



The Sandpiper

Great South Bay Audubon Society

A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Misconceptions of Bats: A Halloween Story

by Maria Brown, MS, PWS, GISP, Conservation Chair

As we approach Halloween, we will see many science fiction movies that demonize bats which contribute to the ongoing association of bats and the bad press they receive with "all things evil". Bats are amazing mammals that are critical to many ecosystems around the world. As vampire bats are the most demonized of all the bat species, I will begin with them! Out of the 1,330 species of bats that inhabit the Earth, there are only three species of bats that drink blood (sanguivores), the common vampire bat (*Desmodus rotundus*), the hairy-legged vampire bat (*Diphylla ecaudata*), and the white-winged vampire bat (*Diaemus youngi*). The common vampire bat prefers to feed on horses, cows, and pigs, while the latter two prefer to feed on birds. No bats have a preference to feed on humans.

On Long Island, we do not have vampire bats! The only bats we have are insectivorous bats (bats that eat insects) and not bats that consume blood. Vampire bats live in Mexico, Central and South America and just because they conduct their business after sundown does not necessarily make them malevolent; in fact they have strong social networks, don't mind sharing, and are incredibly clever as a means of survival.

Our Long Island insect-eating bats actually consume many pests such as mosquitoes, keeping their populations in check. One bat can consume up to 1000 insects in one night. Since mosquitoes on Long Island are vectors for disease such as West Nile Virus, bats help to reduce the spread of this zoonotic disease indirectly by consuming mosquitoes for food.

The release of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* provided the imagery of evil with nocturnal, bat-like behavior and the association of bats and blood. When vampire bats take a meal, they do not latch on and suck blood and they certainly don't turn people into vampires! They drink by making a quick slice with its sharp teeth and lap up a spoonful or two of blood. But vampire bat moms share some of their own hard-earned food with others in her colony (resource reciprocity). If a vampire bat does not eat every two to three days, it will starve, so this sacrifice for the benefit of the colony places each vampire bat who does share food at risk. Gerald Carter, who studies the social relationships of vampire bats at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama suggests that this cooperative relationship is functionally analogous to long-term and short-term friendships in humans and that vampire bats have strong social bonds within the colony (batcon.org). He also found that the out-of family food-sharing relationships are stronger than the in-family-related bats and suggests that this is a way to hedge bets against direct family catastrophe; the better relationships one has with individuals outside their immediate circle means the better chance of assistance if the family falters.

Vampire bats are "scary smart". The simple act of feeding requires them to be



Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. We think this vampire bat is cute; others may not agree.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS and MONTHLY PROGRAMS

All GSBAS Activities are FREE
and open to the public.

Join us and bring a friend.

General Membership Meetings are held on the
third Thursday of each month, except May,
(which is our Annual Dinner), July & August.

Pre-program refreshments begin at 7:00.

Program begins at 7:30 pm.

Held at Connetquot River State Park Preserve.
See page 3 for directions. Come early to chat
with our members and share your birding
adventures with us!

Thursday, November 17

November's speaker is Camilo Salazar, an environmental analyst for the Water Quality Division of Suffolk County and a professor at Suffolk Community College. He is currently involved with the salt marsh restoration at Wertheim which will restore 432 acres of salt marsh habitat. Camilo will discuss how the Wertheim project will improve the habitat for fish, crabs and shrimp and how it will affect the food chain.

Thursday, December 15

Annual Member Participation and
Holiday Celebration Night

Bring a treat to share, if you'd like, along with anything else you would like to share, such as photos, poetry, stories, books, etc. This is the last meeting of 2015 and it will give us an opportunity to take stock, look ahead, reflect on 2015 and enjoy some good company.

Connetquot Breakfast & Birding



Saturday, January 14
8:00 am - 11:00



Connetquot River State Park Preserve,
Sunrise Highway, Oakdale

See page 3 for more information

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Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Great South Bay Audubon Society is to advocate for the conservation of habitats for native birds and other native wildlife on Long Island.

The Sandpiper

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The Larry Merryman Memorial Library

is located at our
Brookside Headquarters,
59 Brook St. in Sayville. It can be
accessed Wednesday and Sunday
from 1 to 3pm.



Welcome New Members!

