



The OSPREY

November/December 2012—Vol. XXXVII No. 6

Nature Walks/Field Trips

John McNeil

Saturday, Nov. 17th @ 9:00 am

Jamesport State Park and Hallockville Farm Fields

Trip Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

The varied habitats of the farm fields, woods, ponds, and dunes on Long Island Sound provide a diversity of migrants and wintering birds. Bring binoculars for this 2-hour walk of spectacular views and good birding. For additional details call Hallockville at 631.298.5292. There is a \$5 charge for this walk benefiting the Hallockville Museum Farm.

Sunday, Nov. 18th @ 9:00 am

Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk at the William Floyd Estate

Trip Leader: MaryLaura Lamont

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

December 2012

No field trips are scheduled. We hope members will participate in the Christmas Bird Counts. See page 5 for details.

Saturday, Jan. 5th, 2013 @ 9:00am

Lakes around Patchogue

Trip Leader: John McNeil

John tells us “these lakes are God’s little oases for wintering waterfowl usually with a surprise or two to peak your interest!” 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.

Nature Programs

Nature Programs are held at Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

All programs are free and the public is welcome.

Bob Adamo, Interim Program Chair

Monday, November 5, 2012 beginning at 7:15 pm

Mcgee Marsh

Linda Sullivan and Dianne Taggart have teamed up again and will give us a program on Magee Marsh in Ohio. It is a great place in the Spring to see warblers. Geographically it sits on Lake Erie and is a resting place before the birds take off for the Boreal woods of Canada. Come hear about their experiences and see if you wouldn’t like to plan your trip next year.

Monday, December 3, beginning at 7:15 pm

All Things BATTY!

Marisa Nelson, Quogue Wildlife Refuge Program Director *Don’t run screaming.* This is your chance to learn about the amazing physical adaptations of bats including their anatomy and the various lifestyles of bats from all over the world - including Long Island. Marisa will discuss their ecological importance to the planet, and the conflicts bats are facing. She will also tell you why the United Nations declared 2011-2012 International Year of the Bat, and give you some ideas of how you can help. Accompanying the power point presentation, are various artifacts such as taxidermy of bats, a bat skeleton, posters, and a bat fossil replica. QWR has partnered with Bat Conservation International to promote awareness of bats.

Just a reminder: There is no January meeting.



See page 2 for details on the dinner

Celebrating Birding on Long Island

See page 5 for details on Christmas Bird Counts

and how you can participate

Celebrating Birding on Long Island

On Wednesday, October 17, seventy members and friends of ELIAS got together at Casa Basso Restaurant in Westhampton. Tom Moran introduced The Osprey Award winner, Sally Newbert, The Osprey editor. Carl Starace received a Special Achievement Award for his service to the members of ELIAS. He is planning a move west, so if you haven't been on one of his walks come out on one before he leaves.

After the awards Pam Salaway, the speaker took the floor, and with enthusiasm and humor described her birding experiences as she began to become a birder. She realized perhaps she had gone over the edge or graduated to official birder when she found herself barefoot, in the middle of the woods in back of her house, stuck on pricker bushes, in a flimsy night gown in search of a bird she heard calling. She went on to recount some touching stories of how a Bluebird in Pheasant Meadow (sitting on one of the bird houses ELIAS had put up) brought her some solace after the death of her mother.

This year was a good one for raffle prizes, there were over 30 prizes so many folks went home with gifts in addition to the seeds for hummingbirds and butterflies that were given out to everyone. There are probably some left, so if you get to meeting you will probably be able to get some and hope your garden will be filled with butterflies and Hummingbirds.



Byron Young, ELIAS President with Sally Newbert, Osprey Award Winner and Tom Moran, ELIAS Treasurer did the introduction.

Below left Pam Salaway enthusiastically describes her birding experiences.

Below right: Byron Young with Carl Starace who received a Special Achievement Award and Al Scherzer, a past ELIAS President.



Right: Byron holds the list of raffle prize winners as Ridgie Barnet reads the winners.



A few of the guests enjoy the speaker.

Get Involved
 Would you like to submit an article or a photo?
 We would like to hear from you. Contact: eliasosprey@optonline.net.



