



THE SANDPIPER

FEATURE STORY

Starlight

by Annette Brownell

*Star light, start bright, first bird I see
tonight, I wish he may, I wish he might,
find rest and safety along his flight.*

Photo: Frans Lanting, Audubon

May is one of the birders most favorite times – migration season! We can't wait to get out there to some of the more favored stopovers for migratory birds, hoping to add as many as possible to our list. For groups in our area, Central Park is a favorite. Although birds have been migrating since the beginning of time, migration is becoming more and more dangerous with thousands of birds dying as they attempt to make a trip which is often thousands of miles. The fact is that the avian mortality rate during spring and fall migration is the highest.

If you've ever taken a trip of any type of distance with children (or adults), you know that it is rarely made without a few stops – maybe several. Migrating birds are no different.

Their stopovers include areas that have good tree coverage where they will find rest, food and water. With more people, more lights, more weather and less migratory stopover sites, scientists documented the loss of 3 billion breeding birds in North America since 1970. About 80%, or 2.25 billion of which are migratory birds. A lot of knowledge and insight is gained through e-bird. It is a wonderful tool that is available to anyone with the aptitude to use it (sadly, not I).

Birds are the first astronomer, following the constellations on their migratory journeys. With the advent of a different set of constellations caused by billions of artificial lights, creating light pollution from below, dimming out the constellations from above, birds get drawn into cities and areas of fruitless rest.

Fortunately, in the past decade there has been a rapid rise in new research methods and a growing group of scientists is dedicated to creating safer passage of these tiny travelers. You have heard much about lights out legislation, studies on bird window strikes, and over use of pesticides. (Many of us feel that it is any use of pesticides). Although there is a lot of big research going on through Cornell Labs and other groups, with many Audubon groups joining the fight, there are things each of us can do.

I have long been a champion of large trees. Don't cut them down. If you and each of your neighbors for a 2 mile radius would leave one large oak in their yard, it would create a wonderful cover and habitat for migratory birds, who will feast on the nutritious insects that live in such giants. Add water – bird baths, ponds. Plant native pollinator and seed offering plants – crab apple, serviceberry, cone flower, sunflowers. Give up pesticides. Support organizations like Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Educate your legislators.

There is so much that each of us can do beyond shaking our heads at the sad state of natural affairs. Aside from the benefit of being part of the salvation of our ecosystem, an added bonus is that the more you turn your space into bird friendly habitat, the less work you have to do and the more time you have to enjoy it.

President's Message

by Jody Banaszak

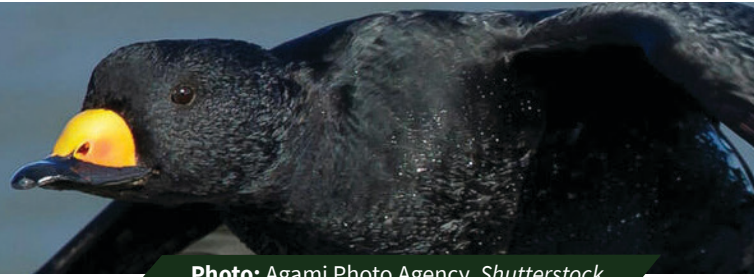


Photo: Agami Photo Agency, Shutterstock

Hello my little birding friends!! Hope you are all well and are enjoying watching the birds. My little birds can't wait for me to fill the feeders. They don't even wait until I'm done before they fly over! The mallards, now about 40, come to eat the cracked corn we put on the ground, as do the squirrels and other birds. One day I saw a black squirrel pull the suet right out of the holder and run off with it! The canal has been frozen, on and off, with some ice floats.


There has been a male long-tailed duck, formerly called an old squaw, sitting on one. I put up my scope so I could see him better and found he had a broken wing. He seemed healthy, often hopping into the water every now and then. I called some rescue centers, but they really couldn't help unless I caught the duck and brought him in! I haven't seen him in a few weeks now and hope he's ok. In the 25 years I've lived here, I have never seen a long-tailed duck in the canal. Merganzers, scaups, and an occasional loon, visit in the winter months, but never a long-tail.

We had a bird walk February 6th by Jones Beach. Six members showed up at the Coast Guard Station to see many ducks, including long-tails, scaups, mallards, black scoters, merganzers, Canada geese, and buffleheads. The new Nature Center had a few flocks of snow buntings. There were a lot of trails, with some leading down to the ocean, but they weren't plowed and it was too hard and too slippery to walk them, as was the beach to find any snowy owls. Beautiful day though!

