



THE SANDPIPER



Restoring Mastic Beach

A Coastal Resilience Project • by Annette Brownell

Photo: Frank Fugarino

We are very excited to talk about an upcoming project in which we have the opportunity to partner with Audubon New York (as lead organization) and other groups in a coastal restoration project to restore Mastic Beach (Audubon NY, Town of Brookhaven, NY). Funding for this project is coming from National Fish & Wildlife's National Coastal Resilience Fund.

In early 2020, Audubon NY began coordinating with the Town of Brookhaven to restore 1.75 acres of salt marsh in Mastic Beach. The Town of Brookhaven plans to remove 3 sections of Riviera Drive, and Audubon will plant native marsh vegetation to help enhance the adjacent marshes, increase coastal resilience, and provide potential nesting habitat for Saltmarsh Sparrows. Ben Maher, New York Audubon's Coastal Resilience Associate spearheading this project says, "Pre- and post-restoration monitoring of vegetation and bird populations will also be included in this project. This project is a smaller portion of a larger 147-acre restoration led by the Town of Brookhaven that includes an extensive buy-out program for homes in high-risk flood areas and multi-stage restoration designs. Currently, The Town of Brookhaven is developing 100% design plans for the larger 147-acre area, and Audubon is coordinating the road removal and planting alongside the larger project."

This is not the only coastal resilience project happening in Suffolk County.

Long Island Sound Area Assessment (Audubon NY, Audubon CT)

Funding: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation: LI Sound Futures Fund

In the Spring and Summer of 2020, Audubon NY and Audubon CT began assessing priority sites along the Long Island Sound. Sites in NY included Sunken Meadow State Park, Caumsett State Park, Crab Meadow Wetlands, and Stony Brook Harbor. Each site went through a desktop analysis using ArcGIS and various online tools and then an onsite assessment using the MarshRAM (Rapid Assessment Method) to evaluate wetland disturbances, surrounding land use, marsh community composition, and migration potential. Analyses from this project are near completion and potential restoration projects will be identified.

Sunken Meadow State Park Restoration Design (Audubon NY, Save the Sound, NY State Parks, Restoration and Historic Preservation, NY Natural Heritage Program) • **Funding:** National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Long Island Sound Futures Fund

In the Fall of 2020, Audubon NY was awarded funding to develop 50-60% restoration design plans for a priority site at Sunken Meadow State Park. NY State Parks and Save the Sound have been involved in ongoing restoration (stormwater management, low marsh restoration) at this site due to damage caused by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Audubon is currently coordinating with project partners to select a consulting/engineering firm to develop restoration design plans with a focus on high marsh habitat and the nesting needs of Saltmarsh Sparrows. The 50-60% restoration design plans will be completed by the end of 2021. At the writing of this article, we don't have full details because the informational meeting is set 4 days after the article due date. But by the time you read this, we will know more. Please consider volunteering to help with the project when the time comes.

Our home is an island. Let's help protect it.

President's Message

by Jody Banaszak

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!

Brookside Volunteers

by Annette Brownell

We used to call them "tour guides." That was a bit of a misnomer, as they rarely gave "tours." We have talked many times about how fortunate we are to have Brookside County Park as our home. Suffolk County is very generous to us. Most other Audubon groups do not have a home base.

One of the agreements that we have in our stewardship contract with Suffolk County is that we will have someone at the Park on Wednesdays and Sundays to welcome people and show them around, if they would like – give them a tour. We have been very fortunate, again, that Steve Steinbaum joined our Board of Directors and took on the position of Brookside Coordinator. Steve has been doing a great job and is readily available. The team of Brookside volunteers is small right now, for different reasons from people having volunteered for a long time, life circumstances changing or difficulty getting out. Sometimes it's just that someone doesn't have a partner to go with and doesn't want to go alone. We are very grateful to Karen, Edward, Methel, Walter, and Lisa. However, a few of our people are snowbirds, and some are not "official" but show up to help clean the trails, take a walk, & fill feeders.

We recently got a new recruit, Jim, who lives right in the area. Jim has been really helpful in getting things done and being present. If spending a Wednesday or Sunday afternoon at Brookside is something that might interest you, **visit our website** or send **Steve** an email at steinbaumsteven@gmail.com.



Thanks, Mason!

We appreciate your help.

