



The OSPREY

November/December 2010 — Vol. XXXV No. 6

Carmans River Herbicide issue

This issue was brought to our attention by Doug Swesty.

Dennis Puleston, a founding member of Eastern Long Island Audubon, was one of the pioneers responsible for banning DDT, an action that saved the Osprey. Now by introducing a partially tested herbicide, it is possible many fish and birds will be at risk again.

Editor

by Doug Swesty, President, Art Flick Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Suffolk County and the Town of Brookhaven jointly formed a steering committee to oversee a study to investigate methods of control of aquatic invasive plants on the Upper and Lower Yaphank Lakes and the Carmans River. The committee is comprised of residents whose property adjoins the lakes, town and county representatives, as well representatives of a few civic and environmental groups including Nature Conservancy, the Open Space Council of Brookhaven, and Trout Unlimited. Many other groups such as Seatuck, the Audubon Society, the Peconic Baykeeper, etc. which should have been included, were not. A consultant, Nelson, Pope, & Vorhiis, was hired by the County to carry out a feasibility study for controlling the invasive plant species (Variable Leaf Milfoil and Cabomba). The consultant was to investigate all methods. The local residents were pushing for a plan to treat the lakes with herbicide. The consultants suggested a combination of herbicides and dredging to remove silt. We (the Art Flick Chapter of Trout Unlimited) are not opposed to the dredging plan, provided it is done carefully, but we

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NATURE PROGRAMS

Bob Adamo, Interim program chair

Monday, November 1, 2010

ECUADOR

Part Three: The Andes

Bob Adamo

In 2008, I was part of an "Oat" (Overseas Adventure Travel) small group (16 persons) tour to Ecuador's Amazon Jungle, Galapagos Islands, and Andes Mountains. Having already made presentations to ELIAS on the first two, I look forward to sharing a section of the "Dragons Spine" with you. We spent 5 days traveling by bus down the Pan American Highway from Quito, south to Guayaquil. During that time, we passed the towering Chimborazo Volcano, Ecuador's highest mountain at 20,702 feet above sea level, visited a few of the indigenous markets that this area is known for, drove by fields worked by people, who in this area have more pure Incan blood in them than any other part of Ecuador. In addition to many other attractions, including riding "The Devil's Nose"— a train which you can ride the traditional way, inside, or if you are adventuresome, on the train's box car roof. Now you know where my pictures were taken from.

Monday December 6, 2010

Everyone Loves OWLS!

Everyone loves those elusive OWLS! Come and learn more about the owls of North American and our own Long Island Owls. This presentation given by Dianne Taggart and Linda Sullivan will feature not only lots of owl information, but wonderful photos by local nature photographers.

Top: A Short-eared owl is a winter visitor to our area. There have been two reported already this year. The bottom photo, a Saw-whet Owl is a year-round resident..

Meetings are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Nature chat begins at 7:15 pm, the meeting at 7:30 and the speaker at 8:00 pm. The programs are free, and open to all.



BOTH OWL PHOTOS BY JIMMY GALLETTO

Christmas Bird Counts & Winter Waterfowl Censuses John McNeil

As the holiday season approaches, it is once again time to think about the winter bird counts. Each year, ELIAS members participate in a series of ten counts — five Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society and five winter waterfowl censuses sponsored by the NY Ornithological Association. Dates and compilers for the counts are listed below. If you would like to participate as either a field observer or a feeder watcher in any of the listed CBC's, or as a participant in any of the waterfowl censuses, please contact the compiler for the count(s). A fee will be collected from all observers over 18, to defray the cost of compiling the data and publishing for the CBC results. There is no fee to participate in the Waterfowl Censuses. Usually the compilers are very flexible and participants can bird with the group until they need to go. So...please do not hesitate to ask if you can participate.

All help is welcome.

Experienced birders are needed for each of the counts, but beginners are most welcome. If you are not an experienced birder, field parties who are familiar with the territory will help you learn your way around. We hope that new observers will find the counts to be as exciting as experienced birders find them to be, and that they will continue to participate in the future. This is the way we can we develop an adequate pool of skilled, committed observers to continue the tradition.

Feeder watchers who live within the count circle are needed to provide additional coverage by recording the number of individuals and the variety of species that appear at the feeder during the count day.

For the most part, counting begins as soon as it is light enough to see (around 6:30 to 7:00 am) and continues until it is too dark to see anymore (around 5:00 pm). How-

ever, to hunt for owls, some observers start a few hours before daylight and continue for a while after dark. At least eight hours of field observation during daylight hours in a CBC circle is required for acceptance of a CBC report.

Field coverage is primarily done by some combination of walking and driving, but bicycles, boats, motorcycles, and other modes of transportation are also used.

The Winter Waterfowl Censuses have been compiled throughout the state of New York since 1955. These too are done in assigned territories, but only birds such as ducks, geese, swans, cormorants, grebes, and coots are counted. These censuses are usually done in mid-January by the same CBC compilers. If you would like to participate please contact a compiler.