Hopefully, we will be having our annual dinner in the fall and some other happenings as more and more people get their covid-19 shots. Look for them on our news flash emails. The photo/artwork page in the newsletter is a great adage. Thanks to all who sent in their wonderful shots! If any of you have an article to add to the newsletter, including a funny birding story, please send it on in for consideration. Stay safe and happy birding!

Eating Habits

by Harry Anderson



One morning at Heckscher Park, I came across a herring gull trying to pick up a dead, two inch baby flounder off the pavement. It must have found it on the sandy beach and waddled it back to the walkway. After a number of attempts, it finally managed to grab it again with its beak, but that was as far as it went. Now what? There was no possible way it was going to swallow it whole. Dropping the tiny fish on the cement, it tried to peck at it like it does when it rips open your garbage bag. No luck. The fish just kept sliding across the pavement. It was pathetic. I felt like saying, "Hey, let me help you." That would never happen. I am probably the only person in the world who witnessed that incident. Not important to anyone except that particular gull on that particular morning.

How animals manipulate and eat their food is interesting. Other primates like us eat the way we do, but that is a facility lacking in most other animals. A hyena's prey is killed simply by being eaten. There's an image you don't want to

dwel on too long. Most creatures prefer their meals live, but vultures enjoy carrion. We, it would seem, have something in common with them and avoid food that is still animated. Grizzly bears are omnivorous and eat just about anything they want. They munch on berries, dig up ground squirrels and eat them whole as snacks. They hold down salmon with their huge paws as they rip out the few parts they like best. Snakes and alligators swallow their food whole, but have difficulty manipulating it to where they want it. Boa constrictors have teeth that point backwards preventing prey being swallowed to escape. Most birds have a crop, or gizzard. It's a pouch that's part of a bird's gullet to store food for later digestion.

Unlike other animals, we may draw harsh criticism by the way we get food into our mouths - eating like a pig, pecking at it like a bird, or wolfing it down.

Photo: Diana Bzik, Audubon

EVENTS



Bluebirds and Ballerinas

Sat, August 14 • 6:30 pm
rain date: Sunday, August 15

Certainly, an exciting departure for Great South Bay Audubon, Lumiere Ballet, Long Island's Premier Russian School and Apprentice

Company will be presenting a live ballet interpretation of the M. Maeterlinck's fairy play *The Blue Bird*. Bringing nature and art together in this classical ballet will show the wonderful inspiration that the natural world has on creativity. Artistic Directors, Svetlana Caton, a former soloist with the Belgian Royal Ballet, schooled in Liege, Belgium and Paris, France and Venti Petrov, choreographer and ballet master, top graduate of the Bulgaria National Ballet, impart the importance of classical education as the essential foundation to their students. In addition to *The Bluebird*, the school will present a Spanish Character Dance and a surprise piece.

You can learn more by going to their website, lumiereballet.com Entrance to the grounds will begin at 6pm to allow everyone to enter with social distancing. Bring your own lawn chairs. Patrons are permitted to bring their own snacks and beverages. No alcohol permitted. No pets, please. Bug defense is advised.

Strict Covid-19 guidelines will be adhered to. Masks required for entrance and when not seated. Admission will be limited to 125.

Blue Grass with Buddy Merriam

Saturday, September 18 • 2-4 pm
rain date: Sunday, September 19



Buddy Merriam and the Back Roads have been sharing their BlueGrass music with the world for over 40 years, throughout the United States and all the way to Scotland, England and Ireland. The Islip Arts Council is pleased to present the summer series in our parks and thanks Suffolk County Legislator Tom Cilmi and Anthony Piccirillo for making this a possibility.

Entrance to the grounds will begin at 1:15pm to allow everyone to enter with social distancing. Bring your own lawn chairs. Patrons are permitted to bring their own snacks and beverages. No alcohol permitted. No pets, please. Strict Covid-19 guidelines will be adhered to. Masks are required for entrance and when not seated. Admission will be limited to State Guidelines at the time.

Islip Arts Council is a 47-year-old arts council dedicated to presenting programs of excellence in the arts. The Islip Arts Council is dedicated to leadership, advocacy and excellence in the arts by presenting, producing and promoting culturally responsive, high quality programs for diverse populations in varied artistic disciplines.