ELIAS ELECTIONS, A New President Elected

Elections were held at the October meeting. Eileen Schwinn, who has been the President for seven years wanted to step down to be able to spend more time traveling, birding and enjoying a grandchild who is expected any minute. Byron Young was elected as the president. Eileen will be the new vice president. Suzi Stewart and John McNeil were elected to the board of directors. John McNeil is the field trip organizer, the membership chairman and does the feeder survey data.

A Tribute to Eileen Schwinn

A message from Byron Young

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Eileen Schwinn for her seven years of dedicated service as President of Eastern Long Island Audubon Society. Thank you for your time, dedication and support for local birds and birding.

After my retirement from DEC in 2006, I took up actively birding again and soon

after began to look at local Audubon Clubs. I was sold on ELIAS after my first visit as a guest. When Eileen stepped up to begin the meeting, her enthusiasm for the organization, and the birds was contagious. Eileen's passion for birds, birding shines through whether she is leading a group of novice birders on a Dune Road tour or leading a group of seasoned birders on a Christmas Bird Count.

Stepping down as President may allow Eileen more time to bird Dune Road that is if her family commitments don't get in the way. Actually, Eileen has agreed to be the Vice President, which is truly outstanding because we will still have her expertise and enthusiasm on the Board and she can help keep me pointed in the right direction.

I want to thank Eileen for her encouragement and I am sure that I will be seeking her advice frequently as we move forward. I also want to acknowledge all of the

Board of Directors of ELIAS for their dedication and knowledge. I trust that the Board will also keep me pointed in the right direction because most of you have been members for years. This group of individuals and its members are what make this organization.

Again, thank you Eileen for your seven years as President. Enjoy your new found free time for family, birding and of course helping us out on occasion.



Eileen Schwinn on a spring walk in Maple Swamp.



SCHOLARSHIPS for teens to attend DEC Summer Camp

EASTERN LONG ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY is offering scholarships to 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 would like to 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 their own physical examination, if the camp requires it.

For more information, call Ridgie at 631-288-3628.

Please complete & send the application in by **January 12, 2012** 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 _____

The Ravens of Hampton Bays

Larry Penny

It was a record hot late Thursday afternoon in June. I was on my way back from a New York Botanic Garden class with Vicki Bustamante when she suggested we stop off in Hampton Bays to look for the Ravens that had been breeding there since mid-spring. The news had completely escaped me. I had been impressed by the Ravens sneaking around San Francisco streets checking out the garbage cans several years earlier, and before that, watching them effortlessly navigate the ins and outs of Grand Canyon ravines. Although I had received a Masters Degree in Ornithology from San Francisco State University in 1964 and had studied birds for four years at Cornell University in the 1950s, I had never seen a Raven, or heard one prior to coming upon the Ravens in the Grand Canyon.

This is all quite understandable, I spent my first 22 years on Long Island where there were no Ravens. Before the 1970s there were only a few Ravens in New York State. According to John Bull in *Birds of New York State* the Raven population was confined to the western Adirondacks. In fact Ravens were so scarce as breeders in the state they were considered as "Species of Special Concern" by the Department of Environmental Conservation in its first publication under the "endangered and threatened species" section of the Environmental Conservation Code of New York

Elon Eaton in his treatment of the northern Raven in Volume 2, *Birds of New York, 1914*, was so concerned about the species scarcity that he stated that, "There is rather cause to fear that this famous and picturesque bird will disappear entirely from the State domains." He went on to say that the Common Crow was replacing it in much of its former territory, particularly in Ontario County. No wonder I was excited at the prospect of seeing one on Long Island.

It was after five when we reached the Hampton Bays LIRR station, the sun was shining bright and it was still in the upper 90s. Right off we saw a couple of Crows which in the fervor of the moment my 76-

year old eyes took for Ravens, except they flew in a straight line with nary a glide. Vicki searched and searched the white Hampton Bays Water District Tower, the tallest structure or tree by far for miles and miles around, for 10 minutes. We were examining the northern half of the massive circular water tank, but couldn't see the south half. So we picked up and drove across the track and down a little street, until we were opposite the tower's south side, stopped and looked. Ah, there was one of them, we thought, up on the railing that circled the tank.