Great South Bay Audubon would like to welcome you to our chapter. We look forward to seeing you at our programs and events!

The Board-Walk by Annette Brownell

Greetings everyone and welcome to the loveliness of Autumn! Have you ever taken a walk along an old boardwalk where, although well built with a sturdy foundation, a number of the boards have begun to show more than a fair share of weathering and rot? You have to be careful where you step.

Well, that's where our Boardwalk is going this month. We have a terrific group of dedicated people on the Board of Great South Bay Audubon Society. We also have terrific volunteers that we are grateful for. But, as many people have been in positions for a long time, and we all get older and tired –many our grandchildren don't live locally so we travel more, or our parent is ill – or we are the ill parent – we need to freshen up our volunteer group.

The Board is continuously coming up with ideas to make this a great society, offering programs and events. Many of you don't take advantage of them. We wish you would. We look for interesting monthly speakers, work hard on the dinner and organize over 40 field trips a year. But we do need some people to volunteer as Brookside volunteers, hospitality committee people to set up for meetings and events. We need people to help with the annual dinner, and other fun and varied events.

People who have a volunteer heart tend to volunteer in more than one place, so some of the people are wearing thin as things change in other organizations. An example of this is that as Friends of Connetquot sadly lost one of their active members suddenly this summer, others have had to pick up more responsibility for a wonderful organization.

Please, please, please consider spending some of your time helping Great South Bay Audubon.

The Trees of Life and Death by Harry Anderson

Our word "tree" comes from the Old English word treow or treo. It is related to the Greek dou, meaning "spear or wood" and dru, meaning "oak." Even what constitutes a tree is debated. Bamboo, for instance, is a grass, not a tree, even though Timber Bamboo can grow to be 98 feet tall and sure looks like a tree. Some bamboo can grow 3 feet in 24 hours, but no tree can do that.

The slowest growing tree in the world is probably a White Cedar, found in the Canadian Great Lakes area. After 155 years, it grew to only 4 inches and weighed just 0.6 ounces. The fastest is a native of China - the Royal Empress or Foxglove tree. The species can grow to 85 feet in just 7 years. The world's smallest is the Least Willow that tops off at 2.4" in height.

A Great Banyan in India occupies an area of about 4 acres of 3772 aerial roots. No one will plow that field. One large tree anywhere can supply oxygen for two people and in one day it can life up 100 gallons of water out of the ground and discharge it into the atmosphere.

The General Sherman, a giant sequoia, is a forest unto itself. In volume it is the largest tree in the world with 52,000 cubic feet of wood. The tallest is also here - a coastal redwood topping 379.4 feet. That's 73.7 higher than the Stature of Liberty. The widest still grows in Oaxaca, Mexico. It is a cypress with a trunk diameter of 38.1 feet. If it were in the middle of a tennis court, you couldn't walk by it.

Researchers have announced the dating of a 5,062-year-old Bristlecone Pine in the White Mountains of California, which is now the world's oldest tree. It started to grow about the time the Aztecs were controlling central Mexico.

An untold number of trees have been cut down in Brazil's rainforest, clearing acreage to grow soy beans. and other crops, while almost one quarter of all natural medications have been found in this rainforest, a place that is also responsible for one quarter of the world's oxygen turnover. The World Wildlife Fund estimates that by the year 2030, 60% of this critical place can be destroyed completely or ruined beyond redemption.

A cautionary tale is Haiti where less than 1.5% of Haiti's original tree cover remains today Consider what that does to the quality of life. In contrast, U.S. urban forests sequester an estimated 25.6 million tons of carbon every year.

The most poisonous tree known is the Manchineel, found in Florida and the Caribbean. Columbus' sailors called it "manzamita de la muerte", little apple death. Its sap is a milky white juice that is extremely caustic and poisonous. Drops of rain falling from its branches can cause blistering and severe burns. When the Manchineel's bark burns, the smoke can cause permanent blindness. Where possible, trees in an area accessible to the public, carry warning signs for good reason. Parts of many trees are poisonous including Black Walnut, Red Maple, Cherry and Plum and Oaks.

Nobody knows for sure how many tree species there are in the world. A guess is 25,000. Another guess is that there are 4 trillion, 967 million trees themselves. Reasonably accurate satellite images indicate that the forested areas of the world right now stand at 9.6 billion acres.