Below are the people to contact to join the CBC and the Waterfowl Census.



Count	Date	Compiler	Contact Information
Quogue to Water Mill CBC	Sunday, Dec. 18th	Steve Biasetti	Hm 874.4684 / Wk 765.6450 x205 biafamily@optonline.net sbiasetti@eastendenvironment.org
Montauk CBC	Saturday, Dec. 18th	Hugh McGuinness	725.6037 / cell 631.697.2099 hmcguinness@ross.org
Sagaponack CBC	Sunday, Dec. 19th	Hugh McGuinness	725.6037 / cell 631.697.2099 hmcguinness@ross.org
Central Suffolk CBC	Monday, Dec. 27th	Eileen Schwinn	516.662.7751 beachmed@optonline.net
Orient CBC	Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011	MaryLaura Lamont	722.5542 elamont@optonline.net
Smith Point to Shinnecock Inlet Census	Saturday, Jan. 15, 2011	Jay Kuhlman	878.4461 sjkuhlman@aol.com
Yaphank to Peconic Bay Census	Midweek of Jan. 17 to 21	John McNeil	281.2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net
Montauk to Amagansett Census	Contact Coordinator	Hugh McGuinness	725.6037 / cell 631.697.2099 hmcguinness@ross.org
Reeves Bay to Noyack Bay	Midweek of Jan. 17 to 21	John McNeil	281.2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net
Fresh Pond to Sag Harbor	Midweek of Jan. 17 to 21	John McNeil	281.2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net

Hawk Watching at Hook Mountain

Tom Moran

I'm enraptured to live on Long Island where the birding is sensational. From the seasonal variety of species which you can find on your own, to the organized counts, there are plenty of ways and locales to enjoy. In the fall, this is especially true for the hawk migration. The Robert Moses platform is an exceptional place to see raptors, especially falcons.

To see some other species of birds of prey, a drive upstate is the ticket. On Saturday, September 25 I left the Island, crossed the Hudson to Hook Mountain, just on the other side of the Tappan Zee Bridge. The top is a spartan location, some rock outcroppings are cut by the trail used to gain the peak, which then continues down the other side. What it lacks in facilities is more than made up for by a panoramic view of the Hudson, including the Tappan Zee Bridge to the south, the Gunks and Catskills to the northwest. The view of the river to the south is unobstructed. As it is traced northward, the view is blocked by a mountain, and then appears again before it disappears behind another northerly peak. To the north and west, Rockland, Congers and Deforest Lakes are visible. An interesting Palisades rock formation is visible in the distance but was not naturally exposed. As was explained by the Hawk Migration of North America coordinators, the location was among important and early causes of the preservation movement of the Palisades, as concerned citizens reacted against the destruction of this geographic wonder for the quarrying of its stones.

Although the winds were from the south and the counts for the varied species were not high, the number of species, the views afforded, and behavior were exceptional. Some of the species we enjoy at Fire Island were present: American Kestrels, Peregrine Falcons, Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Coopers Hawks. Black Vultures were present in good numbers as well as Turkey Vultures. Several mature Bald Eagles and an immature Bald Eagle soared by. Surprises included the croaking of passing Common Ravens and a brief visit by a Red-breasted



An immature Red-tailed Hawk soars over Hook Mt.

Nuthatch. Although many of these species can be viewed from some other watches upstate, we were afforded some really close views of the passing birds. Behavior was another high point of the day. A Peregrine stooped (*a steep, quick dive*) at a far distance providing a dramatic view. The space at the top was not crowded but getting a comfortable space was a matter of selecting a good rock to sit on as I did not bring a chair. I chose a site just to the south of a tall pole with an owl mounted on it, which attracted the attention of a Red-tailed Hawk. It climbed high and while I was enjoying a fine view of it through the binoculars, it began to stoop towards the owl, which was directly between the hawk and myself! Some estimates of a Red-tailed Hawk's dive indicate a speed that approaches 120 mph. Now imagine my horror as that view was magnified through binoculars. I imagine this view is what many small birds last perceive before becoming lunch on the wing. I involuntarily ducked, probably looking pretty strange. Fortunately, I believe all eyes were on the hawk, which veered away from the owl at the last moment.

There is a small pull-out on 9W north of Nyack for approximately five cars where the yellow trail will lead to the top. If this is full, parking is available at the executive golf course in Rockland Lake State Park. More detailed directions are available at: http://www.rocklandaudubon.org/hook_mountain.htm. From the 9W pull off it is approximately a ten minute, half-mile, quite steep hike to reach the summit. The drive is approximately 110 miles from the Quogue Wildlife Refuge. The official count ends on Oct. 31.

