



THE SANDPIPER

FEATURE STORY

Abundant Ospreys on Long Island, Thank You Dennis!

by Jody Banaszak

There have been so many Ospreys around Long Island. Along Sunrise Highway, the length of Connetquot Park, there are 4 nests! One nest in front of the Sunrise Business Center had a little bush growing in it. The Ospreys tried to make a new nest on the electric poles, but tin pieces were put over it so they couldn't finish the nest. Apparently the little bush was in their way. I called PSEG to see if they could remove it. A few days later I saw the Ospreys in the nest and the bush was gone!

Ospreys are abundant now, but in the 1960's they started to decline. Dennis Puleston, who moved to the United States from Great Britain in 1939 and lived on Long Island, was the Director of Technical Information at Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, artist and an ornithologist, began keeping records of the Osprey. His observations noted that the eggs were crushed by the weight of the parent as they incubated the eggs. Mr. Puleston took the eggs to the lab and found high amounts of DDT residue in the eggs. Rachel Carson wrote a book about the effects of pesticides on the environment and birds. DDT caused thinner egg shells, reproductive problems and death of birds. Mr. Puleston brought the eggs to the lab to be tested and sure enough found that DDT was the culprit. When he studied the Ospreys on Gardiners Island in 1948, there were 300 nests.

In 1966 there were only 50. Mosquito Control refused to believe the DDT they were spraying for mosquitos was responsible. Mr. Puleston and some others filed a class action suit in NY State Supreme Court to force the Suffolk County Mosquito Control to stop using DDT. He showed his paintings to illustrate how DDT was destroying the food chain of the wildlife. Crabs ingested it from the mussels they ate. When I was a little girl, we would go across the bay on our boat to catch crabs. I would stand on the bow of the boat and tell my father where they were and he couldn't keep up scooping them up in the crab net!! When we got a bushel, which was fast, we would go to Lega Beach, which is now Davis Park, and eat them for supper. So now I know the decline too.

In 1967 Mr. Puleston and his colleagues founded the Environmental Defense Fund and by 1972 they got a nationwide ban on DDT. By 1992 there were 226 nests on Long Island and about 60 on Gardiners Island. Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and a lot of fish species have also recovered since the ban of DDT. Thank you Dennis Puleston! He wrote several books, one being *The Nature Journal*, and died June 8, 2001.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Puleston at his house a long time ago. He was an artist also. I brought some of my bird paintings for him to see and he showed me his bird paintings and his books. He had built an Osprey stand on his south shore property by the bay with a camera to monitor them. I'm glad I got to meet him.



Osprey, Bob Glasser

President's Message

A Message from GSBAS PRESIDENT Jody Banaszak



Long-Tailed Ducks, Bob Glasser

Hello my little birding friends! Hope you are all well and enjoying nature. As I write this, it is spring, and most of the summer birds are here. The forsythias, daffodils, crocuses, and pink flowering trees are blooming. I love spring as it brings color and a smile to my face as everything is coming alive! I'm sorry to see the colorful Winter ducks leave though. But they'll be back next winter. I remember as a little girl, walking down the street to Annie Meyer's house to get pansies. She had a half acre and grew them in her back yard. My mom would bring my sister and me and the wagon down to her house to buy them. My mom lined our very long side walk to the front door with them. There were so many colors and they looked beautiful. To this day I always plant pansies in the spring.

We did a bird walk on April 5th to the Coast Guard Station and the Nature Center on Ocean Parkway. We saw 29 species of birds. A female Harlequin Duck, scoters, a Red Breasted Nut Hatch, a Coopers Hawk, Yellow Rumped Warbler, Eastern Phoebe, Golden Crowned Kinglet, Brant, Oyster Catchers, Eastern Meadow Lark, Northern Gannets, Ospreys and the usual everyday birds. We also saw some seals but no Snowy Owl as they have gone back up North. Thank you Jack Carlson and all who came on the walk.

I have loved birds and nature since I was a little girl. We had a half acre with woods behind our house. A few houses down were fields in which vegetables were grown. I was always asking my grandfather, who was a carpenter and lived a couple of doors down, for scraps of wood to build tree houses in the woods. To my mom's dismay, I was always climbing the trees too. I remember the first time I saw a Baltimore Oriole nest in one of those trees. I couldn't imagine how they made that nest. We had a long driveway and when we came home, sometimes at night, we would see quail and rabbits run away into the woods. One time my Dad pointed out a Screech Owl in a tree next to our window. Of course, as time passed, the woods turned into apartments. A horse farm that my grandfather would bring us to for a 25 cent pony ride turned into King Kullen. A big old country house turned into a restaurant, another farm turned into 7/11 and other stores, and the field that ran behind the apartments turned into Nichols Road. There were a lot of horse farms, one turning into CVS. Luckily Bayport Flower House is still there!

