



# THE OSPREY

January/February 2016 — Vol. XLI, No. 1



*Gentoo Penguins returning from the ocean*

## Want to learn more about penguins and other critters that call The Falklands home?

**A**RDITH BONDI has made several trips to South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, one with an extension to Chile. Penguins, her favorite birds, aren't always easy to access. Some require a few flights to out-of-the-way places; others require some pretty rough boat trips or climbing rocks. One always hopes that the weather cooperates. Ardith will join us on February 1 for the first meeting of year. It is at 7:15 at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Ardith's talk will include photos of seven species of penguin, some very unusual ducks, albatross and giant petrels, geese, pipits, wrens, plovers, an owl, other birds and a few mammals. In addition, it will include some special captures of behaviors, the reward for spending hours observing bird colonies.

Ardith Bondi lives in Manhattan. She earned a PhD in pharmacology from Columbia University and continued medical research at New York University Medical Center and at The Rockefeller University before leaving research to perform as



*Marcaroni Penguin*

a flutist. After years of performing and teaching, she still plays in the Centre Symphony in Manhattan, and photographs birds near home and in many other interesting places. 🐦



## Relocation for Bluebirds!

### Gigi Spates Bluebird Restoration Chair

**F**OR many years Eastern Long Island Audubon Society has monitored Bluebird nest box trails in several locations. The nest box trails that are still active are both on local golf courses. There were some trails that had to be abandoned because the landowner was not mowing on a regular basis, leaving our volunteers in danger of tick bites. When these wooden nest boxes, were originally constructed and posted, they were, in many instances, either not placed in the proper micro-habitat of the golf course, or trees and shrubs have grown and expanded and changed the previous habitat. As many of you are aware, different species of birds have evolved to need specific surroundings. In the case of the State Bird of New York, the Eastern Bluebird, it likes a relatively open area with just a few trees and shrubs within reach of the young Bluebirds as they fledge from their nest boxes. The habitat should not be so dense as to be attractive to, for example, a more woodland species like the little brown House Wren.

Many years ago, Evelyn Voulgarelis and I adjusted, where needed, the sites of nest boxes at Suffolk County's Indian Island Golf Course in Riverhead. Now, nearly every year we observe several families of successfully fledged young Bluebirds. Young Tree Swallows is another species that likes relatively open habitat they, too, have fledged from these boxes.

Finally it was time to deal with the fact that no Bluebirds had ever bred in any

*continued on page 6*

## The President's Corner

# Year in Review and Planning for Next Year

Eastern Long Island Audubon Society Chapter had another successful year, hosting numerous bird walks, and 11 monthly meetings, though winter weather got in the way a couple of times. We had a very successful Annual Dinner at The Birchwood in Polish Town in Riverhead, with a great speaker, fabulous food, and great companionship. The Dinner Committee set a new high standard for future Annual Dinners. If I am not mistaken this was one of the best attended Annual Dinners if not the best. Thank you all for your support. The Annual Seed Sale in conjunction with the Quogue Wildlife Refuge was a success as well generating funds to help both groups. We participated in the Annual Earth Day event in April at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge and the weather cooperated this year. We sponsored two kids to attend a DEC camp this past summer and are looking for applicants for 2016. The Chapter has been actively involved in the proposed development plans for the North Fork Preserve and the EPCAL property both important birding and wildlife habitat locations.

We are looking forward to another active year with walks scheduled for every month, Earth Day, the Annual Dinner, the Christmas Bird Count, the Winter Waterfowl count, the Great Back Yard Bird Count, and our own Feeder watch counts. Our monthly meetings begin again in February, and are always the first Monday of the month barring bad weather and

official Holidays. Please join us when you can at one of these events. Our Program Chair does a great job in finding speakers and is always looking for suggestions. In my opinion our two top presentations this year were on Bald Eagles, by Mike Schiabel and Owls by Joe Guinta. Both meetings were very well attended.

Now that the Holiday season is over are you ready to begin the New Year by getting outside looking for birds? It doesn't matter whether it is watching the birds at your feeders, traveling to some far off exotic location to find that elusive life list bird or something in between, the birds await you. Watch *The Osprey* for upcoming birding field trips. Last year we hosted 19 trips around the east end. We attempt to host at least one bird walk each month and in some months more, especially in the Spring with the returning migrants and the warbler migration.

Join us on one of our walks and maybe we will find that elusive life bird. Do any of you have birding goals for 2016? My goals for 2016, maybe even New Year's Resolution of the birding variety is to find 100 species of birds in Suffolk County during the month of January. I borrowed that idea from one of our more active ELIAS birders. It is a fun goal and gets you outside in the winter. Looking back at my birding records, I have failed to achieve that goal in the ten years since I retired and becoming a more active birder. My high January count came in 2013 when I found 82

species in Suffolk County. So it looks like I have my work cut out for me if I am to achieve 100 species for January 2016. I am already planning my strategy considering trips to Montauk, the Lakes of Patchogue, Dune Road, and many of our local State and County Parks. Of course that assumes that the winter weather cooperates. The past couple of winters have not been fit for anything but staying under cover.