Field Trips

John McNeil

Saturday November 20th @ 9:00am

Hallockville Farm and Jamesport State Park Walk

Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

The varied habitats of farm fields, woods, ponds, and dunes on Long Island Sound provide a diversity of bird residents. Bring binocs for this 2 mile walk of spectacular views and good birding. A \$5.00 fee goes toward Hallockville's educational programs. Meet in the parking lot of Hallockville Museum Farm on Sound Ave. in Riverhead. Call Hallockville at 631.298.5292 or trip leader MaryLaura Lamont at 631.722.5542 for details.

Sunday November 21 @9:00am

Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk

The William Floyd Estate in Mastic is 613 acres of mowed fields, woods, creeks, and salt marshes. Roundtrip walk of 3 miles will turn up wintering hawks, ducks, sparrows, and perhaps Bluebirds. Bring binocs and meet in the parking lot of the Estate. Main Entrance is 245 Park Dr., Mastic. Call trip leader MaryLaura Lamont at the Estate at 631.399.2030 for details.

December 2010

No Field Trips planned. Join one of the Christmas Bird Counts or Waterfowl Census groups. See the schedule on page 2 and contact one of the group leaders.

Saturday, Jan 8, 2011 @9:00am

Lakes Around Patchogue

Leader: John McNeil

Come see winter-resident waterfowl on the lakes of Patchogue. John tells us "these lakes are God's little oases for wintering waterfowl. There's always a surprise or two to peak your interest!"

Join John for either a half or full-day excursion (conditions permitting). Meet at 9 am at the Swan Lake Club House on Swan Lake in East Patchogue. Contact John at 631.281.2623 for details. On the day of the trip, John's cell is 631.219.8947.

Bluebirds, *the beginnings of a come back*

Larry Penny

I grew up in Mattituck and became interested in local birds at a young age. Ever since seeing the Shirley Temple movie of 1940, *The Bluebird*, I was intrigued with that species. As a child, Jan Peerce's *Bluebird of Happiness* was right up there with *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* among my top ten songs before I was ten. It wasn't until March of 1951 however, that I saw my first Bluebird. I was walking through the heavily treed pasture of the Ralph Tuthill dairy farm on Middle Road toward a brush pile where a woodchuck had been living hoping to see it again, when I came upon a eye-level hole in an oak eight inches in diameter. I stopped and tapped on the trunk under the hole expecting to see a Starling fly out. A bluebird flew out and that was my first one-on-one experience with New York's State bird.

In the six years thereafter before leaving for the Army I went on a lot of Long Island Christmas bird counts, but didn't see a single Bluebird. When I think back, that was quite understandable as Mattituck was heavily farmed primarily with row crops, most heavily with potatoes. The fields from May through August were covered with just about every pesticide ever invented. It was not a good time for songbirds on the North Fork, particularly for those that were mostly insectivorous and lived close to fields.

In the Army and after discharge when I took up residence in California and Oregon, first as a student, later as a lecturer and professor, I saw a lot of Western Bluebirds and a few Mountain Bluebirds. I still had the Eastern Bluebird imprinted in my mind when I returned to the East End of Long Island in 1974 to teach at Southampton College. Seven years later while participating in the East Hampton part of the Orient Christmas Bird Count, then run by Paul Stoutenburgh, I was with Russell Hoeflich at the grown over athletic field of the St. Regis Camp in on Northwest Harbor when we came upon a mixed flock of a dozen or so Eastern Bluebirds. Thirty years between Eastern Bluebirds

sightings, I was resmitten. Russell was equally surprised. While a student at Southampton College he had carried out numerous breeding bird studies on the South Fork, but had never recorded a breeding Bluebird during any of them.

In the early 1980s I met two people who would lead me deep into the life of this then mysterious species. One was the late Kim Hicks, a retired engineer, resident of Hither Hills in Montauk and skilled craftsman. The other was the wife-to-be of the herpetologist, Andy Sabin, Karilyn Jones. Andy was into salamanders and frogs, Karilyn was into birds. It was in the mid-1980s while several of us were forming the South Fork Natural History Society that Karilyn, Kim and I decided to start a Bluebird trail in Hither Woods. The late Gil Raynor had discovered breeding Bluebirds there during the 1980s New York State Breeding Bird Survey. They were seen in a meadowland alongside the Long Island Railroad Track, a frequent area for brush fires.

Kim had a plan showing a new type of Bluebird box with a removable roof that was being used successfully in the Midwest. He went to work in his shop turning out box after box according to that design. We began putting them up, first in Hither Woods which experienced a major burn over in the spring of 1986, then at the East Hampton Airport where Grasshopper Sparrows bred and the fields on either side of the runways were occupied with little bluestem and other maritime grassland species. Karilyn became the "den mother" of the various Bluebird trail nest boxes, which by the mid-1990s grew to more than one hundred and was managed as a joint project between the South Natural History Society (SOFO) and the East Hampton Town Natural Resources Department. Each box had to be cleaned out before each new nesting season.