There is strong evidence that trees have memory. They can encode information, retain it and retrieve it when needed. When passed down, wonder what they remember about us.

"Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realize we cannot eat money."

-- Cree Indian Proverb

Great South Bay Audubon Society Activities

General Membership Meetings and Programs

All General Membership Meetings are held at Connetquot River State Park Preserve in the beautiful and historic main building. The entrance is in the back of the building; please park near the garages. There is a handicap ramp at this entrance. Please do not park on the grass or in the circle in front of the building.

Join us at 7:00 p.m. for pre-program refreshments and casual conversation. Our bird experts will be on hand to field your questions, discuss equipment and share their favorite birding spots.

Directions to the Connetquot River State Park Preserve: Approaching from the East, the entrance is on the north side of the Sunrise Highway (Route 27), opposite the Sunrise-Montauk Highway merge. From the West, exit Sunrise Highway (Route 27) at Oakdale-Bohemia Road, cross over Sunrise Highway, merge on to westbound Route 27 and watch for the Park entrance on the right.

Louise Titus Memorial Tuesday Midweek Walks

Tuesday, Nov 1, 9:30 am, Blydenburg CP Entrance on Veterans Highway just west of the Route 347 merge. Use Blydenburgh entrance not Greengate Park entrance. Meet in the parking lot at the boat ramp area.

Tuesday, Nov 8, 9:30 am, Sunken Meadow SP Meet in the main parking lot in front of the main pavilion near the traffic circle. (Our last Tuesday walk for the season)

Weekend Nature Walks

Saturday, November 19, 8:00 am, Wertheim NWR Leaders: John Gluth (631-827-0120) Vera Capogna (516-639-5430) From the intersection of Montauk and William Floyd Highways in Shirley, proceed West on Montauk Highway 7/10 of a mile to traffic light (Smith Road) turn left, go over the railroad tracks and proceed to make a right into Wertheim Visitor Center. There are signs both on Montauk Highway and on Smith Road at the turnoff into Wertheim.

Sunday, November 20, 9:00 am, Morton NWR

Leaders: Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) Sunrise Highway east past Shinnecock Canal. Look for A North Sea Road Noyack sign and bear left on CR52. Stay on CR52 and then turn left at light onto CR38. After 1.4 miles on CR38, turn right onto Noyack Road after 5 miles turn left onto refuge.

Saturday, December 10, 9:00 am, Montauk

Leaders: Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) Meet at Lighthouse parking lot. Latecomers can still join in the vicinity of the restaurant overlook. Directions Route 27 to 27A to end.

Saturday, January 7, 9:00 am, Montauk Leaders: John Gluth (631-827-0120), Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) Meet at Lighthouse parking lot. Latecomers can still join in the vicinity of the restaurant overlook. Directions Route 27 to 27A to end.

Saturday, January 14, 8:00 am, Connetquot River SPP, Breakfast & Birding

Leaders: Bob & Edith Wilson, Ken Thompson, Helga Merryman Continental breakfast hosted by Friends of Connetquot. Reservations required - call Connetquot River State Park Preserve at 631-581-1072 to register. Registration fee \$4. plus \$8 parking fee per car - unless you have yearly Empire pass.

Saturday, February 4, 8:30 am, Jones Beach West End Leaders: Mike Cooper (516-523-2369, Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Meet in the parking lot near the Coast Guard Station at West End.

Saturday, March 4, 8:30 am, Bob Laskowski Memorial Duck Walk Leader: Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Meet at Brookwood Hall, Islip Town Park in East Islip on Irish Lane between Montauk Hwy and Union Blvd.



Photo by Ken Thompson

Many species of birds are spotted on the trip to Elizabeth Morton National Wildlife Refuge, a few of which will eat seed from your hand. Although the Wild Turkey (above) is frequently seen on this trip, this bird will not eat seed from your hand!

Young Naturalists Club

Meets first Sunday of the month at 1:15pm, Brookside County Park, 59 Brook St. Sayville

The Young Naturalists Club focuses on learning about nature and stewardship of a natural area. Outdoor activities include crafting nature boxes and pinecone feeders, nature scavenger hunts, hiking the trails, gardening, and maintaining bird-feeding stations. Indoor activities include examining birds' nests and feather displays and special presentations on subjects such as the Northern Bobwhite Quail, local marine creatures, and bird watching. For details on upcoming Young Naturalists Club activities, please email info@gsbas.org or call 631-581-1731, or visit our website: www.gsbas.org. Registration is not required but recommended. Program is free, but donations are welcome, and joining GSBAS is encouraged.

