



THE SANDPIPER

First Record of Roseate Spoonbill on Long Island

by Lisa Nasta

FEATURE STORY

The Roseate Spoonbill is a medium sized pale pink wading bird with a distinctive long, flat spoon-shaped bill and is rare in any area north of Florida and the Gulf coast. But on the morning of July 25th, 2021 two separate birds were reported here on Long Island. The first one was spotted in Cold Spring Harbor and the second in Island Park. The Cold Spring Harbor bird was relocated later that afternoon and caused quite a “stir” in the birding community as it was a first record for Long Island. As word got out and birders received the “scoop” they flocked to the area to see it.

Although, this is a first record for Long Island, the reports were not too “spontaneous” due to a recent influx of Roseate Spoonbill sightings reported this month in upstate New York in the counties of Delaware, Broome, Orange, Seneca and Dutchess. In fact, for some birders, this was their second Roseate Spoonbill of the day &/or week as many traveled upstate to a Holiday Inn in Dutchess County to see the bird reported there a few days before. Those who went for the Seneca County bird which was in Montezuma NWR prior to these closer sightings, it would be their 3rd Roseate Spoonbill for NY this year.

To add to the excitement, the Cold Spring Harbor bird happened to be in close proximity to the Nassau/Suffolk County borderline. The bird frequented the Inner harbor just north of the fish hatchery as well as Saint John’s Pond south of the fish hatchery. For county bird listers especially, they may have been tickled “pink” by this. As the bird crossed county lines when it flew west or east, depending on where the bird was standing, it could be a bird to add to their Nassau or Suffolk County lists, or both!

The first confirmed record of a Roseate Spoonbill observed in New York State was in August, 1992 on Staten Island at Goethals Bridge Pond, Richmond county. Those that saw that bird when it was relocated may recall seeing it perched on a half-submerged shopping cart in the pond. The subsequent and last time a Roseate Spoonbill was documented in NY was in Orange County in July 2018, where it crossed the border into NY from NJ. It seems all birds confirmed in NY thus far have been juveniles. There are several theories of why the sudden influx of Roseate Spoonbills to the area. Some theorized maybe it was storm track related, others say climate change, or an abundant successful breeding year was likely sending more juveniles to wander to more northward ranges.

If you have not had a chance to see this rarity yet, no need to “blush”. At the time this article was written, the Cold Spring Harbor bird as well as the birds in Dutchess and Seneca counties are still being reported so there may still be time to take the opportunity or grab the “spoon” so to speak.



President's Message

BY JODY BANASZAK



Photo: Whimbrels by Lisa Nasta

Hello my little birding friends! Hope you are all well and getting through all that's going on in the world. I can't wait to get back to normal, if there is such a thing. Good thing for the birds. They always bring a smile to my face, except for those grackles who eat all my birdseed in ten minutes. I've had the pleasure of seeing a great egret and some kingfishers in my backyard this summer. I also have seen three young and one adult green heron. They sit on a big dead branch over the canal so I can get a good look at them. I found their nest, only because the roof and side of my shed had a lot of white droppings on it!! And I mean a lot. There's also been a lot of monarchs, swallow tail, and other butterflies in my yard. I have milkweed plants and a big butterfly bush that they come to every day. And I was happy to see one hummingbird. Even though it's nice to feed the birds, it's good to have native plants that produce seeds that birds eat too. Another thought came to me (always when I am trying to go to sleep), was people who feel the need to use fertilizer for the greenest lawn possible. That fertilizer runs off into the street drains and probably into our bays. Robins and other birds who eat worms and other bugs in these lawns are taking in these fertilizers. I only water my lawn and it's just as green as people who use fertilizers!!

I've gotten some bird news from other Audubon chapters about a weird bird disease. They have asked not to feed the birds because that's how it spreads. I mentioned it in this newsletter. Hopefully we can continue feeding them in the fall and winter.