Mason Nasta took to Brookside to help clean up! Mason is a student at the Islip Middle School. There, he is a member of the National Jr. Honors Society, which requires members to demonstrate qualities of good citizenship by performing community service hours.

Mason chose Brookside County Park for his endeavor, where his mom, Lisa, is GSBAS member and volunteer. We at GSBAS appreciate Mason's hard work at Brookside and hope he continues helping the environment.

Photo: Lisa Nasta

Pleasure Reading: Woodswoman

by Jody Banaszak

I was never much of a reader. I think I didn't have the patience or didn't want to waste my time. In school I'd just read the book jacket and never a whole book! That's why I have boxes of old newspapers and magazines that I didn't read, saying I'd read them later. I don't want to throw them out because I think I'll miss something. One day, about 11 years ago, I started to read a newspaper and always the obituaries.

There is where I met **Anne LaBastille**, a "woodswoman". She died in 2011 at 77, had written several books and was featured in the Conservationist magazine several times. After reading that obituary, I had to read those books and actually couldn't put them down! One was Woodswoman, about her life working as a teenager in the summers at a camp/lodge on a lake in the Adirondacks and later into her adult life. She ended up marrying the owner, divorcing, buying property down the lake and building a log cabin by herself, except for the roof. Anne was an environmentalist and nature lover. She had a degree and wrote for National Geographic. She later earned her PHD by studying and trying to save the Giant Grebes from Guatemala, who are now extinct, writing another book called Mama Poc.

It tells about her journey to Guatemala to a certain lake and working with the President and natives to save the grebes and their habitat for about 25 years. According to the book, if there are 25 or less of a species, it is considered extinct. This was fascinating reading and if I can read it, you can too! On another note..... on a trip to the Adirondack Museum, I found that they had dismantled Anne's cabin, about the size of a single car garage or smaller, and put it back together to display in the museum! Happy reading!



Photo: Adirondack Almanack



A Close Encounter by Harry Anderson

On a sunny day in May, I was biking by an empty beach at Heckscher Park. I passed a large roped off area between the pedestrian path and the water. The site has been posted because of nesting Piping Plovers. I spotted two of them, and saw one scurrying across the sand on some important mission. A tiny bird in a very large area.

Suddenly, a **Cooper's Hawk** came out of nowhere, unannounced and unwelcome. It swooped down, talons out, and made pass at the diminutive bird. It missed it by inches as the plover raced for cover in the tall grass. The hawk winged it up to a nearby tree and perched on the very top. It sat there, quietly disappointed. Suddenly, like its attack on the plover, it was mobbed by two Red-winged Blackbirds that dive-bombed it without mercy and ruffled more than just a few of its feathers. I felt like cheering as the Cooper's hightailed it north. The sign at the protected area warned No Entry, No Vehicles, No Pets. It neglected to say "No Hawks".

No one else witnessed the incident and I have to admit I felt privileged to be there at the right moment to experience such a minor but such a dramatic two minutes.



Photo: unsplash.com

May Dinner Update

by Annette Brownell

Looking positively toward the advent of Spring and then the delightful passage into Summer, we have come full circle to “what is happening with the May dinner?” Having cancelled the dinner last May, rescheduling it in October, only to cancel it again, there is great hope that we will be able to host some sort of an event this year.

The annual May dinner serves both the purpose of being a major fund raiser for Great South Bay Audubon, but it also in the opportunity for much needed fellowship with people that we don’t otherwise get together with. It’s always an energy-filled fun time.

As I fill my head with all sorts of ways to host a party, I want to share thoughts and get some input. The Board of Directors has been bouncing around the idea of holding the dinner in a less formal atmosphere, where we could be outside, but also in an open-air protected space. I have approached Seatuck with the idea of renting space from them and catering the event there, perhaps a dinner - perhaps a cocktail hour style of event - still with raffle prizes and a speaker. The ballroom (as I fantasize to call it) with its 2 (or 3) sets of double doors serves as both fresh circulating air and protection.

The other thought is utilizing the open-air canopy air of the room we usually have our event in at Captain Bill’s.

Both of these ideas would mean moving the date to later in the season, perhaps later June – and also moving it to an earlier time of day. This may make Captain Bill’s too expensive as they give us a good price because we do a Monday night in early May. I really need your feedback on these ideas. I am open to hearing other ideas as well. I am always open to someone partnering with me on this event, but I don’t want to spend time and get other organizations involved if there is no interest. Email me at nettiesbaskets2@optonline.net.