MEMBER'S CORNER

Birding in South Africa

by Dr. Michael J. Beck

I was fortunate to have an opportunity to spend time in the Okavango Delta where I saw many species of the approximately 700 species that make their home in Africa.

The iconic bird is the African Fish Eagle. We saw several of these perched in trees. I was able to see the nests, which are not as large as the American Eagle. They have a beautiful russet stripe on their wing, which gives them a fabulous appearance.

We also saw many Bateleurs but were unable to get close enough to really appreciate their colors. This is probably the most colorful of the birds of prey. Only a few Vultures were seen. Vultures are endangered because when poachers kill something the Vultures of course show up. The poachers are killing the vultures so their overhead flight doesn't give away the location of the poached animal.

When I was in Pretoria I stayed in a bed and breakfast, which had many species of plants, put in by the owners. In the morning I would hear this raucous noise. The owner told me it was a Glossy Ibis. They looked very strange perched on a limb because this is a very large bird. The

owner told me that she was happy that the Ibis was there because it ate all the crickets that made her nervous. She should see my basement if she's nervous about crickets. One of the birds that I saw all over the place was the Go Away bird, which looks like a Grey Cardinal on

steroids. Anybody who's insecure shouldn't hang around with the Go Away bird because that's what it says all the time.

Another really interesting bird was the Saddleback Stork, which has a beautiful coloration on its bill. We saw numerous Marabou Storks along the Zambezi River. They're kind of like the Bullies of the wetlands since they'll eat anything. Another common bird is the Egyptian Goose, which is a very colorful bird. If we could substitute it for our local Canadian Goose the goose would get more love. The Hammerkop actually looks like a bird that has a hammer for a head. Many German children grew up thinking that their name is 'dummkopf'.

Coming back from a late night game drive we spotted the Spotted Eagle Owl, which is another great species to see there. We saw many Helmeted Guinea Fowl all over the place. They would probably solve the tick problem all over Suffolk County since they are busy clearing stuff from the ground.

There are many species of Kingfishers in South Africa. We saw several of them. One of them is a meat eater rather than a fish eater, which kind of surprised me until I remembered the Kookaburra, which I believe is a Kingfisher also, eats meat rather than fish. That's the Brown Hooded Kingfisher who's the meat eater. We also saw many red and yellow Hornbills. As you know they have an interesting habit which is that the female finds a hollow tree and she goes in there and

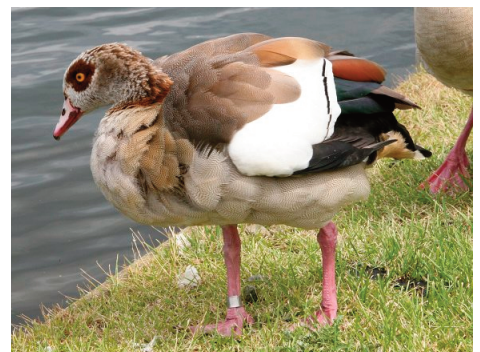


The Brown-Hooded Kingfisher rarely eats meat, unlike our local species, the Belted Kingfisher whose diet consists mostly of fish.

removes her flight feathers to make a bed for the new-borns. The male seals her up in there with mud. I assume this is probably to keep the snakes out, but if the male gets killed he can't get back to open the nest and leave her out. So it's kind of a precarious existence, but nevertheless

these birds are quite common and we were happy to see many of them.

We saw Lilac Breasted Rollers all over the place. This is the national bird of one of the countries we visited. Our guide who was very informed about everything



The Egyptian Goose is a common South African species, much like our Canada Goose, but much more colorful.

told us that one of the countries either substituted this for the national bird or removed it. He said that the people were pretty upset. So I can't imagine them doing this in the United States, but nevertheless that's what happened to one of the countries in Africa which got a different national bird for reason that are not known to me.