During the Bluebird trails' heyday the East Hampton Bluebirds and Karilyn were featured on the CBS Sunday Mornings show. I remember taking a young woman from the United States Department of Agricul-

ture around the airport. She was on a fact-finding mission. It was the USDA that handled gulls, geese and other birds that were considered airport nuisances by the FAA. She looked at the boxes around the periphery of the airport and asked me what they were for. "Bluebirds (and Tree Swallows)", I replied. She said they would have to go. Karilyn and I didn't have the heart to remove them, the lady never returned and those boxes are still there today and still in use.

Jan Peerce's song is still one of my favorites, Kim passed away, Andy divorced Karilyn and my focus shifted to habitat restoration. Joe Giunta came along in the nick of time, before the new millennium and has done a marvelous job caring for the Bluebirds and the Bluebird nesting boxes ever since. There has not been a Long Island Christmas Count in the last 15 years or so that hasn't reported at least one Eastern Bluebird. The road back started in East Hampton.

THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Three new board members were elected to the ELIAS Board at the September meeting:

Byron Young

Catherine McClusky

Matthew McCluskey

There is also an opening for a new vice-president and a new program chairperson.

If you would like to become more involved please call one of the board members listed on the back.

Carmans River Herbicide issue

Continued from page 1

are strongly opposed to the use herbicides. Little is known about the effects of the herbicide fluridone on the ecosystem. NY DEC guidelines state that herbicides should not be permitted on streams. But the committee seems set to bypass this policy by acting as though the small impoundments are closed lakes.

There are numerous fish and insect eating birds on the Carmans including Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Black-crowned Night Heron. The current research states that fluridone bioconcentrates in fish. Several years ago our TU chapter installed a fish ladder which opened several miles of the Carmans River to spawning alewives. I watched Ospreys, and others birds attacking one of the schools of alewives and it upsets me to think of what could happen to these birds if they ingest these fish with concentrated fluridone in their system. And this could happen on one of the very rivers where Dennis Puleston fought to protect Ospreys and Eagles by getting DDT banned over 40 years ago!

Sadly, the Steering Committee voted, without having seen a written report, that Brookhaven and Suffolk County use a combination of herbicide and dredging. The Art Flick Chapter of Trout Unlimited was the single "No" vote. County Legislator Kate Browning, Brookhaven Councilmen Connie Keppart, and Assemblyman Marc Alessi voted "Yes". (*Eastern Long Island Audubon was not invited.*)

The recommendation of the Steering Committee will be sent to the Town and County. Perhaps if enough people pressure their local legislators it can be stopped.

Please note that TU opposes this use of fluridone. We believe in operating under the *Precautionary Principle* of not using something that is not fully understood. The Carmans is a complex ecosystem and it's hard to know what subtle effects might matter. I encourage your members, to do their own research.

The consultant's plans are available at: www.suffolkcountylakes.net under "resources & links".

Boy, What a Night!

Sally Newbert

OCTOBER 20, 2010 Close to 80 birders and friends enjoyed the annual dinner at the Vineyards in Acquebogue.

Al Scherzer, past ELIAS president presented Eileen Schwinn current ELIAS President, with The Osprey Award for her commitment and outstanding leadership. "Please keep inspiring us." Said Dr. Scherzer.

The speaker, Susan Krause from Sweetbriar Nature Center, was spectacular. She introduced us to a few of her friends. There was nothing but oohs and aahs from the audience as she introduced a Saw-whet Owl, a Broad-winged Hawk, an opossum, a Barn Owl, a Eurasian Kestrel, a Diamond-backed Terrapin and a Red-tailed Hawk.

The Dinner Committee is grateful to all our raffle donors and hope all the winners will enjoy their prizes.

See you next year!!!



Top: Sue Krause with a very nervous Barn Owl. The owl was making its first public appearance

Below: Eileen Schwinn accepts for Osprey Award from Dr. Al Scherzer.



A Day at the Beach

On Saturday, September 18 a group headed to the Hawk Watch Platform at Robert Moses, hoping for a nice windy fall day. There weren't many of hawks flying. We did catch a few sightings of Merlins and Kestrels. The most interesting sighting of the day was a Lincoln's Sparrow at the volleyball courts. The group checked out some pines by the golf course, a possible place to find some interesting birds in the coming months.



Amazing Panama

Matt & Cathy McCluskey

In April, we joined a group of 10 on a trip to Panama for 13 days of tropical birding. The tour was run by “Cheepers! Birding on a Budget” which did a fantastic job organizing the trip. Tiny Panama (smaller than South Carolina) boasts about 960 different species of birds. More than the U.S. and Canada combined. We knew we were in for a great trip!