We watched for a while, nothing was happening. We went back to the north side, but got closer by way of the paved roadway leading into the HBWD offices. We stopped suddenly halfway in, when we saw two Raven look-alikes on the grassy field east of the tower. Vicki examined them through her glasses and could see the prickly throat feather "beard," the large

I discovered that they (Ravens) are among the most intelligent birds in the world's avifauna.

black beak. One was feeding the other, presumably, a fledgling. Soon they were joined by a third, another fledgling?

Vicki is one of the most well-equipped birders I've ever accompanied. She took out her cell phone and opened up a bird-call applet. Wouldn't you know it, it had a Raven call. She played it but the big black birds on the field paid no attention, at least, at first. When she played it a second time one of the Ravens looked around and moved a bit, but didn't call back. It wasn't until I read about Ravens later on that I discovered that they are among the most intelligent birds in the world's avifauna. Their brains compared to body weight are the largest in birdom, comparable to brain to body weight ratios of apes, humans and dolphins. According to some bird behaviorists, they rank with humans, ants and bees as one of four animals that can communicate to other Ravens the lo-

cation of a site, say, where a road-kill deer is lying, at a point far away from it.

The more I researched Ravens the more amazed I became. No wonder they were important in the religions of various cultures and feared by many different groups as a symbol of impending death. Apparently, they were the first pair of animals to leave Noah's Ark when it landed after a long trip away from a flooded past.

By the mid-1980s breeding pairs of Ravens were no longer scarce in New York State according to the state *Bird Atlas* published in 1988. They had also begun to breed in Connecticut, and other parts of New England. Why had their New York population been so devastated in the 1800s? Eaton suggested it was because of the clearing of forests for farms and residences. As more and more second-growth forests take over more and more abandoned fields, Ravens are making a comeback.

Other reasons for surges in Raven sub-populations here and there were the creation of large garbage dumps or land fills, such is used as an explanation for the Raven's exponential increase in the Mohave desert of California. The increase in road kills mainly as a result of an increase in the number of motor vehicles may be another contributing factor. Or, the Raven's ethos could have changed dramatically, either as a result of selection for more tolerant-to-man Ravens, or via a mass change in Raven culture.

Ravens are not migratory like many Crows, and tend to be monogamous. A pair will use the same nest year after year. The pair occupying the Tower of London is believed to be 40 years old. Ravens commonly reach twenty years old and are among the longest-lived birds, and, vertebrates, for that matter. Will the pair return to the Hampton Bays water tower in 2013? It's a good bet that they will. Wouldn't it be grand if this new-to-Long Island breeder's offspring took advantage of all of the other water towers here, as well as all of our bridges and tall buildings, following in the footsteps of the Peregrine Falcon, as it were?



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 New York Ornithological Association (NYSOA). 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 of that count. No fee will be collected this year and the results will be available online. 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.

Contact the compiler if you would like to participate. You don't need to be an expert birder to participate. If you are in a count area, you can offer to count birds at your feeder.

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 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

Count	Date	Compiler	Contact Information
Quogue to Water Mill CBC	Sat., Dec. 15	Steve Biasetti	Hm 874.4684 Wk 765.6450 x205 biafamily@optonline.net sbiasetti@eastendenvironment.org
Montauk CBC	Sat., Dec. 15	Karen Rubinstein Angus Wilson	karrubi@gmail.com oceanwanderers@gmail.com
Sagaponack CBC	Undetermined		Consult ELIAS web site for compiler & date
Central Suffolk CBC	Thurs., Dec. 27	Eileen Schwinn	516.662.7751 beachmed@optonline.net
Orient CBC	Sat., Dec. 29	MaryLaura Lamont	631.722.5542
Smith Point to Shinnecock Inlet WF Census	Contact Coordinator	Jay Kuhlman	sjkuhlman@aol.com 631.878.4461
Yaphank to Peconic Bay WF Census	Midweek Jan 19 to 27	John McNeil	631.281.2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net
Montauk to Amagansett WF Census	Contact Coordinator	Frank Quevedo	631.537.9735 sofoexdir@optonline.net
Reeves Bay to Noyack Bay WF Census	John McNeil Jan 19 to 27	Midweek Jan 19 to 27	631.281.2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net
Fresh Pond to Sag Harbor WF Census	Midweek Jan 19 to 27	John McNeil	631.281.2623 jpmcneil@verizon.net

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). However, 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 may also be 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.