These are the highlights of my time there. I could mention numerous other birds but I highly recommend a trip to South Africa for birding. We were only in a limited area of the range and habitat of many birds and there are game parks, which encompass a variety of habitats that we didn't get to visit. So it seems like another trip to South Africa is in order to explore some of these other habitats.



Saddleback Stork displaying its striking bill pattern.

CHAPTER NEWS

Ed Davis Memorial Beach Cleanup

by Jody Banaszak

This year's annual beach cleanup was held at Sunken Forest/ Sailors Haven, Fire Island. We had eight volunteers, including five newcomers.

It was a beautiful day, despite dark clouds. We walked approximately ½ miles along the ocean beach picking up trash. One of the rangers helped document the debris, as I couldn't write fast enough, making two groups. Of course I couldn't help collecting my treasures along the way.

The most collected trash was 168 bottle caps, 106 pieces of plastic, 51 plastic bags and 65 balloons which is unfortunate since plastic bags and balloons are so harmful to wildlife. Sea turtles and other wildlife mistake the plastic or deflated balloons for jellyfish and try to eat it, choking and dying in the process. I've seen gulls with plastic six pack rings around their necks, and fishing line around their throat. It only takes a second to throw



Not only are beach cleanups beneficial for aesthetic reasons, they also bring awareness to the dangers of pollution. Here a tossed away plastic bottle cap was deadly for this oystercatcher.

trash out the proper way. I always bring bags with me to collect shells and driftwood when I walk along the beach. One bag is for trash and the other for my goodies. Then I bring it home to discard.

After the cleanup, we brought all the trash to the ranger station, weighed it and headed off for lunch at the food stand. I got to know the new people and reminisced with the old ones. A good time was had by all!! Thank you to the rangers who helped us. Looking forward to next year!

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for one or two people to help out our Hospitality Committee. Hospitality sets up and organizes the beverages and snacks that are served at our meetings and events.

To continue our stewardship at Brookside County Park we must have volunteers present at least twice a week. We are looking for a few more people for Wednesdays and Sundays for just two hours a month to fill the feeders, walk the trails and pick up trash. You will be trained and paired up with someone. The perks of this volunteer job is that you get to spend a few hours in a beautiful environment helping out a worthy cause. Please contact Vera for more information or if you think you might be interested: vlvcap@yahoo.com or 631-563-4969.

May Dinner

Save the date for our annual May Dinner. John Cardone, author and terrific photographer will be our speaker. You can check out some of his work on Water-viewsbook.com. We are hoping to re-vamp some of our organization in regard to the dinner and are looking for volunteers that would be willing to solicit donations by writing letters to businesses and retailers. This is your dinner and suggestions are as welcome as extra hands are. We would like to hold our first brainstorming meeting in January. Please contact Annette at 631-665-4405 or email her: nettiesbaskets2@optonline.net.

A Late Summer Hike

by Janet Gremli

On Sunday, September 4, 2016, members of the Young Naturalist Club met at Brookside County Park for a spectacular late summer day outdoors. Asked what visions come to mind when you think of Nature, Cassie was very decisive, "Flowers", she stated. As a student currently studying biology, she was very keen to learn of the variety of plant species that dominate the park. Our group of three young teens and three adults hiked the trails throughout Brookside, identifying the many vines, trees and ground covers we encountered. Few birds were present, other than a hairy woodpecker, Carolina wren and several robins and mourning doves. We were amazed at the massive size of the Snapping turtle sunning itself on the fallen log in the west pond. Several small painted turtles glistened at the tip of the log, dwarfed in the



Participants of the Young Naturalist Club help keep Brookside County Park clean by collecting litter along the trails.

shadow of the giant nearby. The effects from the diminished rainfall of this past season were observed as most of the waterways had receded from their nearby embankments. The shallow streams revealed more muck than water and exposed broken tree limbs submerged long, long, ago. Ending the day, our group took with them dozens of beautiful photos of insects, plants and flowers, new experiences and many visions of what comes to mind when you think of Nature!

"Cash for Causes" our Ongoing Fundraiser

A simple way to help out the chapter is by purchasing Stop and Shop gift cards from us. We purchase them at a discounted rate and sell them at face value.

Available in increments of \$50, they will be for sale at our general membership meetings, or you can mail a check to Annette Brownell, 1411 Saxon Ave., Bay Shore, NY 11706. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Call Annette with any questions: 631-665-4405. Thank you for your support!



