



The Sandpiper

Great South Bay Audubon Society

A Chapter of National Audubon Society

ECO FOCUS:

Our Slowly Disappearing Night Sky A Growing Light Pollution Crisis

by Gail Marquardt Black

Less than a century ago our view of the night sky was starry and spectacular. Today millions of people on earth can no longer view the Milky Way at night, a disturbing result of the advent and spread of electricity. With the demand for newer and brighter night lighting, the evening sky has been slowly disappearing. A 2016 study revealed that 80% of the world population live under 'skyglow'—the artificial brightening of the night sky; in Europe and the US 99% of the population no longer experience natural night.

Besides affecting a natural night view of the universe, increasing and widespread use of excessive and inappropriate artificial light, called 'light pollution', is negatively impacting the world's ecosystems. All life—amphibian, bird, mammal, invertebrate and plant—is genetically adapted to day/night/seasonal cycles, which should be controlled by earth's predictable light rhythm. Human disruption to this natural light cycle, caused by light pollution, is now affecting behavior and physiological processes of animals and plants, with unknown long-term ecological consequences.

Both diurnal (day active) and nocturnal (night active) animals are affected by light pollution. Nocturnal animals—such as moths, bats, frogs—seem more noticeably affected by it and its impact on their habitats. Light pollution is changing animal behavior patterns and reproduction rates and making them more vulnerable to predators. Examples are numerous: sea turtle hatchlings who find the sea by the night sky have been drawn inland due to artificial beach lighting, resulting in the deaths of millions yearly; night-croaking frogs in wetland areas are impacted in their nocturnal breeding rituals, resulting in population decline; night-pollinating insects, such as moths and fireflies, display lowered pollination activity, as well as population reduction.

Birds are affected by light pollution in many ways. Recent studies have revealed subtle changes in bird breeding rituals/timing and feeding patterns, as increased use of artificial light impacts day length; future effects from this are a concern. Known for centuries, bright light at night surrounded by darkness disorients migrating or night-hunting birds and cause them to change their flight paths towards it; disorientation can lead to repeated chirping, circling until dawn, total exhaustion, building collision and death. A major mortality threat currently for fall and spring migrating birds (mainly night-migrating passerines), light pollution actually disrupts the celestial and magnetic orientation mechanisms birds possess, which have evolved to work with dimmer natural light sources. "Lights Out" programs that dim city lights during fall and spring migratory

continued on page 6



Birds, such as this Golden-winged Warbler, are frequently and fatally disoriented by artificial light and skyglow during migration.

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.

Thursday, Nov. 15

What it Takes to Compete in the Long Island Birding Challenge

Tim Dunn and a team of birders, Pteam Ptarmiggeddon, compete annually in the Seatuck Birding Challenge, winning first place three times. Sponsored by Great South Bay Audubon for the last several years, the team has had many interesting and humorous moments over the course of their competitions. Tim will talk about the highlights and lowlights involved in their annual effort to see all of the birds from Brooklyn to the Hamptons in one twelve-hour period.



Thursday, December 20

Member Participation Night

Holiday spirit, camaradery, good food, and lots of fun and laughs are what this night is about. Bring photos to share if you would like, a favorite book, a poem, a story, a treat: anything you would like to share with your fellow members. This is the last meeting of 2018 and it will give us an opportunity to reflect back on the year and look ahead to 2019 and enjoy some good company.

Connetquot Breakfast & Birding

Saturday, January 12

See Details on Page 3



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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Thank you to everyone who helps mail each issue.

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email: info@GSBAS.org
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Submission deadline for next issue is **November 30**.
Please send submissions to
vlvcap@yahoo.com



The Larry Merryman Memorial Library

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

The Year of the Bird



Visit:

BirdYourWorld.org
each month during 2018

President's Message by Jody Banaszak

Hello my little birding friends! Hope this newsletter finds you all well and happily birding. Well I have a new mocking bird. At 7am, a few weeks ago, I heard a big song like a red bellied woodpecker. Then a few seconds later I heard a mocking bird sing like it was from Evelyn Wood's speed birding tape! It was so fast and only less than a minute. This couldn't have been the usual mocking bird who woke me up early and didn't shut up all day. I hadn't heard that one all summer and figured he moved on. I guess it was an offspring, just starting to sing. Phew!

