunition, by educating hunters.

5) Cormorant control was not conducted this past year.

6) Spruce Grouse re-introduction was carried out in 2016, making it the 4th year into this project designed to restore this species to a level where it becomes a viable, self-sustaining population. During 2015 & 2016, Spruce Grouse (both adults, and broods) were trapped in Maine & Ontario and released in NYS.

7) Piping Plovers returned to breed at Lake Ontario in 2015, while successfully fledgling young, after a hiatus going back over a decade. This species was also documented in 2016, although that report was not ready for this NYSOA meeting.

8) The Grassland Birds Conservation Strategy, developed with DEC, along with Audubon and other partners, is working to develop a strategy to maintain grassland habitat to support those species of birds that depend on it. The current restrictions are not providing adequate measures to curtail the development of this habitat by agricultural interests.

9) The goal for the Wildlife Management

Areas controlled by DEC is to insure that NYS perpetually has a range of all ages of trees on these lands, with young forests making up 10% of that total. Towards this end, DEC is creating Habitat Management Plans to guide the Wildlife Management Areas for the next 10 years. Unfortunately, only 8 of these have completed their H.M.P., as of yet.

Elections

The slate of officers, directors and committee members that was voted on will join current members who choose to stay, are:

President: Joan Collins
Vice-President: Seth Ausubel
Treasurer: Andy Mason
Recording Secretary: John Kent

Board of Directors

Doug Futuyama
Rich Guthrie
Greg Lawrence
Shirley Shaw
Bob Spahn

Nominating Committee

Bob Adamo, Chair
Janet Allison
Dominic Sherony

Auditing Committee

Stephan Chang, Chair
Tom Burke
John Cairns

The Paper Sessions

After lunch, the Paper Session got under way with "Was the Last Labrador Duck Killed in Elmira?" presented by Kelli Huggins, Education Coordinator, Chemung County Historical Society.

The Labrador Duck officially went extinct

in the late 19th century, when one was killed on Long Island in 1875. An intriguing mystery has developed however, with the report of a Labrador Duck being shot in Elmira in 1878. The veracity of this claim remains in doubt, due to the historical evidence available, and to the questionable expertise and character of the main person responsible for the bird's identification, Dr. W. H. Gregg, the local pharmacist and amateur ornithologist. While it is certainly a compelling story, which at times can be humorous (the body of the bird ending up as dinner for a poor family that very day, along with it's head and neck going missing, sometimes afterwards!)... Dr. Gregg did write of the existence and demise of the last Labrador Duck, which was published in *The American Naturalist* in 1879. I am told that a book entitled *Curiosities of Elmira: The Last Labrador Duck, Professor Smokeball, The Great Female Crime Spree and more* will be published by The History Press and available on Amazon by mid-March.

There were 4 additional papers presented, with each one providing identifiable and insightful knowledge on it's subject, while in the case of the last presentation, many cherished memories!

1) Comparative Abundance of Obligate Grassland Breeding Birds on Islands and Mainland Habitats in the St. Lawrence River Corridor by Gregory Lawrence

2) Merlin Nesting in and near Ithaca, NY by John I. Confer, retired Biology Department Ithaca College, Anne B. Clark, Biology Department, Binghamton University, Deborah J. Mahoney and Madeline Ulinsky

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3) Measuring a Site's Importance to Birds
by William Ostrander

4) Maxwell Corydon Wheat, Jr., in
Memoriam by Andy Mason

Saturday Night Presentation

The Saturday night cocktail party provided opportunities to either make, or refresh personal friendships. Dinner was followed by the award presentations.

Richard (Rob) Bierregaard was our Banquet Speaker. Dr. Bierregaard's program "Tracking Ospreys in the Age of Silicon: Migration, Ecology, and Conservation", was the latest in a long line of outstanding programs, designed to educate and excite an audience, made up mostly of experienced birders! Dr. Bierregaard is a research associate of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, where he focuses on the conservation and ecology of raptors and Neotropical birds. His presentation highlighted his work tagging Ospreys since 2000 in the eastern United States. During that time he has fitted 52 juvenile and 43 adult Ospreys with satellite transmitters, which have led to many useful discoveries. His team's work (first to collect an ample amount of information on migrating juveniles) has led to surprising data regarding the dispersal and migration of these inexperienced travelers, including their subsequent returns. As they leave where they were born for the very first time, all of their meandering starts and stops are captured by the electronic "backpacks" they are carrying. This technology has also helped document the hunting behaviors of adult males, as they seek to feed their families. Being able to view a sizable amount of this data for both juvenile and adult birds, through the intricate mapping of their movements was a very impressive exercise in understanding bird behavior, as they meet the challenges of their world.

NYSOA's state-wide membership has benefited from the hard work and commitment of a small part of their organization — in this case, the members of the Chemung Valley Audubon Society — who did a great job! 🐦



Friday and Saturday, March 24-25, 2017 at Brookhaven National Lab

TOPICS & PRESENTERS

Horseshoe Crabs: Global Conservation Icon in Dire Straits.

John T. Tanacredi, Ph.D., Dept. of Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Studies, and Director of CERCOM, Molloy College

Freshwater Fishes of Long Island:

What are they and where did they come from?

Chart Guthrie, Regional Fisheries Manager, NYSDEC, Stony Brook.

Restoring Tributaries and River Herring on Long Island

Enrico Nardone, Esq., Executive Director, Seatuck Environmental Association

Herpetofauna of the Northeast Coastal Region

Alvin Breisch, Roosevelt Wild Life Station, College of Environmental Science & Forestry, Syracuse

What's so special about the Long Island Dwarf Pine Plains?

Jessica Gurevitch, Ph.D., Department of Ecology and Evolution, Stony Brook

The American beachgrass microbiome: spying on private conversations underground.

Javier A. Izquierdo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Hofstra

Plankton blooms, decreasing temperatures and recent fishkills: is there a connection?

Sixto Portilla, The Graduate Center, CUNY

What Every Naturalist Should Know About the Geologic History and Glacial Geomorphology of Long Island

Dr. J. Bret Bennington, Dept. of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability, Hofstra

From Plankton to Whales: Why our local waters are worth protecting.

Christopher Paparo, Marine Sciences Center Manager, Stony Brook University

Bluefin Tuna Ecology and Management

Bradley S. McHale, Northeast Branch Chief, National Marine Fisheries Service

Wicked Neat; the Natural History of Vernal Pools.

Matthew R. Burne, Conservation Director, Walden Woods Project

Long Island's Role in the Comeback of the Great White Shark.

Tobey H. Curtis, NOAA – National Marine Fisheries Service and UMASS– Dartmouth

Salt Marshes: A Natural and Unnatural History

Judith S. Weis, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Rutgers University

Plum Island: Biological Linchpin of an Archipelago

Louise Harrison, New York Outreach Coordinator, Plum Island Campaign, Save the Sound

To Register - go to

http://longislandnature.org/2017_conference/2017_registration.shtml

The cost is \$40 for an individual, \$36 for a member of Long Island Nature Organization, and \$25 for a student. 🐦

The **OSPREY**

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