NATURE WALKS



Tuesday Sept 07, 9:30

Connetquot SPP

Meet in the parking lot near booth.
May require entrance fee of \$8.

Tuesday, Sept 14, 9:30 am

Shinnecock Dune Rd Sunrise Hwy.

East to Exit 65 South to Montauk Highway. Go east and follow signs to Ocean Beaches. Cross Ponquogue Bridge and turn left at the traffic light. Go to end of road to parking lot at inlet.

Tuesday, Sept 21, 9:30am

Oceanside MNSA & Jones Beach

Southern State Pkwy. to Meadowbrook Pkwy. South to Merrick Road (27A). Go west on Merrick Road a short distance and turn left on Mill Road and bear left (on Main Street) turn right on Atlantic Avenue to Waukena Ave. left to Park Avenue to Golf Drive
(brown signs from Atlantic to Oceanside Marine EC)

Tuesday Sept 28, 9:30 am

Suffolk County Farm, 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.

Tuesday Oct 5, 9:30 St Joseph Campus.

Take Sunrise Highway to Brentwood Rd. north approximately 2.5 mi look for the main entrance. Meet in the parking lot in front of building 4.

Tuesday Oct 12, 9:30 Robert Moses SP

Meet in Field 5 at the northeast corner.

Tuesday Oct 19 9:30 Avalon

Rte. 25A to Village of Stonybrook at Carriage Museum, 25A turns right do not turn right, but proceed straight ahead on Main St. to Harbor Rd and park in legal spots by Grist Mill.

Tuesday Oct 26, 9:30 Jones Beach West End

Meet in the parking lot at the Marina near the Coast Guard Station.

EVENTS

Live Animal Presentation

with Tackapausha Museum and Preserve

After a long 15 months (but who's counting) of not being able to meet in person, Great South Bay Audubon Society is reopening the doors with its first event at Brookside County Park with the favored June living animal presentation. Tackapausha Preserve in Seaford will be presenting birds, lizards, snakes and some surprises.

This presentation, as well as all our programs, is free and welcomed to all. Entrance to the grounds begins at 5:30 to allow everyone to enter with social distancing. Bring your own lawn chairs. Patrons are permitted to bring their own snacks and beverages. No alcohol permitted. Bug defense is advised. Covid-19 guidelines will be adhered to. Masks are required for entrance and when not seated. Admission will be limited to 125 people. Please, no dogs allowed as the live animals may react to their presence.



Photo: Tackapausha Preserve



Photo: Ian Preston, Flickr

Little Birds

by Helga Merryman

Due to a shortage of their natural food in the north, large mixed flocks, (juncos and assorted sparrows) visited LI last fall, along with those flocks were "Little Birds" these are the small birds such as Redpolls, Siskins, Kinglets, Nuthatches, and Brown creepers, that with luck visited your yards and feeders last season.

Redpolls and Pine Siskins are small, about the size of a Goldfinch, the Redpolls have heavily streaked sides, white wing bars and a red patch on their forehead, Siskins are darker, heavily streaked with yellow wing and tail markings, both have tiny seed eating bills, they will visit feeders, sometimes in large numbers feeding on black oil sunflower seeds, shelled peanuts, thistle, and suet. A large flock of Siskins returned daily to raid my feeders early this fall. Kinglets are tiny, slightly larger than a hummingbird, the Ruby Crowned is a greenish grey with white wing bars and a white eye ring, when excited the males raise a ruby crest.

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The Golden Crowned Kinglet has a golden crown surrounded by a black border, and a white eye stripe, when excited they will also raise a ruby crest in the center of their golden crown, they both flit nervously along branches searching for insects (not usually seen at feeders).

A Brown Creeper, is slightly larger than a Kinglet, with a brown streaked back that blends into the tree bark, they also have a white breast and a down curved bill which they use to pick insects and spiders from crevasses in the trees (not usually seen at feeders). If you see a bird descending a tree headfirst looking for insects it is a Nuthatch, the White-breasted Nuthatch is a little smaller than a House Finch and has an all-white face, blue-gray back and a long bill. The Red-breasted Nuthatch is slightly larger than a Kinglet with a rusty breast and a white eyebrow over a black eye-line, they are common visitors to feeders especially attracted by Black oil sunflower seeds, thistle, shelled peanuts, and suet.