I was taking a shower the other day and noticed a spider on the floor of the tub. I was going to smush it but then thought of all the bugs birds eat. Birds can help us by eating the bad bugs in our gardens, such as cabbage worms, whiteflies, aphids, earwigs, grasshoppers, grubs and cucumber beetles. Thank goodness for swallows. They eat mosquitoes, flies, gnats and flying ants. Swallows can eat 60 insects per hour or 850 a day. THANK YOU! Sparrows, wrens, grouse, flickers and starlings eat ants. Bluebirds eat grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, larvae and moths. I'd like to put a bluebird in my pantry! Cardinals, chickadees, grosbeaks, and nuthatches eat the same and also stinkbugs, snails and caterpillars. So next time you go to kill a bug, think twice and save it for the birds!

We had a WONDERFUL "For the Birds Festival" in September. The kids had a great time drawing on the chalk board, watching Ranger Eric, getting their faces painted, taking a bird quiz, and looking for and identifying birds. Kelly Knutson, Audubon New York Field Organizer, came all the way from Troy, NY. Thanks for all the many volunteers who helped make this a great experience, especially Annette Brownell for making it a reality!! I would also like to thank Legislators Tom Cilmi and Bill Lindsay for taking time out of their busy day to attend the festival. A good time was had by all!! Happy Birding!!



Birds on the Page by Harry Anderson

*"may my heart always be open to little
birds who are the secrets of living
whatever they sing is better than to know"*
— E. E. Cummings

Birds have been the subject of literature for millennia. In 414 BC, Aristophanes wrote a play called, "The Birds," that featured a pet Crow and a pet Jackdaw. A popular video game, "Angry Birds" has a stylized Cardinal that lives only to frustrate gamers. The mythological Phoenix rose from the ashes and Tweety Bird drives Sylvester the Cat nuts.

Those four and twenty blackbirds that were baked in a pie were probably the *Turdus merula*, a European Blackbird. It is the rare child in our culture who doesn't know Donald and Daisy Duck or Hans Christian Andersen's "Ugly Duckling." Mother Goose is iconic.

It's a sin "to kill a Mockingbird" the classic novel reminds us. Poe's Raven still squawks "nevermore" as it first did in 1845. Maya Angelou tells us why "Caged birds sing." Hitchcock's "The Birds" continues to put us on edge and Gerard Manley Hopkins' Peregrine Falcon continues to move us with his poem, "The Windhover." We still "Make Way for Ducklings".

And as in print, birds have inspired music. Begin with "Swan Lake," the perennial ballet classic. There is Respighi's suite for small orchestra, "The Birds." He also recorded the sound of a Nightingale for a section of "The Pines of Rome." Mozart utilized a vocalization from his pet Starling in a piece of music. Olivier Messiaen transcribed bird songs in his "Catalogue d'oiseaux". The Finnish composer, Einojuhani Rautavaara, included the songs of birds from above the Arctic Circle in his "Concerto for Birds and Orchestra." Not to be outdone, Pink Floyd uses the ever popular Nightingale in "Cirrus Minor."

The poet, John Giffard, writes of the absence of bird song:

*In the cold morning air
In black and white striped flimsy clothes
Hungry and hopeless, fearful of what might come
In that dread place
Where no birds sing.*

A dreadful place indeed.



Great South Bay Audubon Society

General Membership Meetings and Programs

All General Membership Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month (except for May, July and August). Join us at 7:00 pm 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.