Photo: Heather Meyer
Snowy Owl

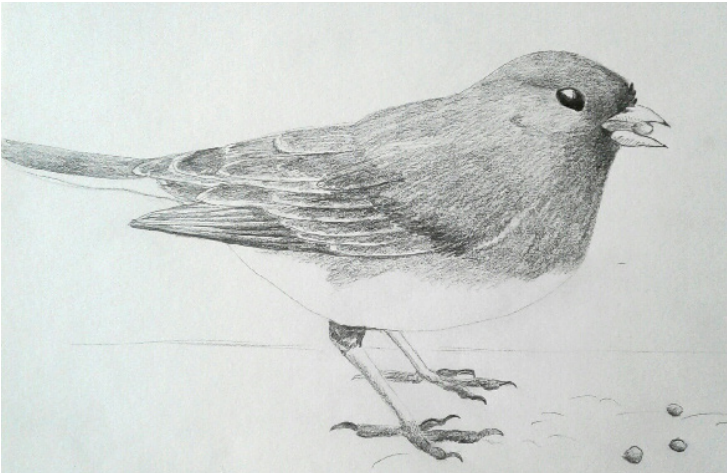
A Funny Birding Story

by Jody Banaszak

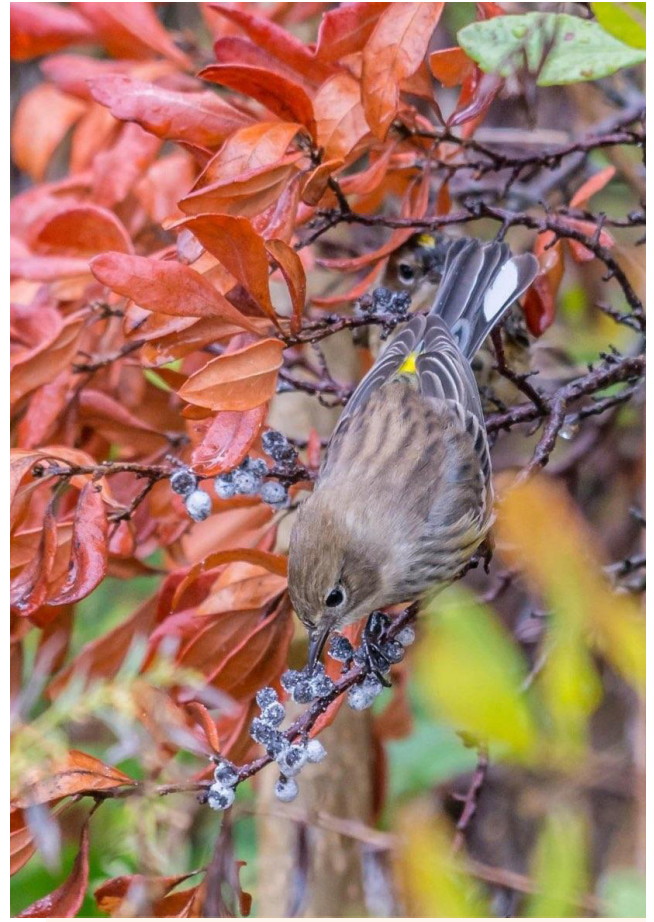
A few years ago I went searching for the **Snowy Owl**. My son, Peter, was going to Stony Brook/Southampton College and would take Dune Road. He spotted the Snowy owl on a duck blind. So out I went, searching for this beautiful, adult male, and found him. I pulled over and parked where I wasn’t really supposed to, but put a note on my windshield stating I was checking out the Snowy Owl and don’t give me a ticket. I grabbed my binoculars and camera and off I went, on the long trek, and I mean long.

The trek was through the marsh and bushes, and every few minutes I would look up to see if he was still there and take a picture, even though he was still far away. I was little more than halfway to him when I came upon a mosquito ditch. Great. Do I jump over or step into it and get stuck, die, never to be found. I decided to jump over it and made it safely! I looked up to see if the owl was still there. Off he went, east, down along the march and had a little flying adventure with a harrier! Great.