See the chart above are the people to contact to join the CBC and the Waterfowl Census.



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 AND LANDSCAPING

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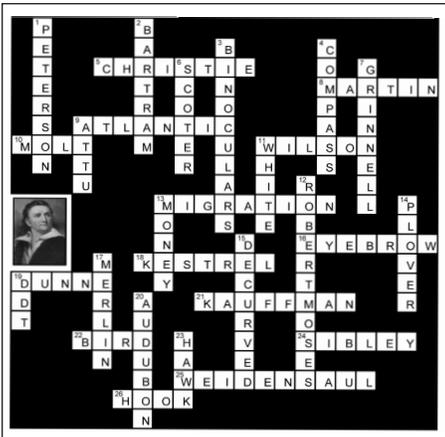
369 Montauk Highway
 East Moriches, NY 11940
 631-909-4630
 baygardens.ny@gmail.com

Eastport Feeds, Inc.

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 Black Oil Sunflower Seed
 Suet
 Nutrena Products
 Triumph® Horse Feed
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140 East Moriches Blvd.
 Eastport, NY 11941
 631-325-0077

Answers to last issue's puzzle
 Famous Birders by Tom Moran



Names of Groups of Birds by Tom Moran

Across

1. A group of birds of prey often in a rising thermal
3. Extracting gas from rocks, current environmentally controversial method of drilling for energy
5. A group of Crows
6. A group of Ravens – black birds with a secret?
10. A group of Woodcocks – maybe for part of its aerial breeding display
11. Besides an Eagle's nest, also one of the words for a flock
13. A group of Jays – their harsh calls do seem to make this sound
15. A gaggle of _____
16. A southern bird seen at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge this year – 2 words
18. _____ Bluebird, a western visitor this year at 25A and Hulse Landing Rd
21. _____ Grosbeak and Indigo Buntings were seen at Gilgo this year
22. Large rafts of these birds can be seen off the shore of LI in the winter
23. A group of Geese in flight, apparently from the shape

Down

2. An uncommon sighting locally made at Captree SP this year – 2 words
4. A group of Quail
6. A group of Penguins – but not part of the original 13
7. An unusually large number of Snowy Owls migrated south last year, referred to as an _____
8. This group of birds is referred to as a chain, that would mean they are _____
9. A collection of Herons – maybe for the types of plants they hide in
12. Convocation – this is a second word for a group of our country's national bird
14. A group of Goldfinches – these bracelets are often made from gold
17. Location of our annual dinner – 2 words
19. AKA Montauk Point, a good place to bird in the winter – 2 words
20. A group of ducks on the water
22. Sightings of Pectoral and Buffy Sandpipers were seen at there Riverhead _____ Farms



Left to right: Carl at Terrell River County Park, at Ditch Plains with Tom Moran, Hunters Garden with Dick Belanger and on a very cold day at Smith Point with Al Scherzer.

Rare Days, Rarer Birds and a Rare Leader

Carl Starace

Time spent in our eastern Suffolk woods and along our beaches are, most always, rewarding ones. But then, every once in a while, a day stands apart from the others. A Central Suffolk Waterfowl Census one January with Steve Biasseti comes to mind. It was a clear blue mid-January day and we were bundled up in parkas and heavy gloves making the rounds of creeks and bayfront in, I recall, East Quogue when we came upon a Red-throated Loon on the ice not far from the creeks edge. What we soon realized was that this Loon was not upon the ice but a part of it. Its feet enclosed in its grip. What to do? Well, we didn't hesitate. We soon had found a long, stout looking branch among the shoreline detritus. We next lay on the ice forming a human ladder with one of us holding the others ankles. Beating the ice just in front of the bird caused the ice to break up just enough to free the Loon. It half flew, half skimmed just above the surface out to open water and calmly set down. We were ecstatic. The ice had held for us and we had just freed one of our favorite winter birds.