We've had some nice bird walks this summer and will start again in September. At one walk, we were greeted by Earl, a Little Egret, who met us in the parking lot and led us down to the marsh!!! Thank you to all who participated and ran the walks. Also, thanks to those who contribute to this newsletter. Submissions for the next newsletter will be October 11th. Happy birding!!!

Inner Space

by Harry Anderson



Photo: House Finch by Michael Boehme

Contrary to a comment in Alice in Wonderland, words can't mean anything you want them to. So it is with the word, "nature." You also can put "wildlife" into that category. When dealing with the phenomenon of the totality of things around us, and in us, it is blissfully naive to omit the reality of "inner nature," the invisible world of microorganisms. It is an environment that is massive, diverse, and - like it or not - dominant. It is as much a part of nature as mountains, streams, and cock robin.

If you were to count the number of cells between the top of your head and the socks on your feet, we would find that 90% of those cells are not human cells. They belong to various microorganisms that exist primarily in your gut and on your skin and many other parts of your body. There is a wilderness of microbes out there. And they may have been there from the beginning of time.

Viruses, for instance, have left no fossils. It is impossible to know how long they have been around. Some say they live at the edge of life, floating between the organic and the not. They can infect all animals, plants and even bacteria. The word "virus" comes from the Latin meaning, "slimy liquid poison." There are millions of types that have been discovered so far, ranging from the thousands that cause the common cold to those causing the deadly Ebola.

And now the entire world is being consumed by Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic is of biblical proportions and will be recorded as one of history's most cataclysmic events. Viruses only multiply within the living cells of a host, which is frequently us and we have experienced this dramatically with Covid 19. On balance, inner space is more of a challenge than outer. As the poet Robert Frost put it, "What is design govern in a thing so small."

Tackapusha event recap

Our June meeting at Brookside County Park did not have as many people as usual, but was still a success. Isabelle, the Co-Director from the Tackapausha Museum and Preserve in Seaford, came with an array of animals. She brought a Barn Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, a big lizard, and some other wildlife. She explained why and how they came to the sanctuary and let people in the audience pet and touch them.



Meetings & Presentations

Bees and their importance to US! September 16th 7PM

Our speaker will be Miguel Valentin. He has been working with bees for most of his life and has been a Master Bee Keeper since 1993 managing hundreds of colonies. Miguel will speak about the importance of bees concerning pollination and crop survival. He will be bringing a hive to show the workings of a colony and how honey is produced. Bees and birds are very connected in the environment.

Waterfowl, What species we might see. October 21st 7PM Seatuck

Our speaker will be Joe Guinta. Joe has been birding in the NYC region for 30 yrs and is a birding instructor for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Ducks are the most fascinating birds to inhabit our waterways. Colorful plumage and delightful habits make them among the most desired to see and identify. Come learn about their habitats and how to identify the various species.

Nature in all its Splendor! November 18th. 7PM Seatuck

Our speaker will be Bob Labuski. Bob is an avid nature photographer capturing in photographs the beauty of the world that surrounds us. The presentation will show nature at its best. Flowers, trees, nature, habitats that make it possible for our feathered friends and animals to survive.

December Holiday Party! December 16th. 7PM Seatuck

Our December Holiday party will be at Seatuck at 7pm, on December 16th. We will have members presentations, food, refreshments, holiday cheer and raffles. Hope you can make it!!!

Finally...a set date for our annual dinner.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021

We rely on our dinner and annual appeal to be able to meet the financial obligations that keep Great South Bay Audubon Society flying (so to speak). This last year and a half has been financially challenging. We would not have fared well if it were not for a very generous Suffolk County grant from Legislator Anthony Piccirillo that was able to cover the costs of the monthly remote programming and some of the media expenses. Although the dinner has been a springtime event since before my time, we are very glad to have set a date of Monday, October 18, 2021 for our dinner/fundraiser. Our venue will still be Captain Bill's, but to ease the strain of number commitments and make it easier on the staff, we have opted to hold the dinner in the main house. As usual, we will have lots of raffle prizes and hope that you will take advantage of these whether you can attend or not.