LOCATION FOR MEETINGS: Seatuck Environmental Association located at the Scully Estate, 550 South Bay Avenue, Islip NY 11751. **Directions:** Sunrise Highway (Rte. 27) to Exit 45 (Rte. 111/Islip/Smithtown), Follow signs to Rte. 111 South toward Islip. Rte. 111 ends at Main St. (Rte. 27A). Turn right onto Main St. (Rte. 27A). Turn left at first traffic light onto South Bay Ave. The entrance to the Environmental Center is almost exactly one mile south of Main St. on the right.

Louise Titus Memorial Tuesday Walks

Tuesday Walks will resume in March. See our website for a list of all nature walks.

Weekend Nature Walks

Saturday November 10, 8:30 am, Suffolk County Farm Leaders: John Gluth (631-827-0120) Vera Capogna (516-639-5430) 350 Yaphank Avenue Yaphank NY. Take Sunrise Highway to exit 57N, Horseblock Rd. Bear right onto County Road 21, Yaphank Ave. Travel approximately one mile to the Cornell Cooperative Extension on left. Turn left onto the entrance road. Take your first right and follow down and meet at the Visitors parking area on your left.

Sunday November 18, 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 8, 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 5, 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 12, Connetquot River SPP, 8:00 am, Breakfast & Birding Leaders Bob & Edith Wilson, Ken Thompson, Helga Merryman, Jack Carlson Continental breakfast hosted by Friends of Connetquot. Reservations required - call Connetquot River State Park Preserve at 581-1072 to register. Registration fee \$4. plus \$8 parking fee per car - unless you have Empire pass.

Saturday February 2, 8:30 am, Jones Beach West End Leaders Mike Cooper (516-523-236), Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Meet in the parking lot near the Coast Guard Station at West End.



photo by Ken Thompson

If you have never experienced the thrill of having a bird eat from your hand, you will want to attend our trip to Morton NWR on Nov. 18. Hungry chickadees, titmice and nuthatches land on your outstretched hand to nab a sunflower seed.

Art Class with Jody

We just can't keep up with the demand! Jody's painting class has become so popular that we are scheduling another class for Saturday, November 17, at Brookside County Park.

The subject matter will be a bird of Jody's choice. Students paint the same bird from a photograph with step-by-step instructions along the way.

The fee is \$20 and includes all materials. Class runs from 2 o'clock to 4 o'clock. Please register by November 3 and a spot will be reserved for you. Email Jody: crabnose88@yahoo.com to register.



Captree Christmas Bird Count

The tradition of Christmas Bird Counts was started by Frank Chapman in 1901, for the purpose of replacing the shooting of birds with a bird census. The Captree Christmas Bird Count, first conducted in 1962, was a relative latecomer to this nation-wide, and later international, tradition, which has become a uniquely powerful resource for understanding the abundance and distribution of birds during early winter.

Our participants fan out in nine teams across a 15-mile radius circle, centered near the mouth of the Brightwaters Canal. Always an exciting day in the field, last year we counted 125 species, a bit above the average for the count, and were treated to great looks at a very rare Mountain Bluebird! A festive compilation dinner follows at the Villa Monaco restaurant in West Islip.

The Captree Christmas Bird Count will be conducted this year on Sunday, December 16th. Regular participants are asked to contact their team leaders to coordinate coverage. New participants who don't have an assignment can contact Pat Lindsay at: pjlindsay@optonline.net



"Birds of a Feather" Festival a Huge Success

Many people don't realize that chapters of the Audubon Society are not just about birds. The Audubon Society is a conservation and environmentally minded organization worldwide that helps identify environmental problems through observation of bird activities, migrations and breeding and helps to find solutions to the problems through education, grassroots efforts and governmental legislation.

On September 8th, Great South Bay Audubon Society hosted our first big public outreach in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, and in support of the initiatives of National Audubon Society to establish backyard native plants for bird friendly habitat, shade grown coffee initiatives, and to make public aware of the threat to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act through proposed legislative changes.