Those of us who put in a lot of birding miles love to get tips from others when a bird rare to our region is found. I got a call one evening from my birding colleague Andy Baldelli of Riverhead. He excitedly told me that a birder not from New York had found a Northern Lapwing in a small field near the bay in Bridgehampton that afternoon. This was no North American straggler but a genuine stray from the European mainland. Lone birds such as this are said to be blown far off course by the intense Atlantic storms that rage off that continent. The Lapwing had a record of sightings for a number of coastal states in-

cluding New York. But there hadn't been one recorded on Long Island in close to thirty years. I arose early to meet Steve and Andy in the hopes that this Atlantic voyager had not moved out of the area. When we got to the lane where it had been seen, we noticed several carloads of birders moving ever so slowly along the fields boundaries. Suddenly the lead car stopped and people emerged with scopes in hand. We noticed the Lapwing at just that same moment. It was at the far end of an overgrown farm field oblivious to all our commotion just picking away at some late summer insects. Within a half an hour there were probably 60 tripods set up on a berm along the northern end of the property. This bird is a beauty. It is a Plover, longer by an inch than our Black-bellied and quite stunning with a long thin crest, broad black breast, pure white belly and warm orange undertail coverts. It actually stayed put for several more days in that place which made most everyone in the birding community very happy. Every year brings new bird surprises. Like the Mountain Bluebird spotted by Diana Teta last December as she was out scouting for an upcoming Christmas Count. Then there was that tiny Dovekie that was found diving for meals in an Oakdale canal one January. It too lingered for all to see. A personal favorite rarity of mine was the Scissortail Flycatcher that Jim Clinton Sr., Steve Biasseti and I came upon early one June morning while doing the Breeding Bird Census. We had been walking along the boundary path in the big field that faces County Road 51 just to the south of Hunters Garden when Steve yelled out, *Scissortail Flycatcher*. The Scissortail is the longest tailed of all North American Flycatchers. That is the first thing you notice. It was perched on a tall thistle and it

moved to several different perches as we followed with our scopes and binoculars. What was especially nice was the perfect lighting we had looking westwards with the sun at our backs. In flight we could see its wide split tail and its bright pink underwings and lower belly. After close to 8 minutes of viewing it flew straight by us, quickly gaining height, passing over Rte 51 and then it was gone. I believe we all left our feet that first moment in the pure joy of seeing a species whose home ground basically covers 3 states, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. A very good day of birding with friends had become one to be remembered for a lifetime.

PS I wish to tell my friends at ELIAS and readers of my articles that my partner Sally Swain and I are beginning a new life out in Central Oregon. Its been a wonderful 27 years with Audubon here in Eastern Suffolk and I wish everyone all the best. *Good birding to you all.*

ELIAS members will miss Carl, in addition to writing a column in The Osprey he has led many field trips. He has taken groups to Montauk, Smith Point, Hunters Garden, Cup-sogue, Dune Road and Shinnecock, Terrell River and his last walk to the sod fields of Riverhead and EPCAL. We are so grateful that he is so willing to share his knowledge and experience. He has been a regular participant in the Christmas Bird Count and the Waterfowl Census.

He makes his living as a painter and a muralist. Talents he will be able to take with him to Oregon. He and Sally have decided on Oregon and expect to find a vibrant and new avian community to explore. All our best wishes go with them in their new adventure.

Good birding to you and Sally!

Sally Newbert, Editor

A Visit to The Camargue

Michael Beck, PhD

The Camargue is one of the largest deltas in Western Europe. It is the area in France, south of Arles, where the Rhone River drains into the Mediterranean. This area has grown over the years because of deposition of silt from the material picked up by the Rhone in its course from northern France down to the Mediterranean. Naturally, all kinds of environments have been created in this delta. For many years, the area has been mined for salt. In addition, excellent rice is grown in the area. The harvested rice leaves gleanings at the end of the season, and is a real treat for the birds. Just driving by these rice fields, one can see a variety of birds feeding on the rice. The most dramatic bird of the Camargue is the Flamingo. They're attracted to the food here which helps to give them their pink color. In my course of riding through the Camargue with a guide, we saw Flamingos all over the place. They were really hard to miss. Among other prominent birds were very colorful Bee-eaters which flew out randomly from many different places. Naturally, there's a wide variety of insects that attract the Bee-eaters. I was also thrilled to see so many Harriers. This is the Montague Harrier. I drove through a number of different settings in the Camargue and it didn't seem to matter where I was as the Harriers were quite common and easy to spot based on their coloration and large size relative to the other types of birds.