We arrived in Panama City around 9 pm and spent the first night there. A beautiful Crimson-backed Tanager greeted us the next morning right on the hotel grounds. The day was off to a great start. We made our way to the Canopy Lodge in El Valle where the well stocked feeders were busy with Thick-billed Euphonia, Rufous Motmot, Red-legged Honeycreeper and various tanagers. Flashy, exotic birds everywhere! You didn’t know where to look next. WOW, we’re not in New York anymore!

Canopy Lodge: What a beautiful place to call home for the next few days. An

Keel-billed Toucan



Crimson-backed Tanager

idyllic setting for a birding vacation. A small bridge over a creek brings you to the lodge which is nestled in the crater of an extinct volcano. Luxury in the dense forest.

Our local guides, Moyo and Danilo, brought us to several excellent birding sights during the next few days. These guys really knew their stuff! They could ID every bird even from slightest glimpse or a one-note call coming from deep in the woods.

Our day in La Mesa proved terrific for raptors: Swallow-tailed Kite, Barred Hawk, White Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk and Bat Falcon among others. A Common Potoo posing atop a dead tree branch (and sitting on an egg) was an exciting find. With help from the local community we were able to locate Tropical Screech Owl and Crested Owl. 102 species for the day. Whew, and it’s only our first full day!

The next day we made our way to the Pacific Lowlands and a village called El Chiru. Antshrikes, flycatchers and grassquits dominated the morning. A Ferruginous Pygmy Owl was a midday highlight. A lunch time dip in the Pacific Ocean at the private home of the owner of Canopy Lodge really hit the spot! After our break we made our way to a rice field that was being harvested. As the machinery worked in the fields hundreds of egrets and herons followed looking for an easy lunch. What a scene! Caracaras, storks, vultures and other raptors were about.

Day 4 consisted of a 4-wheel drive to an area known as Jordana. But before we left an amazing Sunbittern flew along the

Canopy Lodge stream as we ate breakfast.

A completely different cast of tropical birds made for a great morning. In the afternoon we experienced Canopy Adventure which is a series of 4 platforms connected by zip lines, some almost 300 ft above the forest floor.

The next day we went to the higher elevations of Altos del Maria. A variety of wrens, tanagers, warblers, toucanets, hummers and manakins all made appearances in the cooler highlands. We spent the late part of the day like we did most days: Back at the Lodge watching the colorful show at the feeders as we listed the day’s birds.

Today we said goodbye to Canopy Lodge and headed to its sister accommodation The Canopy Tower which is at a lower elevation and offers a new set of birding opportunities. Canopy Tower was once a United States Air Force radar facility used in the defense of the Panama Canal. The tower was demilitarized and transferred to Panama in 1996 and was transformed into an eco-lodge. The Pacific Ocean, Panama City skyline and the Panama Canal can all be seen from atop the tower. While not as luxurious as the Canopy Lodge the Tower, with its observation deck, offers the unique opportunity to see tree top birds at eye level. Spectacular looks at tanagers, honeycreepers, dacnis, aracarís, toucans and woodpeckers were a daily occurrence. The observation deck also gave us face to face time with sloths, monkeys and cute little tamarins.

A short ride on the Birdmobile to a local pond proved fruitful with Rufescent Tiger-Heron and Wattled Jacana making appear-

ances along with a variety of orioles, caciques and tityras. A kettle of thousands of hawks and kites circled overhead.

Back at The Tower the usual flurry of activity at the hummingbird feeders was in full swing.

Our next day started like all others with breakfast atop The Tower with close up views of all these gaudy exotic birds. Later we walked the road leading to The Tower and found all kinds of manakins, thrushes, antshrikes and toucans. After lunch we took a trip to Summit Gardens and its Harpy Eagle display. What an impressive bird! Too bad we never got to see one in the wild. The grounds proved excellent for a variety of trogons and woodcreepers. We also found some Tent-Making Bats taking refuge under their homemade tent in a Palm Tree. After dinner we took a drive to



MATT MCCLUSKY

A sloth lounges in the treetops

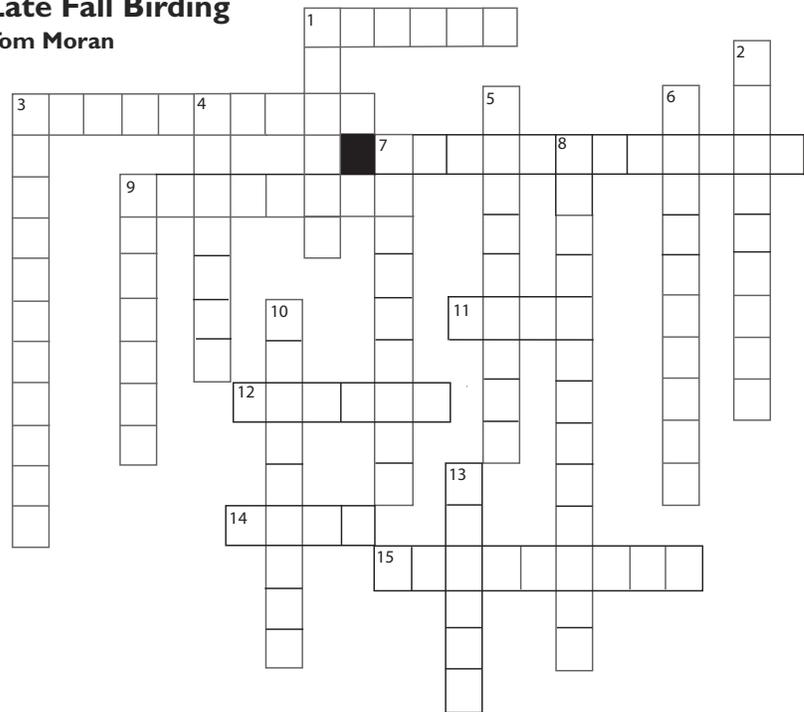
find some creatures of the night. Watching an eerie Potoo calling from a nearby tree stump was the highlight along with sloths, Woolly Opossum and a group of Night Monkeys.