We will finally be having our May dinner at Captain Bill's and our June program at Brookside County Park. Look for the information on our news blasts. As summer comes, don't forget to clean your bird baths and enjoy the birds! Happy birding! Jody!

If anyone knows someone who could give a talk about how and why birds make the nests they do please contact me! Thanks, Jody (crabnose88@yahoo.com)

Program Person

by Annette Brownell

We are in need of a volunteer (or a team) to book and coordinate our programs beginning in September. It is not a huge commitment, but it is a commitment. It entails finding, booking and confirming speakers for each month, September through June. It would also require giving the information to our newsletter editor. It is a nice opportunity to meet a host of interesting people on a little more of a personal basis than you might otherwise not. You would not be left on your own to figure it out. We have ideas and resources to help. We all work together to create our Society.

If this is something you would be interested in, please call, email or text either Jody Banaszak or Annette Brownell.

All About Birds

by National Audubon Society

Do you love animals, including wildlife? Then you just might want to get to know the wildlife you probably see every day: birds. There are many special things about birds. For one, they have feathers. No other animal has them. Birds come in an amazing variety of colors and sizes. That's another special thing about birds—diversity.

How do you describe a bird? You may describe its colors and color pattern, the size and shape of the beak, or what its legs and feet look like. These are called field marks. Field marks are clues that people use to help them identify a bird. When you become comfortable recognizing field mark clues, you can begin to identify specific kinds of birds. So, grab a field guide or open an app, or go outside if you can. When you spot a bird, take a closer look.



Scan Me!

Birdist Rule #85: Write In Your Field Guides

by Nicholas Lund

I thought every birder did this. Do we not all do this? I chased some birds this winter, eventually finding my milestone 700th ABA Continental bird—a Common Gull in Eastport, Maine. Afterward, I shared some photos on Twitter of the handwritten notations I made in my Sibley field guide and got a lot of responses. Many birders said they do the same, and shared images of their well-loved books. Others had their own methods of keeping physical records. But some responses caught me off guard: What an interesting idea to keep a physical copy of your life list in a field guide! Or, wow, I never thought of that! Or even: I'd never mark up a book like that.

These comments surprised me because writing down lifers in my field guides is something I've always done, and it's something that I've always assumed all birders did since the exact moment I started birding. To those who don't do this or have never heard of the practice, please listen: Do it. It's the best. I began birding the day I pulled a used Peterson field guide off a shelf in Hyde Brothers Booksellers in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In it, the previous owner had marked in pen next to each species the date and location they had seen it. My lightbulb went off. The doors of my mind were kicked open. Field guides weren't just a way to figure out what kind of bird you were seeing, they were the answer key to a game you played across the entire country. They were the directions to a lifelong scavenger hunt. "Here are all the birds," it read, "go find them."

I bought that old field guide, got to work crossing off the previous owner's notes (sorry, karma), and began entering my own sightings. The first lifer I ever recorded was a pair of Northern Shovelers in a nearby cornfield pond. I was immediately hooked. I could keep a neat record of everything I had seen—and everything else I needed to find—right there in my book.

It was such a tidy solution that I began keeping records in all my field guides. For my first few years of birding, I'd buy a new guide every year and keep my year list in them. I keep written records in every international guide I buy before an overseas birding trip, and I have entire shelves full of guides to places I haven't visited yet, just waiting to be inked up. I keep track of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, Hawaiian reef fish, and butterflies in their respective guides. I recently wrote a guide to the birds of my home state and will copy my state list into it as soon as it's published.

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There's no right or wrong way to do it. The variations I've seen relate to how much information people record. I generally just find the species I saw and write the date and location of the sighting. Others will mark every plumage or sex or subspecies. Some will jot quick notes: "Very windy, with Jane." Maybe you just want to do a check mark. Whatever way you choose, it becomes yours.