Naturally in this type of environment there are many, many kinds of herons. They are attracted to the wetland environment. Other kinds of shore and wading birds were common including Avocets and Stilts as were many varieties of gulls which we don't have here. It was interesting to observe and identify these species. Another attractive bird, but one that I didn't see is the Hoopoe, it has a prominent crest and is supposed to be quite common here. There are also many kinds of tits. These, of course, are related to our Chickadees. There are some warblers in the area unfortunately, I did not spot any.



Friday, November 16 and Saturday, November 17
Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, NY

Keynote Speaker: Peter Alden,
Author of Audubon Society's regional field guide series.

Speakers & Topics include:

Mike Bottini on River Otters

Rob DiGiovanni on Marine Mammals & Sea Turtles

Shai Mitra on Bird Migration

Byron Young on The Long Island Alewife: Biology, Ecology & Restoration

Mike Bottini, John Turner and Don Riepe will lead field trips.

More Information is available at LongIslandNature.org
Basic Registration is \$20.00/Student registration is \$15.00

If you are in Europe and you want to really have an excellent birding experience, I recommend you go to the Camargue. There are other features in the area. Two types of bulls exist here: the Spanish bull and the French bull. Bull fighting is allowed in Southern France. Bull fighting in this part of France keeps a low profile as it's somewhat controversial. I asked my guide if the French favor the French bull because the French bull is not killed in the arena but they do still kill the Spanish bulls which are more aggressive. He didn't see the humor in my comment and told me they liked all kinds of bulls. Wild horses are also raised in the area and they are rather famous. They kind of just roam around. I don't want to give the idea that the Camargue is a wild, unoccupied place because a lot of commercial farming goes on there. Nevertheless, the wildlife and commercial activity seem to co-exist pretty mutually. There aren't a lot of villages or settled areas but numerous farms exist. If you miss some of the birds that you were looking for, there's a bird sanctuary located nearby and you can visit

Cranes and their kin.

We had a whirl wind tour of the Camargue and we got to cover a lot of territory. I would recommend that you rent a bicycle or go on horseback, if you are so inclined, and you would probably spot a lot more bird life than I was able to see. The Camargue is an area that requires more than a day's visit as there is a wide variety of habitats and naturally the diversity of habitats support different kinds of wild life. There are wild boars in the Camargue and beavers. Again, as I said earlier, if you are in France make it your business to visit the Camargue.

We don't know how lucky we are here in the United States. In suburban areas and city areas in France there is very little bird life. Get out into the wooded areas in France, of course, things change quickly, but I would say on the whole that we have a much greater variety of bird life in our suburban and city areas compared to what I've seen in my travels in Europe.

Adventures in the field



Carl Starace, third from the left, led the Sept. 16 walk that ended at EPCAL watching the American Kestrels. Right, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher near one of the ponds.



September 16 The sod fields of Riverhead and runways or EPCAL

Sally Newbert

The trip to the North Fork Preserve was unexpectedly cancelled when Carl Starace visited the Preserve a few days before the trip and was badly bitten by, what is assumed to be Lone Star Tick nymph leaving him with over 300 itchy bites. So after emails, postings and a contingent at the North Fork Preserve to redirect, the group scoped out the sod fields of Riverhead spotting a Northern Harrier just sitting and waiting, several flocks of plovers and the highlight, a flyby of a Nighthawk. The tern-like flight and the white patches mid-wing being clues to its identity.

From there we went on to EPCAL. Entering from Route 25 on the fairly newly built road that goes across the property. This property now seems to be open to the public, no blocked roads, or police presence. There was a group of model airplane enthusiasts using the western most runway. We were able to drive on this runway, and watch a Northern Harrier hunt and American Kestrels that were both sitting on the runway and hovering, in their distinctive style as they looked for a food. Be careful if you go, the runway on the east is used by a sky-diving school and does have an airplane coming and going. Meadowlarks and some