The next day was spent at world famous Pipeline Road. Different types of Puffbirds, wrens, and tanagers made early appearances. Our talented guide, Carlos, was able to locate a variety of elusive Antbirds and Antpittas in the dense, dark rainforest. A flat tire and a torrential downpour made for an interesting afternoon.

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Late Fall Birding

Tom Moran



Across

- 1. Two species, usually fall migrants, were surprising summer visitors at Cupsogue
- 3. A popular but surprisingly cold mid-fall ELIAS field trip location
- 7. The insect resistant wood variety, not the impoverished artist species?! (2 words)
- 9. Over wintering bird, don't confuse it with a semipalmated plover
- 11. A common warbler through fall, rare in winter
- 12. This sandpiper species becomes abundant in fall
- 14. Most North American birds do this in late summer or early fall
- 15. A migration that occurs only when harsh winters make food supplies low

Answers will be in the next issue.

Down

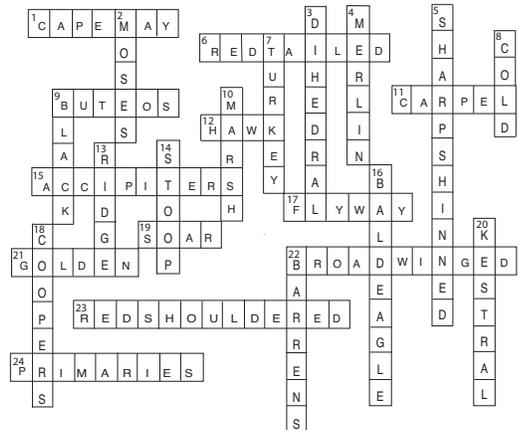
- 1. Large numbers can be seen off Ditch Plains, clues to where the fish are for surf casters
- 2. The _____ in Aquebogue, location of our annual dinner this year
- 3. Large numbers may be seen by November at Smith Pt parting lot
- 4. Sea birds, they are still migrating in November
- 5. One of two jaegers that may be carried close to shore by onshore winds
- 6. _____ Nature Center, located in Smithtown
- 7. By November a strange-billed white winged may (rarely) be seen in the pines at Jones Beach
- 8. An early arriving winter sparrow (2 words)
- 9. Golden-crowned _____, a late migrant
- 10. A dark bodied variety of the snow goose
- 13. Our favorite November bird?

Answers to last issue's puzzle

Birds of Prey Fall Migration

Tom Moran

If you missed it, or want another look at the puzzle The Osprey is archived on the web site. www.eastern-longislandaudubonsociety.org





The American Kestrel

(*Falco Sparverius*)

Carl Starace

This bird of prey is America's smallest falcon. Once called the Sparrowhawk, the Latin, *Sparverius*, means pertaining to a sparrow but this was a poorly chosen title. This superb looking Falcon does not pay that much attention to our sparrows. It preys mainly on larger insects and the smaller mammals. In migration it chooses to dine on the numerous Monarch Butterflies and Dragonflies that are on their own passages to the south. The American Kestrel is the most widespread of all our falcons. It breeds across the continent from the arctic taiga region well into Central America. In wintertime it is completely absent from Alaska, all of Canada, northern New England, northern Michigan and the northern Plains States.

Description: Males of this colorful species are rufous above blue-grey wings. They are white below with dark spots across the chest. Some males have a rosy hue across the chest as well. The females are rufous brown with dark barring above. Below they have rufous spotting on a white background. Both sexes have two dark vertical lines upon their white faces, and a one line a mustache just below the eye, the second line a much wider sideburn. This bird is hands down the most photogenic of our falcon's. Immature birds are similar in markings to the adults.