I am very excited to have Mike Bottini as our speaker. Mike is a wildlife biologist working with Seatuck Foundation doing ongoing research on River Otters, and is a member of IUCN Otter Specialist Group. Additionally, his current studies are of Spotted Turtles and Coyotes. Mike is the founder of Long Island Natural History Conference, author of Eastern Long Island trail & padding guides and has a Level III Wildlife Track & Sign Certificate with Cyber Tracker/North America.

Mike will be speaking on the natural history, behavior, and ecology of the River Otter, challenges they face, monitoring techniques and how to get involved.

Be a Good Egg

by Jody Banaszak



Photo: Piping Plover

On July 17th, Annette, Chris, and I participated in the “Be A Good Egg” program sponsored by Audubon. Kate O’Connell, from the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay, runs the program. We have done it in the past, but since Covid-19, we had to stop. We set up camp at the entrance to the ocean at Lido Beach Town Park. The set up consists of tables with flyers about the birds we are trying to save, a sample of the nest with eggs, keychains, pins, and sticker giveaways, and stuffed (not real) piping plovers and an oyster catcher, all under a tent with chairs. As people come onto the beach, we approach them and ask if they would like to sign a paper that states they will not go near the piping plover nesting sites that are fenced off. Besides Annette, Chris, myself, Kate, and her crew, there were three volunteers who were in high school or college.

It was a beautiful day, we received 129 signatures, and saw a few piping plovers and oyster catchers! This time, no one refused because they thought the birds were taking over their beach!

Imagine

by Annette Brownell

John Lennon’s “Imagine”, released in 1971, told of a supposed world full of peace with no absolute values or consequence. Without getting into a debate about Lennon, his values or the meaning of the song, it has been proven over and over again that as long as people are people, selflessness will be an uphill battle and there are destruction and terrible consequences when one is not accountable to something bigger than themselves and anything goes. However, there are things we can “imagine” and actually accomplish when we work together innovatively to cause results rather than consequences.

In the Summer 2021 issue of Living Bird, there is a wonderful article by Vanessa Gregory reporting one such event - “Making Bean Fields Better- for Birds and Farmers – in the Mississippi Delta.” From a casual conversation between neighbors – an aquatic ecologist and the ecologist and biologist co-founder of Delta Wind Birds, came the discussion about unused nitrogen from crop growth leaching off the land into waterways, contributing to algal blooms and oxygen starved dead zones. Farmer James Failing, allowed his post season soybean and corn fields to be flooded and become temporary wetlands. Temporary wetlands can minimize nitrogen leaching by helping in the denitrification process, which transforms the polluting form of nitrogen into harmless nitrogen gas. Soil erosion is also drastically cut. Not only did it prove helpful in crop yield, but the environmental success for migratory birds has been huge.

Shorebirds migrating from as far as a thousand miles away find wetlands scarce by the time they reach Mississippi. The flooded fields were found teeming with biomass, such as midge larvae – around 4000 organisms per square meter. Not only is this much needed fuel for migrating birds but the tiny organisms also move carbon around. Imagine all the people not just living for today, but living for the future – a future that includes the protection of our greatest ally in the natural world – the birds.

A Change in Our Membership

by Annette Brownell

Although the membership dues are relatively low, they really make a difference in helping defray expenses of the finances behind our Audubon Society.