The day was very exciting. Many volunteers helped design and coordinate this very successful event that was attended by about 300 people from all over the Island. Providence was with us as it stopped raining 15 minutes before start time, and it only started to rain again as we cleaned up. We Are Slightly Mad Advertising Agency did a fabulous job designing our posters and informational signs, as well as preparing media releases for us. Thanks to Bayport Flower House, we were able to give away beautiful gallon size containers of perennial, native pollinator plants to everyone.

Wild Birds Unlimited set up a very informative display of different bird foods, explaining the importance of better seed quality. They also donated a handsome feeder and bird seed that we raffled off to one lucky winner.

Ranger Eric Powers presented a live animal show every hour to the enjoyment of both children and adults. Face painter April Keough's renditions of birds and butterflies awed everyone.

Representative from National Audubon, Kelly Knutson, spearheaded a community activist table where people signed postcards to governmental officials asking them to protect the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Over 100 people signed the postcards. National Audubon generously paid the postage!

We provided free samples of shade-grown coffee from Honduras, educating people about the importance of protecting rain forests in neighboring countries for migratory birds and explained the difference between fair trade and direct trade.

It was an honor to have Legislators Tom Cilmi from Legislative District 10 and Bill Lindsay from Legislative District 8 visit and support us. Guests had the opportunity to speak with the legislators and talk about things on their minds.

It was a thrilling opportunity to be able to service the community with a fun and informative outreach. **-Annette Brownell**



Left to right: Jody Banaszak, GSBAS president; Kelly Knutson, NY Field Organizer; Bill Lindsay, Legislator, District 8 and Annette Brownell, Festival Organizer celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and working together to protect the threats against it.



Chapter member and festival volunteer, Bob Glasser, created several fun educational games using his own photography and creative skills. Thanks to Bob, many people left the festival knowing a lot more about birds than when they first arrived.



Field Organizer, Kelly Knutson, collected over 100 signed postcards asking government officials to protect the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



Ranger Eric Powers delighted young and old with his engaging animal shows. Pictured above, a bearded dragon takes a rest on a participant's head. Through his presentations, Ranger Eric teaches children to appreciate and respect all aspects of nature.



GSBAS members and local residents chat with Tom Cilmi, Legislator, District 8. Chapter members also took the opportunity to thank Cilmi and Bill Lindsay for Suffolk County's continued support in allowing GSBAS to continue as stewards of Brookside County Park.



Children, as well as adults, enjoyed drawing birds on our homemade chalkboard that Jody Banaszak assembled.

CHAPTER NEWS

Great South Bay Audubon Supports Eagle Scout Project

A simple google image search with these three words, "bird, fishing, line" will result in thousands of images, some so graphic that you may not want to look at them. But the fact is that all too often, birds and other animals are entrapped by discarded fishing line and suffer a long and painful death. Monofilament fishing line needs to be disposed of properly. Here is where Aidan Donnelly, Eagle Scout from Troop 362 comes in.

Aidan has set up collection bins in several different locations in Suffolk and has secured other organizations to maintain them. It is his hope that anglers will place unwanted fishing line in these bins that will be sent to a recycling facility to be properly disposed of.

We are now looking for volunteers to empty these receptacles located in Great

River at Bubbles Falls, Rattlesnake Brook and West Brook Pond about four times a year. Shipping boxes with prepaid shipping labels addressed to the Recycling Center will be supplied. The boxes then will just need to be dropped in the mail.

If you are interested in helping Aidan and his commitment to protect wildlife, please email us at info@gsbas.org.

Shade-Grown Coffee Anyone?

GBSAS is excited to partner in the initiative to bring awareness to the benefits of shade-grown coffee for migratory birds, as the habitat protection provides birds with winter habitat. This is not a fundraiser. We are selling the coffee for cost, plus shipping and handling. The more orders we get, the lower the shipping. The price right now is \$12/lb., ground or whole bean (\$8.99/lb. our cost, plus shipping). If you are interested, please contact Annette at nettiesbas-

kets2@optonline.net. Hopefully we will have enough interest and requests to place an order monthly.