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Dark Eyed Junco, Dawn Corcoran



Yellow Rump in Winter Plumage, Lisa Nasta



Abstract Bird, Davis Priolo (20 m/o)



Barred Owl, Jody Banaszak



Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chris Braut



Peregrine Falcon, Heather Myers

Easy Ways To Get Kids Birding

from Maria Pinta, *National Audubon Society*



Photo: Sean Fitzgerald

Birding is awe-inspiring. It connects us with a sense of place, and gets us outside to explore our neighborhoods and towns. It's also great for travel: One of my favorite things to do when I visit a new place is to go for a walk in the morning to see what species I encounter.

So how do you make this wonderful pastime more engaging for children? I'm the Community Programs Manager at Seattle's Seward Park Audubon Center, and I often bird with a young crowd in tow through the ancient woods of Washington's Bailey Peninsula. Here are the strategies I use to keep little birders absorbed for hours (or minutes) on end.

Photo: Camilla Cerea



How to Bird Start off by reminding kids that birds are hard to spot, but easy to hear. Have them close their eyes and listen. Can they point to where the song is coming from? I like to teach common mnemonics like the American Robin's cheery up, cheerio, which can be picked up on almost any bird walk in the United States. Learn some mnemonics for common birdsong [here](#).

Where to Go You don't need to go far. Birds can be seen on the city street as well as in parks, yards, and nature preserves. It does help if you can stick to areas near water if you can. You're likely to spy herons, egrets, and swans, which are easier for kids to see. Plus . . . ducklings!

What to Look For Striking out on live birds? Point out the signs they leave behind such as nests, cracked seeds, whitewash (poop), or owl pellets.

Which Optics to Use Binoculars can be very hard for young children to learn how to use. Kids also have trouble looking through spotting scopes. Instead, focus on staying still and looking for the movements of birds and other animals. Or, for more fun, make a pair of DIY cardboard binoculars to get your kid into practice.

Games The best way to get a kid interested in birding? Make it a game! Here are two ways Nicholas Lund (*The Birdist*) puts the "fun" in "**birding fundamentals**".

Scavenger Hunt Birding is a game that has a goal: To see as many birds as possible. For some kids, counting up from zero to some arbitrary number—5 different kinds of birds, for example, or 20 birds in one outing—will be enough to stay focused and have fun. To fire up kids' powers of observation, make a list of target birds before heading to the yard or park. Use general categories like ducks and hawks or even critters in groups of threes or fours. You could also make a rainbow by finding feathered subjects that cover ROYGBIV.

Let Them Lead Some kids will do anything to be in charge, and outdoor exploration is a great opportunity to encourage their independence. Let them choose which park, or pull up a map of your area and let them choose which green patch you visit. Once there, let your child choose the trail and lead the way, pointing to objects or areas they want to study as you go.

Learn more on how to get kids birding at our website, greatsouthbayaudubon.org and at audubon.org!