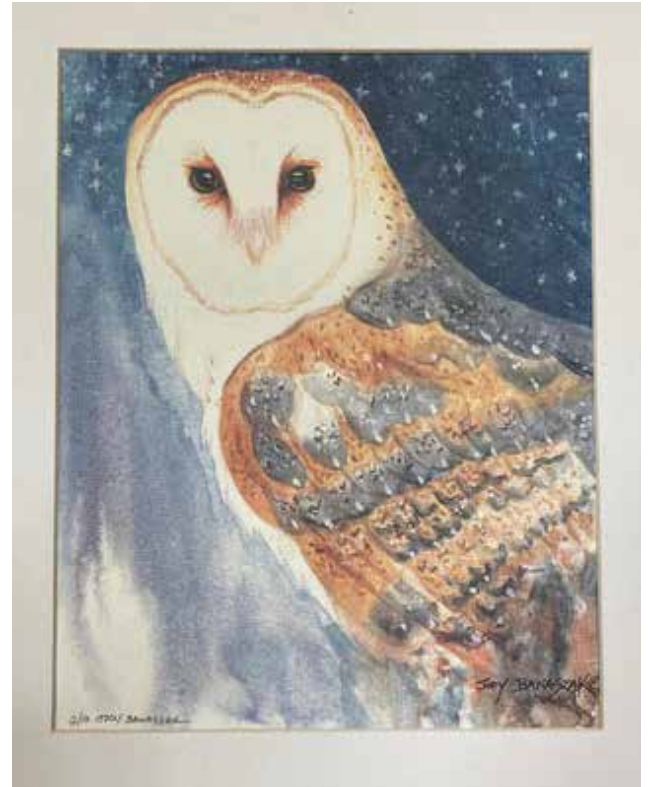
In an effort to stay current with our membership and mailing list, Great South Bay Audubon is going to be changing all membership due dates to February 1st. We will put a reminder in the newsletter to send in your dues. We realize that this may cause a little unrest with some people who paid their dues between August and January, feeling that they are getting gyped out of 6 months. If you must, just pro rate the dues by \$7.50 or \$10, depending on your membership. It will all even out by the following year.

Hopefully this will make our membership more consistent and more people will actually renew.

Art & Photography

VIEW OUR FULL GALLERY AT OUR WEBSITE, WWW.GREATSOUTHBAYAUDUBON.ORG

Northern Gannet at Water Island, Fire Island



Watercolor Barn Owl by Jody Banaszak



Immature Red-tailed Hawk on a Fence by Bob Glasser



Immature Red-tailed Hawk by Bob Glasser



Cedar Waxwings by Bob Glasser

Remembering Astrid Otero

MARCH 31, 1928 - MAY 21, 2021

Astrid Otero is a name that has come up several times over the years that I have been involved with Great South Bay Audubon. Along with people like Fran File, Bob Laskowski, and some others that were critical in the founding and moving forward of our society, she was a name and a story from the past.

I consider myself more than fortunate to have joined at a time when the Merrymans, the Wilsons, Joan Elsabough, and Bill Redshaw were still active. Astrid was the name at the other end of a generous donation and a little note each year – until last year. I got a phone call from her one day explaining that she was extremely concerned about the fact that the Fran File Memorial Bench at Bayard Cutting Arboretum had fallen into ruin. As I began to research and find out what a marvelous woman Fran File was and really began to see the significance of keeping her memory alive, I got to meet, via phone and letters, her good friend and the Society’s historian, Astrid Otero.

We shared a lot of lonely hours talking to each other over the Covid-19 lockdown. While I grieved the loss of my mom, Astrid really filled the gaps. I learned a lot about our Audubon Society, her cat rescue stories, her gardens, her birds, and her health problems (she was 92). Our plans were to finally meet in person when the weather got nice enough. Born in Vienna, Austria, she left her home in Austria in 1948 to marry her Army sweetheart, Hiram Otero, whom she met when she was working for the American Allied Forces in Vienna. Astrid passed this May at the age of 93.

We never got to sit on her porch and have that cup of tea together. Some of our members had the good fortune to know Astrid when she was an active member of a growing Audubon Society. Astrid entered my life as a healing balm reminding me of my focus and obligations to the natural world, during a time when everything else was unnatural. And, as usual, her focus was on giving.



Photo: Dignity Memorial



Become a member!