On The Move by Steve D'Amato

It is Fall, and the annual hawk migration season has started. We here on Long Island are fortunate to live near one of the flight corridors on the East Coast, the barrier islands off the south shore of Long Island. From the end of August through the beginning of November, raptors from the northeast part of this continent migrate through a number of routes. The broad-winged, soaring raptors such as the vultures, buteonine hawks (red-tails, red-shoulders, broad-wings), and both Bald and Golden Eagles, usually migrate inland through the mountain ridges in order to take advantage of updrafts and thermals which helps keep them aloft.

Along the coastline, we do not get the variety of raptors found inland. Though places like Hawk Mountain PA also get the same raptors migrating through as we do, those moving through Fire Island are more restricted. Many of the inland species rely on those thermals for their migration whereas the birds migrating along the barrier islands do not 'rely' on them. They will take advantage of them when one rises right from below, but it does not appear that they seek them out.

Our migrants range from the smaller raptors, the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), and Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), to the medium



The total trend analysis from 1982 through 2015 for all raptor migrants showed a negative slope. Some, such as Sharp-shinned Hawks and American Kestrel (left), showed a significant decline. More than half showed a minor increase over the years. Others, such as Ospreys, Cooper's Hawks, Peregrines, and Bald Eagles, (right) showed a significant positive trend over the years. However, one must be careful analyzing these trends. Over the course of 33 years, Bald Eagles went from 1 every few years, all the way up to 6 for some of the later years. Not exactly a population explosion!



sized raptors such as Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) and Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*), to the larger raptors, such as the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). A few times a season, we will get Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and twice since the beginning of our record keeping in 1982, we had a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) go through. Some seasons, we will get the largest accipitrine hawk, the Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). The hawk watch has only had one species of New World vulture (of the two found on the East Coast) since the watch began in 1982, and that is the Turkey Vulture, (*Cathartes aura*), and that was only 4 birds between 1982 – 2015, one in 2006, two in 2008, and one in 2013.

The importance of this record keeping is it shows how the populations of these raptors are changing. Being apex predators, if the numbers of migrants are going down and continually drop, then there can be a couple of reasons for that. The BEST CASE SCENARIO is that there might have been a modification of the migration route forcing the birds to travel on a different migration path. The WORST CASE SCENARIO is the species has reduced its numbers because of environmental problems, whether from its breeding grounds or its wintering grounds: lack of prey, nesting sites, environmental poisoning, etc.

We are not able to conduct the same type of population study during the Spring migration as the raptors move back north to nest. They do not follow the same pathways nor concentrate as they do when they migrate south during the Fall. So Fall migration is the time to collect the data for raptor population statistics.

Misconceptions of Bats *continued from cover*

quite clever. One strategy they use is to "run" up to their target along the ground which aids in remaining concealed from their target food source. Vampire bats have large brains for their body size compared to other bats. And in particular, they have a relatively giant neocortex (twice as big as other bats), the part of the brain associated with complex social bonds. Scientists have found that they have daily routines and that a social hierarchy exists in bat colonies.

Vampire bat saliva contains chemicals called anticoagulants that keep blood from clotting. From their research on vampire bats, scientists have developed a medicine to help heart patients called Draculin!

Other misconceptions that I have commonly encountered include the following:

Bats are not rodents or flying mice as most people believe, they are classified in their own order of mammals called Chiroptera, which translates as "hand-wing". As you examine the wing of a bat, you will notice that their bone structure is the same as that of a human hand. They are more closely related to primates and lemurs than they are rodents. Less than 1% of all bat species carry rabies (batconservation.org). Since bats

are mammals, and all mammals have the potential to carry rabies virus, they can pose a risk, but no more than a wild fox, coyote, or even a domestic dog who has had a wildlife encounter. You stand a better chance of being hit by lightning or than you do of being bitten by a bat with rabies. Bats are not dirty and groom themselves in the same way a cat does. Their hair is often very soft and silky. Although our insectivorous bats on Long Island hunt by using echolocation, most people believe that bats cannot see and will fly into their hair; in fact, they can see quite well with their tiny eyes. Fruit bats found in the neotropics can actually see in color. Therefore, the phrase "blind as a bat" has no merit! The combination of their sight and echolocation, it is highly unlikely a bat will fly into a person's hair.