Winter Feeder Survey 2020-2021

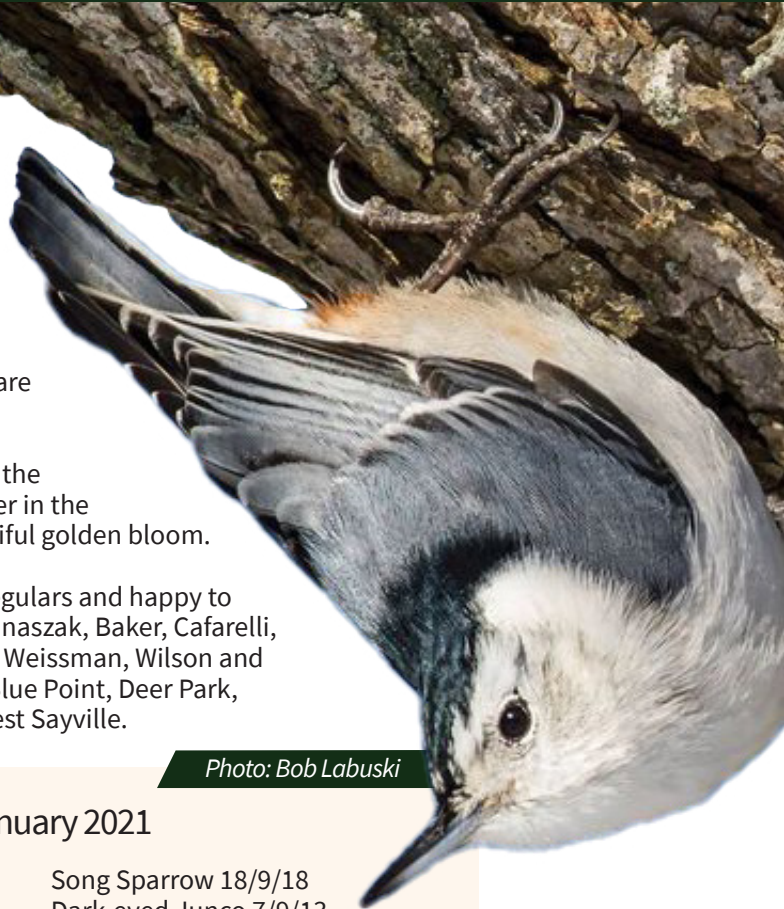
by Helga Merryman

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.

When the survey started last November, a mixed flock was gleaning the remaining crab apples from a tree in my yard, now three months later in the middle of winter I'm awaiting my Witch-Hazel to come into its beautiful golden bloom.

Welcome all to our Winter 2020-2021 survey! We had a mix of past regulars and happy to say some newcomers joined the survey. The 12 participants were Banaszak, Baker, Cafarelli, Fogarty, Kremer-Parrott, Langholz, Merryman, Preisinger, Sorenson, Weissman, Wilson and Unterschuetz. Ten areas were represented, Babylon, Brightwaters, Blue Point, Deer Park, Lindenhurst, Medford, North Babylon, Patchogue, West Islip, and West Sayville.

Photo: Bob Labuski



Feeder Survey • November 2020/December 2020/ January 2021

Red-tailed Hawk 1/0/0	Blue Jay 29/31/37	Song Sparrow 18/9/18	OTHER SPECIES Mallards 2/8/11 Great-blue Heron 1/0/0 Kingfisher 1/0/0 Pine Siskins 15/0/0 Cedar Waxwings 8/0/0 Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1/0/0 Great-horned Owl 0/1/0 Bald Eagle 0/0/1
Sharp-shinned Hawk 0/1/1	American Crow 1/0/2	Dark-eyed Junco 7/9/13	
Cooper's hawk 3/1/2	Black-capped Chickadee 23/25/17	White-throated Sparrow 21/21/33	
Rock Pigeon 22/0/8	Tufted Titmouse 8/1/5	Northern Cardinal 20/17/35	
Mourning Dove 81/77/131	Red-breasted Nuthatch 6/4/5	Red-winged Blackbird 5/0/0	
Monk Parakeet 3/2/0	White-breasted Nuthatch 7/8/14	Common Grackle 16/18/2	
Red-bellied Woodpecker 6/8/11	Carolina Wren 8/9/7	Brown-headed Cowbird 2/0/9	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2/0/1	American Robin 32/4/4	House Finch 26/31/40	
Downy Woodpecker 9/10/14	Northern Mockingbird 6/6/9	American Goldfinch 64/17/34	
Hairy Woodpecker 2/6/5	European Starling 28/100+/100+	House Sparrow 54/80/88+	
Northern Flicker 0/4/1	Towhee 1/0/0		

Upcoming Events

Virtual Bats for Adults

March 18 • 7pm • Zoom Program

Discover the anatomy and physical adaptations of bats, their various lifestyles, and their ecological importance to the planet.

Presented by Quogue Wildlife Refuge.

Taking a Look at the Sea's Feathered Friends

Birding with the Fish Guy, Chris Paprao
April 15 • 7pm • Zoom Program

Discover what LI birds are close to shore, learn details about wading birds, waterfowl and raptors as well as where you can go to observe each of them.



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
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THE SANDPIPER

What Do We Learn from eBird?

Another benefit of chocolate! Cacao Oro de Nicaragua is a cocoa plantation in Nicaragua. After the farming lands were devastated by hurricanes, the Cacao Oro farm was founded as a large scale agroforestry model to rehabilitate nearly 7500 acres. By 2022, Cacao Oro will harvest about 4000 metric tons of UTZ-certified sustainable cocoa, while restoring forest cover and employing local indigenous workers.

It is also home to tens of thousands of overwintering Yellow Warblers! Yellow Warbler have a breeding range from Alaska to the southern Appalachians. During nonbreeding season, they cram into a much smaller overwintering space. eBird data shows that 13% of the global population of Yellow Warbler overwinter in Nicaragua, where they find food and protection in shade-coffee farms and other agroforestry operations like Cacao Oro.

Visit ebird.org for more.