As 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 Renewal \$20
- New Membership Senior (62+) \$15
- Renewal Senior (62+) \$15

Name _____

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GSBAS Feeder Survey for Fall 2021

I welcomed a bumper crop of Cardinal, Mockingbird, Robin, and Grackle fledglings to my yard this summer. It was a pleasure to watch the parent birds flying back and forth trying to keep up with the insatiable hunger of their chicks. I resisted the urge to “rescue” a seemingly abandoned Mockingbird chick, and a short time later was treated to the sight of the adults flying directly to their youngster with radar-like precision and bills full of food. When a chick is “fully fledged,” which means the time in the life of a young bird when its feathers and wing muscles have developed enough to allow it to fly, they usually leave the nest and perch in nearby shrubbery where the parents find and still feed them. Sometimes well-meaning humans observing a young bird seemingly abandoned, seek to “rescue” it, bring it home and try (usually unsuccessfully) to raise it, not realizing that the parent is in the area and is closely monitoring it’s chick. The term “fledgling” is applied to a young chick that has recently fledged but is still dependent upon parental and feeding.

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. Unfortunately there may be an issue with feeding birds this fall, a report of an illness among birds that might be spread at feeders has put a damper on using bird baths and feeders, we are hoping to have more information regarding this issue soon. Please remember to sanitize your feeders and bird baths with a 10 percent solution of chlorine bleach.

How Does the Survey work?

- 1) The counting period is 5 months from November to March. You are welcome to join the survey at anytime.
- 2) During the first 15 days of each month, 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. Example: if you see 10 Cardinals on the 1st, 5 on the 8th, and 3 on the 10th only report the largest amount seen, (10 Cardinals). The birds may actually be at your feeder or attracted to your yard by feeding activity.
- 3) Using the form provided, use 1 form per month to record the largest number of individual species seen. Add any extra species to the list.
- 4) Not later than the 19th of each survey month, mail your completed form or list to Helga Merryman, 38 S. Carll Ave., Babylon, N.Y., 11702. You can also send your sightings and photos to me at elder55owl@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.

Red-tailed Hawk _	Black-Capped Chickadee _	Dark-Eyed Junco _
Sharp-Shinned Hawk _	Tufted Titmouse _	Northern Cardinal _
Cooper’s hawk _	Red-Breasted Nuthatch _	Red-Winged Blackbird _
Rock Pigeon _	White-Breasted Nuthatch _	Common Grackle _
Mourning Dove _	Carolina Wren _	Brown-Headed Cowbird _
Monk Parakeet _	American Robin _	House Finch _
Red-Bellied Woodpecker _	Northern Mockingbird _	American Goldfinch _
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker _	Brown Thrasher _	House Sparrow _
Downy Woodpecker _	European Starling _	
Hairy Woodpecker _	Towhee _	OTHER SPECIES
Northern Flicker _	Fox Sparrow _	
Blue Jay _	Song Sparrow	
American Crow _	White-Throated Sparrow _	

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THE SANDPIPER

Precautionary Measures to combat Songbird Epidemic

Reports of sick and dying birds with vision problems, eye swelling (often with a crusty discharge), and neurological symptoms have been rippling across parts of the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern United States. This illness is different from the conjunctivitis condition known as "finch eye disease," but the exact cause is currently unknown. While many songbirds have been impacted, the illness seems to be most common in juvenile Common Grackles, Blue Jays, European Starlings, and American Robins. Here are the following five steps to combat the virus:

1. Clean all feeders and bird baths with a 10% bleach solution..
2. Avoid handling dead or injured wild birds. Wear disposable gloves if it is necessary to handle a bird.
2. Keep pets away from sick or dead birds as a standard precaution.
4. To dispose of dead birds, place them in a sealable plastic bag and discard with household trash.
This will prevent disease transmission to other birds and wildlife.

There are several inconclusive theories about the origin of the illness, with some suggestions that could have something to do with a fungus the cicadas carried, pesticides or even poor quality birdseed. While we cannot do anything about cicadas, we can avoid pesticides - and herbicides, and we can purchase higher quality, fresh bird food.