



**THE SANDPIPER**

# 2023 Annual Dinner Recap

BY ANNETTE BROWNELL

On Monday, May 8, we had our annual dinner at Captain Bill's. Although the dinner did not go off without a hitch, it certainly went off as a terrific event. After wading through errors and last-minute reservations and seating changes, it was a high energy, fun evening.

The room was beautiful and the food was delicious. Thank you to the staff at Captain Bill's. Cara Fernandez from Quogue Wildlife Refuge gave an informative and interesting presentation about the history of the Refuge and their purpose today. Cara has a nice, comfortable presentation style that peaks one's interest. I hope everyone will take some time in the coming months to visit and support Quogue Wildlife Refuge.



Once again, the Auwaerter family generously donated the table centerpieces as well as 2 wonderful baskets of flowers with gift certificates. It is the first time I have seen any prize have more tickets in the basket than the liquor basket!

Unfortunately, due to a misprint on the invitations, there was nowhere for people to purchase raffles for Steve D'Amato's painting. Steve creates and works hard on this piece all year. So – we're all ready for next year and Steve can relax!



Most importantly, the real prize of this event is the fellowship and connection with everyone, whether you were able to attend the dinner or to send in raffle chances. The support that we receive through an event like this reminds me of how valuable our relationships are.

I am so happy for every hug, smile and encouraging word throughout the evening!



# President's Message

A MESSAGE FROM GSBAS PRESIDENT JODY BANASZAK

Hello my little birding friends! Hope you are all well and enjoying the birds. A lot of the spring and summer birds are coming back. The Ospreys are all sitting in their nests. They are everywhere! A friend saw a Hummingbird around Mother's Day and I think I saw a female Goldfinch. It flew by so fast I wasn't sure. My mom always says, "Once I thought I was wrong, but I was mistaken!" Ha! I wish the Grackles would take a hike. They keep eating all my birdseed. All the birds will be making their nests soon too. I know I wrote about the nests in another newsletter, but I still can't fathom how they know how to make the nest they were born in without being shown. We had our yearly dinner at Captain Bills, which drew a lot of people. It was a nice evening and our speaker from Quogue Wildlife Refuge was great. Thank goodness for them as they save and help so many animals. A big thank you to all the people who donated all the great prizes. And, a really big thank you also goes to Annette for planning and making it all work out!

Helga Merryman will be retiring from the feeder survey. If anyone is interested in taking it over please contact her.

Her email is on the back of the newsletter. There are also no bird walks for the summer. Thank you Ken Thompson for planning them all. We had a great one at Central Park. I can't remember the last walk I did there but it was beautiful with all the big boulders and trees along the paths. We saw a lot of Warblers and other birds. There were a lot of people jogging, walking, and walking their dogs there too. A big thank you to John Gluth for leading us, and the many members who came. He sure knows his birds! We will be having our summer event in June at Brookside County Park so check your emails. This is always a fun event for children and adults.

I saw a Baltimore Oriole in my yard May 17th. I was so excited I looked up how to make the food for them. It said to melt grape jelly with sugar, water, and the juice from half an orange in a pot. I thought they were attracted to yellow!!! I'll see how this works out and let you know. We will not be having any meetings this summer, except for the June event at Brookside, but will resume in September. Enjoy your summer and enjoy the birds!!

## Audubon Aims to Reduce Poisoning of Eagles

BY ANDY MASON

Legislation has been introduced in Albany that would make a modest start in removing the threat of lead poisoning to birds and other scavengers, and to humans. Assembly bill A2084 would prohibit the use of lead ammunition on state-owned land and on land contributing surface water to the New York City water supply. Both the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health have failed to address this issue, so it is dear that the Legislature needs to take action.

**What can you do?** Contact your State Senator and Assembly member and ask them to support legislation to protect Eagles and humans from lead ammunition (To find your state legislators, visit [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov)) Point out that our state was responsible for one of the greatest conservation stories with the successful reintroduction of Bald Eagles. It is unacceptable that large numbers of these iconic birds are now unnecessarily being poisoned.



Eagle by Brian Kushner

# Nature Walks

## AUGUST WALKS

### **Saturday, August 26, 8:00 am, Jamaica Bay**

Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120), Mike Cooper (516-523-2369) Southern State Pkwy to Belt Pkwy to Exit 17, Cross Bay Blvd. South. Continue south for about 2 miles. Look for the entrance of the refuge on the right (west) side. There are signs for park entrance (Knee High boots are recommended.)

## SEPTEMBER WALKS

### **Saturday, September 17, 8:30 am, Connetquot River SPP Bird at The Preserve**

Leaders Edith Wilson, Helga Merryman, Ken Thompson, Jack Carlson Reservations required \$4 at Eventbrite.com search #NatureAdventure, Plus \$8 parking fee per car - unless you have a yearly Empire pass.

### **Saturday, September 23, 8:00 am, Robert Moses Hawk Watch & Jones Beach WE**

Leaders Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) John Gluth (631-827-0120) Meet at Robert Moses State Park parking field #5 northeast corner. May require a parking fee.

## OCTOBER WALKS

### **Saturday, October 14, 8:30 am, Caumsett SP**

Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120) Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) 350 Northern State to exit 42N (Route35) to 25A west to West Neck Rd.(right turn). West Neck/Lloyd Harbor Rd. into Lloyd Neck. Entrance to the Park on the left. Meet in the parking lot.

## NOVEMBER WALKS

### **Saturday, November 4, 8:30 am Suffolk County Farm**

Leaders Vera Capogna (516-639-5430) John Gluth (631-827-0120) 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 the 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 11, 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.