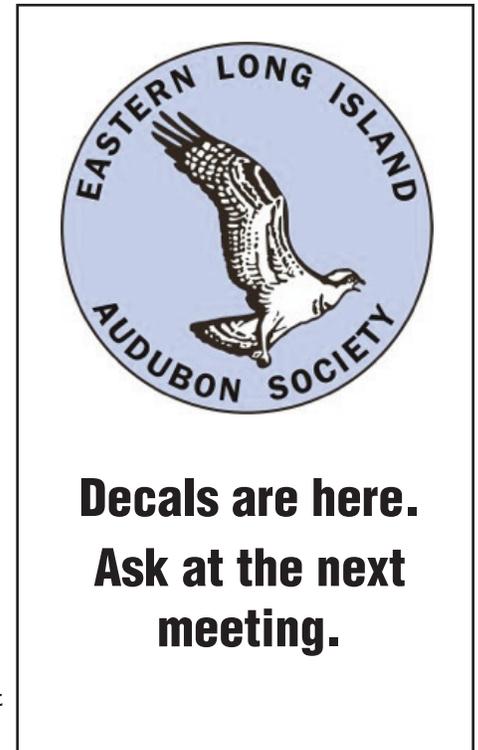
interesting sparrows can usually be seen at EPCAL. On the way home at a stop along River Road we spotted a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher beside one of the ponds.

To My Feeder Watchers

John McNeil

Words can not express my gratitude to all those Feeder Watches who took part in our feeder survey this past season. Another year is here and I hope you will participate again. To start off this season, I had my feeding station out early in September, trying to catch a few sighting of some migrants. I was not disappointed. I had several Red-breasted Nuthatches at the suet feeder along with a Carolina Wren that was doing traffic control, yakking up a storm giving commands like an air traffic controller and keeping the squirrels away in the process. I had several Mockingbirds doing cat patrol, dive bombing those nasty intruders, keeping them away from the ground feeders.

On September 11, late in the afternoon I had a yard filled of Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds and in with them was a Yellow-headed Blackbird. This was a pleasant surprise. I have never seen one on the East Coast, never mind in my yard. Carl Starace reported on "Birds-L" recently that he had a female Yellow-headed Black-



**Decals are here.
Ask at the next
meeting.**

bird at the old camping grounds (now the ball fields near the FIN's station) at Smith Point County Park.

Now, it seems that my residents have settled in, they come everyday, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse flying back and forth taking one sunflower seed at a time, and a whole family of Northern Cardinals working another feeder. Once-in-awhile I had a Hairy Woodpecker but the Downey Woodpecker is the most predominant, coming everyday.

Well... that sums up some of the activity in my yard, tell me about yours when you send along your feeder survey and I will try to include it in feeder report. Also, check out the Winter Finch Report for 2012-2013, I have provided the link below: "<http://www.ofo.ca/webapp/site/page/view/articles.winterfinches>"

We might be in for a good year.

The feeder watcher form for November and December is on the next page.

John



Feeder Survey for November & December

John McNeil

The Survey will be conducted the first full week of the month starting on Sunday and ending the following Sunday. This survey takes place from October to June.

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.

SALLY NEWBERT



An orange put out to attract an Oriole, instead a chipmunk. If you would like to submit pictures of the birds or other critters on your bird feeders to be used with this column please send them to eliasosprey@optonline.net.

Survey Dates:

Sun., Nov. 4 to Sun., Nov. 11

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:

Sun., Dec. 2 to Sun., Dec. 9

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 _____



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Mark Your Calendars

Monday, Nov. 5

Meet at 7:15 pm

Nature Program (see page 1)

Magee Marsh

Linda Sullivan & Dianne Taggart

Sat., Nov. 10

Seed Sale at Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Gift items will be available

Saturday, Nov. 17

Meet at 9:00 am

Nature Walk (see page 1)

Jamesport State Park & Hallockville Farm Fields

MaryLaura Lamont, Leader

Sunday, Nov. 18

Meet at 9:00 am

Nature Walk (see page 1)

Old Mastic Autumn Bird Walk, William Floyd Estate

MaryLaura Lamont, Leader

Monday, Dec. 3

Meet at 7:15 pm

Nature Program (see page 1)

All things BATTY! Marisa Nelson, QWR Program Director

Sat., Jan 5, 2013

Nature Walk (see page 1)

Lakes around Patchogue

John McNeil, Leader

Christmas Bird counts take place in December.

Please call one of the leaders and arrange to participate. See page 5 for details.

Notes: There is no January meeting.

All programs are open to all.

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