May Dinner

We are already looking ahead to the May Dinner. It has always been a time that many people look forward to. Comradery and fellowship are very important.

We are looking for some feedback and ideas to increase attendance and make this dinner even more successful. Do you want a dinner and speaker? Or just a dinner? Minimize the prizes? No prizes? Someone suggested moving the speaker earlier so that people who must leave early don't miss it.

We are looking forward to receiving emails with suggestions and thoughts that would be helpful in continuing to make the dinner a successful and much anticipated event. Send feedback and/or suggestions to GSBAS.org. Thank you!

Slowly Disappearing Night Sky *continued from page 1*

seasons, organized by diverse environmental groups in many US cities, are being adopted to help mitigate bird-kills from urban light pollution building collisions. Manhattan's week-long 9/11 Memorial Tribute to Light beamed skyward 3½ miles initially caused extensive bird-kills, but now shuts down its powerful beams for short periods as needed to release the thousands of disoriented birds vocalizing and circling around them--an improvement to the problem.

Close to one million birds die yearly as a direct result of light pollution. 'Spill lighting' from building window interiors in urban, suburban and rural areas, as well as use of unshielded spotlighting, are ongoing major bird mortality threats. Other dangers are lighted offshore drilling platforms, which cause circling behavior and seabird kills, and lighted communication towers. When used, strobe lighting has greatly reduced bird mortality; intermittent lighting and light color manipulation also show promise in reducing future risks.

Humans are genetically adapted to a natural day/night cycle, bright days and dark nights, crucial for overall health. Research has shown that disruption of this circadian rhythm with artificial light can produce serious health problems. A 2016 American Medical Association report found that blue light (in most outdoor LED lighting, computer screens, TVs, electronic displays, fluorescent bulbs) is particularly harmful to human health and recommends use of lighting with 3000 K color temperatures and below.

Modern society necessitates artificial night lighting for certain requirements, such as safety and commerce, but excessive use increases greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to climate change. Much artificial night lighting is inefficient and

poorly targeted, overly bright and improperly shielded and, many times, completely unnecessary. In urban and suburban areas it often can be seen: on/in houses, offices and factories; in street and park illumination; in outdoor sports areas and parking lots.

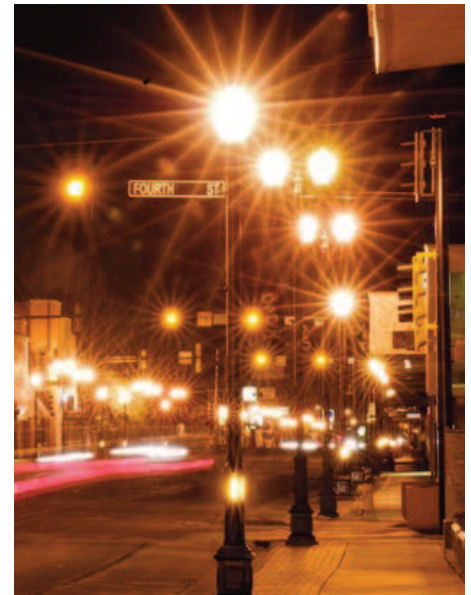
Wise use of outdoor lighting can help control light pollution's harmful effects, if you:

- 1-Install outdoor lighting only where and when needed.
- 2-Shield light fixtures so light points down, not up*; control window "light spill" with blinds/shades.
- 3-Use timers, dimmers, motion sensors for energy saving and brightness control.
- 4-Minimize blue light emissions which endanger wildlife and harm human health.*

*See **Appendix** on GSBAS website: a) Acceptable Outdoor Lighting Fixtures
b) LED Lighting: A Practical Guide

Further information: American Bird Conservancy: www.ABC.org

International Dark-Sky Association: www.darksky.org



Glare from unshielded city street lights can spill light in all directions and skyward, which affects visibility and adds to light pollution.

BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

Compiled by Helga Merryman

FEEDER SURVEY November/December 2018

Hi! Welcome back to the new season of the GSBAS Feeder Survey. Just a few hints to prepare for the bird feeding season. This is a good time to review your feeders and feeding goals. Make sure all feeders have been cleaned and soaked in a 10% bleach solution, then rinsed well. Black Oil Sunflower seed will attract the majority of bird species (it is the best bang for your buck). I also like to put out shelled peanuts to attract woodpeckers and nuthatches. You may wish to get a thistle feeder or a thistle sock to attract goldfinches and siskins. Never put corn in a hanging feeder; it is for ground feed only. If you have decided to replace or add a new feeder, remember they are specific for the type of seed being offered. For example, thistle feeders have very small access holes and the feeders for the shelled peanuts must be sturdy so the squirrels can't chew through them. Quality seed from a good vendor is worth the little extra cost; sometimes cheaper seed has a lot of twigs, debris and fillers that add to the weight and will remain uneaten.

The GSBAS Feeder Survey has been running for many years. The reward of the survey is to bring awareness of nature to our doorstep and share our observations with others. Everyone is welcome to join the survey. I look forward to a new season with our past participants and welcome all newcomers.



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.
- 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 highest 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 highest 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 highest 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 Carl Ave., Babylon, N.Y., 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 _____	Northern Flicker _____	Brown Thrasher _____	Brown-headed Cowbird _____
Sharp-shinned Hawk _____	Blue Jay _____	European Starling _____	House Finch _____
Cooper's Hawk _____	American Crow _____	Towhee _____	American Goldfinch _____
Rock Pigeon _____	Black-capped Chickadee _____	Fox Sparrow _____	House Sparrow _____
Mourning Dove _____	Tufted Titmouse _____	Song Sparrow _____	OTHER SPECIES _____
Monk Parakeet _____	Red-breasted Nuthatch _____	White-throated Sparrow _____	_____
Red-bellied Woodpecker _____	White-breasted Nuthatch _____	Dark-eyed Junco _____	_____
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker _____	Carolina Wren _____	Northern Cardinal _____	_____
Downy Woodpecker _____	American Robin _____	Red-winged Blackbird _____	_____
Hairy Woodpecker _____	Northern Mockingbird _____	Common Grackle _____	_____

Great South Bay Audubon Society

President: Jody Banaszak (631) 278-4059

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Committee Chairs

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Mailing: Ken Thompson (631) 612-8028

Email Responder: Vera Capogna (631) 563-4969

Answering the GSBAS Direct Phone:

Helga Merryman

GSBAS Direct Phone Number (631) 563-7716

GSBAS website: GSBAS.org

GSBAS email address: info@gsbas.org

For wildlife in need of rescue please call

The STAR Foundation (631) 736-8207

Great South Bay Audubon Gear



For Sale at

www.zazzle.com/sandpiper267

Great South Bay Audubon Society Membership

Become a member of Great South Bay Audubon Society. Your contribution will support GSBAS conservation efforts, educational programs and our stewardship at Brookside County Park.

Please make checks payable to:

"Great South Bay Audubon Society" and mail to:

GSBAS, P.O. Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782

☐ New Membership \$20 ☐ New Membership Senior (62+) \$15

☐ Renewal \$20 ☐ Renewal Senior (62+) \$15

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Directions to Brookside County Park

59 Brook St, Sayville 11782

The park is located on the north side of Brook St., just east of, and diagonally across from Sayville High School. Look for the large white sign that says "Brookside County Park".

From the West and East via Sunrise Hwy: Sunrise Highway to Locust Ave. South, to Montauk Highway. Make a left onto Montauk Highway. Then a quick left onto Brook Street. (traffic light). Continue 2 miles, just past Sayville High School. The entrance to the park is on the left (north side of street). Look for the "Brookside County Park" sign. You may park in the high school parking lot and walk across the street to the park.



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