Failing to obtain 100 species of birds in January only makes achieving my second goal of identifying 200 species of birds for the year in Suffolk County more challenging. I have come close once in 2013 when I found 195 species. Slipping some the past two years, I need to renew my efforts. These are personal goals. However, there is a bit of a challenge to keep up with other ELIAS birders throughout the year, friendly competition if you will.

Thank you all for your participation during the past year and I look forward to seeing many of you at one or more of our events during 2016. May you all have a great birding year whether it be watching the birds at your feeder or one of the more active pursuits associated with field trips or adding to your life list by finding that rare bird who graces us with its presence.

Happy Birding during the upcoming year. I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. 🐦

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# Whats Happening?

## **ELIAS MEETING**

Monday, February 1, 2016 at 7:15 pm at Quogue Wildlife Refuge

**Learn more about penguins and other critters that call The Falklands home** Ardith Bondi (details on page 1)

## **WINTER FIELD TRIPS**

Saturday, February 6, 2016 at 9:00 am

### **Montauk Point & the Montauk Area**

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

We will meet at the Concession Stand/Restaurant at The Point to look for ducks and alcids, as well as any other birds that might be wintering in the general Montauk area. We will travel to Fort Pond, Camp Hero, and various other "Hot Spots" along The Montauk Trail! Dress for cold, wind and generally nasty weather — it wouldn't be Montauk any other way!! Contact Eileen Schwinn at beachmed@optonline.net for more information, or call the day of the trip if there are any questions: 516-662-7751

Saturday, March 5, 2016 at 8:30 am

### **Morton National Wildlife Refuge**

(meet in the Parking Lot of the Refuge, off Rte 38/Noyack Road), North Sea

Leader: Eileen Schwinn

Whose heart doesn't melt when a tiny little bird lands on your fingertips to grab a bit of bird seed?? Even the most hard-core birder will smile—and maybe even giggle! Join us at a true national treasure, for a re-run of last year's trip to Morton NWR. Generations of birds have become tame enough to eat out of your hand along the mile to mile-and-a-half hike, where we will see over-wintering birds, including woodpeckers, nuthatches, and perhaps Pine Siskins. Dress warmly and appropriately for snow-covered trails. Contact Eileen Schwinn at beachmed@optonline.net for any questions, or call the day of the trip, 516-662-7751. Birdseed will be provided!

## **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBYBC) is a national event, for all ages, for all temperaments, go out, stay home, go to a park, but join the citizen scientists and send in your observations to [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org).

Sunday, February 14, 2016 at 9am

### **GBYBC at the William Floyd Estate**

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

This is a 3-mile ramble through the fields and woods of the Estate. Call 399-2030 for more info and details.

Sunday, February 14, 2016 time to be announced

### **GBYBC at Smith Point County Park**

Leader: Byron Young

National Park Service is sponsoring this walk. ELIAS president, Byron Young will be leading. Meet at the Ranger Station at Smith Point County Park.

## **How many birds will you find?**

19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count  
February 12-15, 2016



**Join in!** Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

[birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org)

White-breasted Nuthatch  
Photo: Nick Saunders/GBBC



# From the Field Trips

**The Hallock Farm Museum on November 14** As we started through the fields a mixed flock of American Pipits and Lapland Longspurs were startled and few out, back and around a few times. Proceeding on to Hallock State Park

the group had an expansive view of the Sound (left). Just as they came down from the observation point, there was a small group of female Purple Finch feeding in the brushy trees (top right). The Purple Finch were concentrating on the berries they were feeding on, and hung around for everyone to get good looks at them. In total we spotted about 30 species. ➤



**All memberships are now renewable in January. Renew now for 2016! Your renewal will keep ELIAS strong.**



**The William Floyd Estate on Sunday, November 1** It dawned a beautiful and temperate day. It was not terribly birdy but we managed to come up with 24 species. Left, a mother with several children made it down to Indian Point at the Estate. We were also able to get close to the Eagle nest, but, alas, did not see the Eagles. ➤



# YOU CAN HELP STOP THE SLAUGHTER

OpEd from

**Jeannie Lieberman**

**Publisher, Fire Island Sun. com**

**F**ire Island National Seashore has announced their plan to shoot Fire Island's deer possibly killing up to two-thirds of the population in order to reduce the population to 20-25 deer per square mile.

Perhaps the cruelest element of this "solution" is to destroy any deer approaching a human in friendship in an effort to eradicate this previously unique and cherished relationship which is so much a part of the Fire Island experience.

(Does that mean armed shooters will be roaming through communities ready to shoot at sight any "tame" deer?)

FINS is deliberately ignoring animal advocates who have demonstrated that deer control can be achieved through reproductive means. An acceptable vaccine already exists. Fire Island is the first place on earth where free-roaming deer have been successfully darted with a contraceptive which has successfully reduced the deer population by half from 1995 and 2009.