Behavior: Kestrels will perch hunt from power lines, on exposed branches, or at the tops of trees. When there are no suitable perches they will take to hovering at approximately 20 to 30 feet above the ground while they look and wait for prey. Unlike our Merlin, (Falcon), the Kestrel

sometimes flies in loose lines with others of its species in migration. It may also perch close to them at times. Whereas Merlins often harass other Merlins and even larger Hawks they come upon. The Kestrel can be seen lowering and raising its tail apparently to keep balance when perched. This is something not done by either a perched Merlin or the similar sized Mourning Dove.

Flight: A Kestrel's flight is conspicuously buoyant, its wingbeats are stiff, with straight, slightly downwinged glides. This little falcon's long and narrow wings allow it to soar then quickly pull up in a hover with ease. Its wings are more curved in flight than a Merlin's and not as pointy or sharp. On the wing Kestrels appear paler overall and in a soar both sexes show a string of white beads along the trailing edge of their wing.

Call: A Kestrel's call is loud and like a scream — Kli Kli Kli Kli Kli Kli Kli Kli or sometimes a KILLY KILLY KILLY! American Kestrels are always a pure joy to watch on the wing, careening along above the dune line in fall migration. Recently, (Sept. 19th), I called a friend, Dick Belanger, to tell him he definitely should drop whatever he had planned and meet me at the beach the following morning for a *Falcon Show*. That morning we stood watch on the upper deck of the Ranger Station at Smith Point for close to five hours. When we left we had totaled 146 Kestrels. Several days later word came from the Fire Island Hawkwatch that the totals they had that day were the best in 15 years. If you see a **NORTH WIND** forecast for the following day in autumn make haste!

Amazing Panama

Continued from page 7

Back at The Tower an impressive King Vulture soared above the observation deck.

The following day we made our way to Summit Ponds where we found 3 species of kingfisher and a pair of nesting Spectacled Owls. Carlos also found a Rufous Nightjar nesting on the ground with a tiny chick. It was so perfectly camouflaged that we almost stepped on it! We also came upon a dead tree that hosted a group of spectacular woodpeckers, both Lineated and Crimson Crested.

Day 10 (or 11, I'm losing track) we went to the Rain Forest Discovery Center with its 100 foot tower that brought us up into the canopy for great views of the diverse birdlife. A stop at the Visitor Center was fun as we tried to keep tabs on the dozens of hummingbirds that were buzzing all over the place. Back to Pipeline Road to finish up our day of 135 species.

Our next day consisted of a trip to the Panama Canal and its museum. A bit more birding near The Tower and some relaxing on the observation deck rounded out our last day here in beautiful Panama. We headed home early the next day. We totaled 320 species (plus 7 heard). 183 of these were lifers for us. 4 species of owl, 6 trogons, 23 hummers, 6 parrots, 5 toucans, 27 raptors, 4 motmots and 30 tanagers. What a terrific trip! The lodging, scenery, food, fellow birders, guides and, of course, the birds were all perfect. And Jim and Cindy of Cheepers! Birding on a Budget did a great job putting it all together. I certainly would recommend a Panama birding trip to anyone!

Collard Aracari



MATT MOCLUSKY

From our campers

To the members of ELIAS,

Thank you all for sending me to DEC Camp at Pack Forest. I had such an amazing time! The counselors were so much fun, from the professional world champion 2nd place heavy weight lifting champion to the 2nd place world yodeler, to our paramedic who had spent the past year in the Amazon treating people who had fallen out of trees, they all had great personalities. I met so many new people from all different backgrounds, made friends and stay in contact them on Facebook.

My favorite thing, however, would have to be when our group climbed Mount Pharaoh, a whole 8 miles!! The heat was sweltering and making it to the top was so rewarding. The freezing lake was a great way to cool off. I learned how to tie a bear bag and set up a site in the middle of the woods instead of a campsite. That night we watched the stars in the middle of nowhere until 2:30 in the morning!! The clear skies of the mountains are truly a sight to be seen!

I had a fantastic time and learned so much about the environment.

Lane, East Quogue

Dear ELIAS,

Thank you for selecting me for the scholarship to the DEC camp, Camp DeBruce. I had such a great experience! I went fishing, took a hunter safety course, and even saw a Bald Eagle catch a fish while I was canoeing!

Pamela, East Moriches

Dear Members of ELIAS,

We wish to express our thanks to your organization for sending our son to Camp DeBruce. He earned his bow hunting license this year. The program at Camp DeBruce encouraged his interest in the outdoors. He hopes to find similar programs for next summer and is even looking into colleges that have degrees in environmental and outdoor sciences.

Luis & Sharyn, camper's parents, Cutchogue

Sending Kids to Camp — Scholarships Offered

Eastern Long Island Audubon Society is offering scholarships for students in grades 7 through 12 to attend New York State Department of Conservation camps for one week. Campers will choose between two camps in the Adirondacks, one in the Catskills, or one in western New York State. Campers enjoy fishing, hiking, canoeing, volleyball, and hunter safety training. Activities such as sampling streams for aquatic life and hiking in the dark to listen to the sounds in the woods are designed to bring conservation concepts to life.