Although vampire bats take a blood meal, most bats actually do more good than harm for humans in that they disperse seeds and pollen and help in the cultivation of cash crops such as almonds, cashews, bananas, plantain, figs, tequila, and papaya. In China, bats are held in high esteem and are considered omens of good luck and happiness. The word for bat means happiness and good luck in Chinese. So this Halloween season, consider all of the great things bats do for humans without being influenced by the bad press they have received in the past.

BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

Compiled by Helga Merryman

FALL 2016-SPRING 2017

As I write this, a huge storm is raging along the southeastern coast, and although we in the north have been assured that we are not in danger, it was strange to wake up this morning to air that was so still it seemed like the eye of a storm. Due to the lack of breeze the mosquitoes in my yard were very active, and most birds were inactive except for the sparrows who were gorging themselves on coneflower seeds. A slight breath of air started the trees to rustle and was a signal for a pair of Mockingbirds to begin an hour's long chase through the trees that was reminiscent of the Blue Angels as they maneuvered through branches emitting loud chips. I wondered if this behavior was role playing to prepare them for next year's mating or maybe they were just adolescents blowing off steam.

Well we're at the start of another feeder survey, and I look forward to a new season with our past participants and welcome all newcomers.

The GSBAS Feeder Survey has been run for many years. The reward of the survey is to bring awareness of nature to our doorstep and share our observations with others.

How Does the Survey Work?

1) The counting period is 5 months from November to March. You may choose to participate for only one month, several months or the full period of five months.



The Red-bellied Woodpecker is one of the many birds that will visit your feeders during the winter.

2) During the first 15 days of each month, keep your feeders filled. Whenever you view your feeders, count the number of each individual bird species you observe. Report the largest number of each individual species seen at any one time, e.g., if you see 10 Cardinals on the 1st, 5 on the 2nd, 3 on the 3rd - report the largest number observed, i.e., 10. These birds can actually be at your feeder or attracted to your yard by the feeding activity.

3) Make five (5) copies of the form printed below, use(1) form per month to record the largest number of individuals of any species that you see at one time.

4) No later than the 19th of each survey month, mail your completed form to Helga Merryman, 38 South Carll Ave, Babylon, NY, 11702. You can also email your sightings and photos to me at eider55owl@optonline.net, please put FEEDER SURVEY in the subject line. I will compile the information and the results will be published in the following issue of *The Sandpiper*.

Survey Data: period from _____ to _____ Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Red-tailed Hawk _____

Sharp-shinned Hawk _____

Cooper's Hawk _____

Rock Pigeon _____

Mourning Dove _____

Monk Parakeet _____

Red-bellied Woodpecker _____

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker _____

Downy Woodpecker _____

Hairy Woodpecker _____

Northern Flicker _____

Blue Jay _____

American Crow _____

Black-capped Chickadee _____

Tufted Titmouse _____

Red-breasted Nuthatch _____

White-breasted Nuthatch _____

Carolina Wren _____

American Robin _____

Northern Mockingbird _____

Brown Thrasher _____

European Starling _____

Towhee _____

Fox Sparrow _____

Song Sparrow _____

White-throated Sparrow _____

Dark-eyed Junco _____

Northern Cardinal _____

Red-winged Blackbird _____

Common Grackle _____

Brown-headed Cowbird _____

House Finch _____

American Goldfinch _____

House Sparrow _____

OTHER SPECIES



Great South Bay Audubon Society

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Conservation: Maria Brown
Membership: Juliane Wohler (631) 581-1731
Publicity: Helga Merryman (631) 669-6473
Education: Juliane Wohler, Janet Gremli,
Jack Finkenberg
Audubon Activist: Open
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Librarian: Vera Capogna (631) 563-4969
Annual Dinner:
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Mailing: Ken Thompson (631) 612-8028
Email Responder: Vera Capogna (631) 563-4969
Answering the GSBAS Direct Phone:
Steve D'Amato

GSBAS Direct Phone Number (631) 563-7716
GSBAS Email address: info@gsbas.org

**For wildlife in need of rescue please call
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Great South Bay Audubon Society
PO Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782
A Chapter of National Audubon



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