Fire Island National Seashore Deer Management Program was published in the Federal Register on Dec. 31 (*a day when the majority of the public was otherwise occupied*). The plan is scheduled to go into effect in 30 days. The public may comment during those 30 days. Your help is needed to prevent this unnecessary lethal control. Please take time to tell the NPS that you

strongly support the use of effective, non-lethal fertility control methods for deer on Fire Island.

This is taken from Plan D plan, identified as the NPS preferred alternative:

"Deer browsing management actions would include fencing areas at the William Floyd Estate and areas of the maritime holly forest in the Sunken Forest. The deer population would be reduced to about 20-25 deer per square mile across Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate through a combination of sharp shooting, capture and euthanasia of individual deer. Public hunting (within the Fire Island Wilderness) would also be employed. Once reduced, the deer population could be maintained through fertility control. Fertility control would be implemented using a chemical reproductive control agent (when an acceptable agent becomes available). Until an acceptable and effective reproductive control agent becomes available, the deer population would be maintained using the same methods used for direct reduction as described above. Deer observed approaching humans within the Fire Island communities would be captured and euthanized to reduce the risk of negative human-deer interactions and prevent other deer from learning this behavior through observation."

**If you wish to comment contact:**

**Lindsay Ries**, Wildlife Biologist  
Fire Island National Seashore  
120 Laurel Street  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
Lindsay\_Ries@nps.gov

**or write to:**

**Sally Jewell** (202-208-3100)  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**Jonathan Jarvis** (202-208-6843)  
Director, National Parks Service  
1849 C Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**Mike Caldwell** (215-597-7013)  
Northeast Regional Director  
NPS, U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street, Fifth Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Wayne Pacelle**, President & CEO  
The Humane Society of the United States  
2100 L St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20037  
202-452-1100 or 866-720-2676

**Wording you might want to use:**

*I've recently learned that the National Park Service has released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Deer Management Plan for Fire Island National Seashore which approves the shooting of as many as two thirds of the current deer population. For more than 15 years, The Humane Society of the United States has worked with the NPS to implement a fertility control study using humane methods to manage deer population. The study has been widely supported and successful. The NPS should continue working with organizations like The HSUS and Fire Island residents to implement humane deer management strategies rather than killing semi-tame deer, who are a cherished part of the visitor experience at Fire Island. 🐾*

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TOM MORAN

Gigi Spates, Suzi Stewart and Evelyn Voulgarelis and Tom Moran (not in the picture) moved the Bluebird boxes at Sandy Pond Golf Course. Now they will have to wait and see and hope that the Bluebirds will discover the repositioned houses next Spring..

**Continued from page 1**

of the nest boxes at our other on-going location, Sandy Pond Golf Course in Riverhead. This Bluebird trail has been monitored by Chris Schmidt.

It was about a month ago that Tom Moran, who is now known as “Muscles Moran”, helped me pry and push-pull out of the ground most of the very sturdy, long metal pipes that held the nest boxes at Sandy Pond. Then, after consulting with Ken, one of the managers of Sandy Pond, new sites were okayed for pairing two boxes each in more open parts of the golf course than the original perimeter with its thicker congestion of vegetation. Several weeks later a small contingent of ELIAS volunteers – Suzie Stewart, Evelyn Voulgarelis, Tom Moran and I – gathered our tools into a large well-needed wheel barrow, dug deep holes with those various

tools, gradually placed the old nest boxes in their new location and pounded the soil tightly into place around the pipes.

Now it is a wait-and-see! Come late March and April will the bright-blue male and the brown-blue female Eastern Bluebirds examine these newly-located bird boxes, and stake a claim on one for their spring and summer home? We surely hope so! And Chris, their monitor, no doubt hopes so too! Even if our patience must extend several years those of us involved will feel a great deal of satisfaction in the camaraderie of a job well-thought-out and well done. Thank you, Sandy Pond, for your continued enthusiasm and cooperation with our chapter of the Audubon Society in helping to further the well-being of these interesting insect-eating bird symbols of our state. ➤

## The Long Journey Home: Nichol’s Eaglet

This is a special presentation by MaryLaura Lamont, an ELIAS Board Member, and Ranger at the William Floyd Estate. It will take place at 10 am on Saturday, February 13th at The Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, 340 Smith Road in Shirley. This new, richly illustrated power point presentation will chronicle the story of a pair of Bald Eagles that nested at the William Floyd Estate after an absence of perhaps 75 years. The pair of Bald Eagles made the old Nichol’s Estate, today known as the William Floyd Estate, their home last summer. They successfully fledged one chick. This program follows their story from beginning of the pair bond to the Eaglet fledging. Call the Wertheim at 286-0485 for more information. ➤

## Want to do some winter birding?

Stop by the South Fork Natural History Museum at 377 Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike, just outside the main part of Bridgehampton, and get a copy of *Winter Birding by Car*. The cost is \$5.

The East End of Long Island is divided into 6 sections with suggested stops in each section. At each stop there is a list of the most likely species.

You will be jumping in the car between stops to keep warm and still be racking up the species. ➤

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**All memberships are now renewable in January. Please renew your membership to keep our club strong.**

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## **Chapter Renewal & Membership**

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