As caught off guard as I was by those on Twitter who never thought to write in their field guides, I was even more surprised by the folks who were opposed to the practice entirely. Some people felt that books should be kept pristine, and not cluttered with personalizations. I simply don't get the argument. After all, I paid for the book, and it still operates perfectly well as a field guide. I guess some people don't put bumper stickers on their cars or get tattoos, either, but to me, writing my sightings in a book is an act of creation, not vandalism. I'm building a home for my memories. I keep a record of everything in eBird too, of course, but that's never been satisfying to me in the same way as a physical book. Turning each page immediately recalls the memory of where I was when I saw that bird, and any single page may be covered with memories written years apart. It's an individualized keepsake for a hobby that operates mostly on experiences and memories, and it'll be with me as long as I live. And, depending on which used bookstore it ends up in, these sightings might inspire others well after I'm gone.

Upcoming **Event**

The Homegrown Artisan Flavor of Long Island

Saturday, July 31, 11am - 4pm

This fun event will feature the art of several of our local members – photography, painting, carvings and more – as well as music by well-known Mandolin Master, Buddy Merriam. Exhibits will include local Master Beekeeper, Miguel Valentin. Miguel will share his story, including being NYC's official bee remover. He will have bees on display and honey for sale. There will be "birdscape" ideas for your backyard, a live animal program and the opportunity to create your own "glass flowers" to enhance your garden.

Bring lunch. Enjoy the day. This event is rain or shine. We'll move exhibits indoors, to the porch and under the tent if necessary. Enjoy a hike around the trails at Brookside County Park's 8 acre nature preserve. This event is made possible by a grant from Suffolk County and Legislator Piccirillo

Live Oak In New Orleans

by Annette Brownell

I recently went to New Orleans on a river boat cruise. New Orleans is a very old city that is proud of its very rich history and heritage. The thing that made the greatest impression on me was that, despite the constant onslaught of hurricanes, floods and storms that this area receives, they have managed to preserve the buildings and the landscape – both in the city limits and out on the highways and byways, including the plantations (which, although historic sites, some are privately owned and open to the public).

As you can see from the pictures, I was enthralled by the Live Oak trees (so named because they are always green). These trees can live up to 1,000 years. Many that I saw were 500-750 year old. They have seen a lot of hurricanes and floods. Can someone tell me why other areas can do this and Suffolk County cannot?

On another tree note, I was glad to learn that the mega apartment complex being built by TriTech is on the old Tour College property in Bay Shore. Rather than destroying yet another piece of natural habitat, as some other mega contractors are able to do, they will be repurposing land that has already been destroyed and black topped by adding gardens, green space, and trees.

On that same note, if you are interested in helping to make positive changes, contact your local legislator, expressing your environmental concerns. Ask them:

- To consider passing legislation that disallows the clearing of open space and insist that we want abandoned shopping centers to be repurposed and revitalized rather than forested lands being cleared.
- To consider making it a requirement that native trees, bushes and plants to be used in gardenscapes of residential and industrial building complexes.
- For strict, enforced laws in regard to the cutting of any large trees, including privately owned, unless it is diseased and truly threatening to life and home – not just an inconvenience. Ask that tree removal companies be liable for not following regulations.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a list of the current legislators and their districts. They are all terrific people who live in Suffolk County and who have an interest in the health and vibrancy of their communities. Please – get to know them. Explain to them the importance of protecting the living environment, for everyone's sake.



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Art & Photography

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



Female Harlequin Duck, John Carlson



Snowy Owl, Nicole DiGose



Horned Lark, Chris Braut



Lesser Black Gull, John Carlson



Red Tailed Hawk, Melanie Kratunis



Bat Falcon, Lisa Nasta

GSBAS Annual Dinner: **Huge Success!**

by Great South Bay Audubon Society

The weather was slightly rainy and cold and most of our fine feathered friends were nestled in, but our friends at the Great South Bay Audubon Society were flocking together at the Annual Dinner in Bay Shore. We all convened at Captain Bill's Restaurant on the water for sumptuous fine food, fellowship, sharing, learning, and lots of fun as we reconnected after two years without an in-person dinner.

It was an enjoyable evening of amazing door prize give-a-ways, and awesome raffles, including a Steven D'Amato original bird painting. The raffles made everyone feel like a winner. The festivities kicked-off with a great interactive centerpiece game that Annette shared with us about a true bird story. Each guest at every table became part of the game as we handed our table's stuffed bird to one another, passing left or right depending on the direction in the story being told. All ended with a lucky winner at each table claiming the prize!