A perfect candidate would be interested in the environment, and anxious to learn more. (Parents do not have to be Audubon members.) Here is what the candidates need to do:

- Fill out the form below.
- Write an essay stating why they are worthy candidates for the scholarship. Include environmental experiences and interests. Also, describe what benefit they might derive from the experience.
- Have a parent attach a letter stating that they are aware of the transportation stipulation.

If accepted

- Campers are responsible for their own transportation to and from the camp.
- Campers are responsible for a physical examination, if the camp requires it.

For more information, call Evelyn at 631-727-0417.

Please complete and forward the application by **January 20, 2011** to:

Education Committee
 Eastern Long Island Audubon Society
 PO Box 206
 East Quogue, NY 1942-0206

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Date of Birth _____

Name of school _____ Grade _____

Have you ever attended an outdoor education/ecology camp?

If SO, what camp, where, and when _____

Applicant's signature _____ Date _____



Feeder Survey

John McNeil

The Survey will be conducted the first full week of the month starting on Sunday and ending the following Sunday.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEEDER SURVEY

- Define an area containing feeders that you can see all at once from a window. The area should be one you glance at frequently during your daily routine.
- Don't include birds seen off premises.
- Predators perching in or swooping through the count area (not just flying over) may be counted if you feel that they were attracted by the birds at the feeder.
- Record the largest number of each species that you see in your count area during the eight-day count period.
- Do not add counts from previous days together. Be specific with the species name, e.g. we can't use just the name Sparrow, Blackbird or Gull.
- At the end of the count period, record your final tallies and send in the form immediately.

Personal observations and comments are welcome as are suggestions to improve the surveys and reports.

There are three ways to participate:

Mail the survey to:

Feeder Survey c/o John McNeil
168 Lexington Road
Shirley, NY 11967

Send your information via the internet

go to:

easternlongislandaudubon.org
and

- 1) Click on: Chapter Projects
- 2) Click on: Feeder Statistics
- 3) Click on: To submit via the internet and follow the prompts

Email the results to:
birdwchr@gmail.com

Survey Dates:

Nov. 7-Nov. 14, 2010

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Phone _____

- _____ Mourning Dove
- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Blue Jay
- _____ House Finch
- _____ Black-capped Chickadee
- _____ Tufted Titmouse
- _____ Downy Woodpecker
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco
- _____ House Sparrow
- _____ White-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- _____ American Crow
- _____ European Starling
- _____ Common Grackle
- _____ Carolina Wren
- _____ Northern Mockingbird
- _____ American Goldfinch
- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Hairy Woodpecker
- _____ Common Flicker
- _____ Rufous-sided Towhee
- _____ American Robin
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Other _____

Survey Dates:

Dec. 5-Dec. 12, 2010

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Phone _____

- _____ Mourning Dove
- _____ Northern Cardinal
- _____ Blue Jay
- _____ House Finch
- _____ Black-capped Chickadee
- _____ Tufted Titmouse
- _____ Downy Woodpecker
- _____ White-throated Sparrow
- _____ Dark-eyed Junco
- _____ House Sparrow
- _____ White-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Song Sparrow
- _____ Red-bellied Woodpecker
- _____ American Crow
- _____ European Starling
- _____ Common Grackle
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- _____ Red-winged Blackbird
- _____ Hairy Woodpecker
- _____ Common Flicker
- _____ Rufous-sided Towhee
- _____ American Robin
- _____ Brown-headed Cowbird
- _____ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- _____ Rock Dove (pigeon)
- _____ Gray Catbird
- _____ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- _____ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- _____ Other _____





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Please be sure to include your email. You will receive an email confirmation, a pdf of the first newsletter and occasional updates. And, no we do not share this list!

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Sally Newbert 631-281-6008
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Mark Your Calendars

- Mon., Nov. 1** Nature Program: Ecuador, The Andes
by Bob Adamo (see pg. 1)
- Nov. 7 to 14** Feeder Survey (see pg. 10)
- Sat., Nov. 20** Field Trip: Hallockville Farm & Jamesport State Park (see pg. 3)
Leader: MaryLaura Lamont
- Sun., Nov. 21** Field Trip: The William Floyd Estate (see pg. 3)
Leader: MaryLaura Lamont
- Dec. 5 to 12** Feeder Survey (see pg. 10)
- Mon., Dec. 6** Nature Program: Everyone Loves Owls
by Linda Sullivan & Dianne Taggart (see pg. 1)
- Dec. 18 to Jan. 1** Christmas Bird Counts (see pg 2)
- January 15 -21** Waterfowl Census (see pg 2)

NOTE: There is no meeting in January, because of the holidays and the possibility of bad weather.



If there are any changes in programming, it will be announced on Facebook and on the website.

Join ELIAS on Facebook, click to become a friend.

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