Maybe next fall we will again be visited by the Little Birds and now you have the information required to identify them.

Art & Photography

View our full gallery at greatsouthbayaudubon.org



Peter Priolo, *Baby Piping Plover*



Jody Banaszak, *Osprey*



Dawn Corcoran, *Stern Tiger Swallowtail on Coneflower*



Bob Glasser, *Willet*



Davis Priolo, *Baby Chicks*



Steve D'Amato, *Mourning Dove*



Lisa Nasta, *White-Faced Ibis*



Joe Abraham, *Northern Mockingbird*



Jody Banaszak, *CatBird*



Janet Gremler, *Ladybug*

Building Birdfeeders

by Jody Banaszak



Since COVID-19 began last year everyone seems to be picking up new hobbies to pass the spare time. If you love nature and you also love arts and crafts, we have just the hobby for you! Maybe you always wanted to get into birding but never knew how to begin, it can be easy. You probably have everything you need right in your own home! According to an article on the National Audubon website this is what you'll need to make your DIY Bird Feeder :

- One milk or juice carton
- Rope, cord, ribbon, or wire
- Acrylic paint
- Paint brushes
- Decorations recycled from household materials, crafts, or nature
- Craft or hot glue

This is a perfect activity for the whole family that will attract and feed birds while also serving as an adorable backyard decoration for summertime. Using all recycled materials this project is not only good for the environment but also your pockets!

Looking for a more advanced project?

Well, we have something just for you!

Another creative way to break into birding is by creating functional birdhouses specifically, out of clay! There will be classes brought to you by **The Spirit Of Huntington Art Center** this summer. The Spirit Of Huntington Art Center is a 501c3 that ignites the passion of students with special needs and Veterans for creative expression that transforms their lives. The class will be taught by Gina Mars, who has 30 years of teaching experience with a large following of students and a wide range of experience in the field. Three classes will be included - The first class students will be making the actual birdhouse, In the second class will be decorating the birdhouses and lastly for the third class students will glaze their birdhouses. Anyone 8 years of age and up has this opportunity to create their own unique birdhouse for different types of birds. In addition to creating a fun and functional birdhouse- students learn clay techniques, how to create a basic bird form out of clay and discuss birds of Long Island.

Summer Feeder Survey

compiled by Helga Merryman

The old adage “Spring has Sprung” is so true, one day it’s winter and the next day blossoms are “springing” up from the ground and blanketing trees, and birds are “springing” into their mating songs.

This is the last survey report for this season, thank you to everyone who participated, and I look forward to hearing from you again in the fall. For the last two months of our 2021 survey, we had 11 participants, Banaszak, Cafarelli, Fogarty, Kremer-Parrott, Merryman, Preisinger, Ratcliffe, Sorenson, Weissman, Wilson and Unterschuetz. Nine areas were represented, Babylon, Brightwaters, Blue Point, Deer Park, Lindenhurst, Medford, North Babylon, West Islip, and West Sayville.



Feeder Survey • February 2021/ March 2021

Red-tailed Hawk 0/1	Black-capped Chickadee 39/21	Red-winged Blackbird 0/18
Sharp-shinned Hawk 2/0	Tufted Titmouse 3/4	Common Grackle 2/20
Cooper's hawk 2/1	Red-breasted Nuthatch 8/4	Brown-headed Cowbird 0/2
Rock Pigeon 56/1	White-breasted Nuthatch 16/9	House Finch 43/33
Mourning Dove 144/93	Carolina Wren 16/8	American Goldfinch 34/27
Red-bellied Woodpecker 9/6	American Robin 98/33	House Sparrow 80/78
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 0/0	Northern Mockingbird 10/6	OTHER SPECIES
Downy Woodpecker 16/10	European Starling 64/54	Mallards 49/0
Hairy Woodpecker 5/3	Fox Sparrow 5/0	Great-blue Heron 1/0
Northern Flicker 4/3	Song Sparrow 17/17	Kingfisher 1/0
Blue Jay 38/19	White-throated Sparrow 30/20	Hooded Merganser 7/0
American Crow 15/6	Dark-eyed Junco 22/11	Long-tailed ducks 1/0
	Northern Cardinal 30/22	



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

Name _____

Renewal \$20

Address _____

New Membership Senior (62+) \$15

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Renewal Senior (62+) \$15

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Learn more on **page 6 >>**