A highlight of the evening was learning about River Otters, as the famous Wildlife Biologist Mike Bottini shared a presentation about his study and the recolonization of the otters to Long Island. It was interesting to learn about sightings, roadkill reports, accidental trappings, and other historical data dating back to 1983 covering over 150 potential otters sites on Long Island.

Everyone left feeling better informed, happy, and more connected with each other as our flock came together to reconvene as part of the Audubon Society. Stay tuned for more exciting events, walks, and get-togethers as the season unfolds into summer and fall!



Feeder Survey **Summer 2022**

by Helga Merryman

I started birding in New York City over sixty years ago the last 55 of which were spent in Suffolk County birding and feeding birds, I've become aware of how the population of some species has crept up. My first sight of a Mockingbird on Long Island was at Pinelawn Cemetery in 1963, (although I was told that "I couldn't possibly have seen it"), I proved that person wrong the next day as we entered Pinelawn and the "Mocker" was sitting on a branch right at the entrance. That same year we started having House Finches visit our feeders in NYC.

Both species have since become common on Long Island and NYC. Years ago, we would take trips down to Florida visiting relatives and as we traveled through the south we were lucky to find Carolina Wrens and Red-bellied Woodpeckers which have now moved north and are regulars at our feeders and surrounding habitats. Recently a mature Bald Eagle flew low and slow over my house. WOW!! Making me wonder if in the next twenty years, with the recent, steady population increase, will Bald Eagles and Ravens become common sights sitting around the periphery of our yards observing us? Well this brings to a close the survey period that started in November of 2021 and finished in March 2022.

For the past three months the following 11 people representing 9 areas participated: Banaszak (Blue point), Cafarelli (West Islip), Dr. Caruso (East Patchogue), Fogarty (Babylon), Horman (Ridge), Kremer-Parrott (West Sayville), Merryman (Babylon), Preisinger (Medford), Sorenson (North Babylon), Unterschuetz (Lindenhurst) and Weissman (Lindenhurst). Thank you for participating. I look forward to hearing from you again in the fall, when we start again in November. Have a great Spring and Summer.

Red-tailed Hawk _0/1/1	Fox Sparrow _0/0/0
Sharp-shinned Hawk _1/0/1	Song Sparrow _18/17/6
Cooper's Hawk _5/1/1	White-throated Sparrow _
Rock Pigeon _7/6/8	54/54/40
Mourning Dove _16/137/15	European Starling _137/49/14
Monk Parakeet _7/1/2	Towhee _0/0/0
Red-bellied Woodpecker _	Fox Sparrow _0/0/0
11/8/10	Song Sparrow _18/17/6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker _0/1/0	White-throated Sparrow _
Downy Woodpecker _16/14/11	54/54/40
Hairy Woodpecker _3/1/3	Dark-eyed Junco _32/38/26
Northern Flicker _5/5/3	Northern Cardinal _36/37/39
Blue Jay _45/38/30	Red-winged Blackbird
American Crow _9/11/14	_3/49/25
Black-capped Chickadee _	Common Grackle_5/104+/118
20/20/24	Brown-headed Cowbird
Tufted Titmouse _6/11/9	_0/10/7
Brown Creeper_0/1/1	House Finch _57/63/72
Ruby-Crowned Kinglet_0/1/1	American Goldfinch _2/5/3
Yellow-Rumped Warbler_0/0/1	House Sparrow _100+/174+/88
Bald Eagle_1/0/1	
Osprey_0/0/1	OTHER SPECIES
Red-breasted Nuthatch _0/0/0	Great Blue Heron_1/0/3
White-breasted Nuthatch _3/3/5	Mallards _0/26/23
Carolina Wren _7/10/9	Black-duck Mallard
American Robin _25/39/68	hybrid_0/0/1
Northern Mockingbird _6/6/7	Hooded Mergansers_0/0/7
Brown Thrasher_0/0/0	Kingfisher _0/3/1
European Starling _137/49/14	Raven _3/1/0
Towhee _0/0/0	

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. Visit greatsouthbayaudubon.org to learn more about how the survey works.

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
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All membership fees are now due **February 1st** of each year. If you have not renewed your membership, please renew today.

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THE SANDPIPER



Sweetbriar Enviromental Center

June 16, 6pm • Brookside County Park

View and touch animals rescued in the wild.

Please bring a lawn chair or blanket - Insect repellent is recommended.

The Homegrown Artisan Flavor of Long Island

Saturday, July 31, 11am - 4pm • Brookside County Park

Learn more on **page 3 >>>**

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