## DECEMBER WALKS

### **Saturday, December 2, 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.



Scarlet Tanager by John Gluth

## Upcoming Events

### **Sunday, August 27, 2 pm - Shakespeare in the Park**

Sponsored by Islip Arts Council – Twelfth Night, Bring chairs and refreshments.



### **Saturday, July 8th, 9:30 am**

**All Hands Needed** for major garden redesign and relocation of the Butterfly Garden at Brookside. Bring tools and gloves!



### **Saturday, October 7, 12 - 4 pm — Great Lawn**

**Mini Raptorfest** – Featuring Skyhunters In Flight with Brian and Teddy Bradley and dynamic educational program by Master Falconer Brian Bradley. Buddy Merrian will be back for a third year with possible special collaboration with local Ballet School Lumiere! There will be many other surprises, bring chairs and refreshments. Buy local honey!



# Art & Photography

VIEW OUR FULL GALLERY AT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.GREATSOUTHBAYAUDUBON.ORG](http://WWW.GREATSOUTHBAYAUDUBON.ORG)



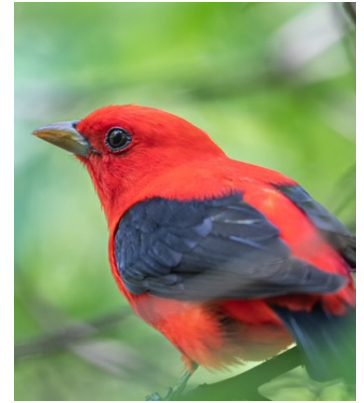
**Barn Swallow**  
*Kristin Cooney*



**Gambel's Quail**  
*Ken Thompson*



**Downy Woodpecker**  
*Thomas Sarc*



**Scarlet Tanager**  
*Lisa Nasta*

## Feeder Survey

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023  
COMPILED BY HELGA MERRYMAN

Years ago, while walking through a park in Manhattan, I noticed a young man eating his lunch, a male house sparrow hopped over, cocked his head and looked at him, the young man immediately responded by tossing a bit of bread to the bird. It made me wonder why we have the urge to feed things? Birds will feed the residents of their nest even though their own babies have been replaced by parasitic birds such as cowbirds. In "little shop of horrors" Seymour feels obliged to feed "Audrey" the plant from outer space when she demands "feed me". When our dog sat up and begged we threw him a snack.

Some feeding urges seem to be a response to instinct while others a response to some type of positive feedback. When we threw a snack to our dog the feedback was thinking how smart he was. Feeding the birds in our yard gives us a benevolent feeling and the feedback is the joy we get by bringing the birds close so we can view them.

The GSBAS feeder survey has been run for many years, I have enjoyed compiling the survey for more than 10 years, I will no longer be running it after this last survey.

Over the years I have enjoyed hearing from everyone, and hope you will continue to fill your feeders and stay aware of the nature on your doorsteps.

Thank you, *Helga Merryman!*

We had 8 participants; Banaszak, Cafarelli, Fogarty, Gale, Horman, Merryman, Preisinger and Wilson.

7 areas were represented; Babylon, Blue Point, Brightwaters, Deer Park, Medford, Ridge and West Islip.

Red-tailed Hawk 0/2/1  
Sharp-shinned Hawk 0/0/0  
Cooper's Hawk 1/3/2  
Mourning Dove 59/54/44  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 4/7/8  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 0/0/0  
Downy Woodpecker 8/9/10  
Hairy Woodpecker 2/1/2  
Northern Flicker 1/2/1  
Blue Jay 17 / 15  
Blue Jay 14/23/9

American Crow 10/4/1  
Black-capped Chickadee  
15/19/11  
Tufted Titmouse 5/5/9  
Red-breasted Nuthatch 2/2/4  
White-breasted Nuthatch 8/4/6  
Carolina Wren 4/6/6  
American Robin 0/0/4  
Northern Mockingbird 3/2/1  
European Starling 68/18/22  
Fox Sparrow 0/0/1

Song Sparrow 10/1/14  
White-throated Sparrow  
14/13/15  
Dark-eyed Junco 10/16/18  
Northern Cardinal 12/12/11  
Red-winged Blackbird 0/1/17  
Common Grackle 15//7/66  
Brown-headed Cowbird 0/0/1  
House Finch 24/21/39  
American Goldfinch 15/13/13  
House Sparrow 43/37/41

OTHER SPECIES  
Raven 2/0/1  
Turkey 1/0/0  
Herring Gull 1/0/0  
Bald Eagle 2/2/1  
Great Blue Heron 0/1/1  
Purple Finch 0/0/1



# Coming up on 100 Years!

BY ANNETTE BROWNELL

*Great Blue Heron by Robert Hurt*

Great South Bay Audubon Society was founded in 1927. We are coming up on our centennial in just 4 years. Anyone in our audience over 60 knows how fast 4 years goes by. We want to make it — but we need your help.

There are several opportunities for you, as a member, to help Great South Bay Audubon Society recommit to the strong Audubon Society that it was in the past. We have many tasks that need attention. Some involve a once a month commitment, and some, a once a week. Since we are an Audubon Society and not a bird club, our goals and responsibilities go beyond bird walks and the appreciation of nature which are super important. Please come on July 9, as we work on our garden restructuring. It will be a perfect time to chat and gain an open house style overview of the organization's needs. A volunteer is a central to the survival of an organization as the right soil is necessary for a plant to grow health.

## How Birds Fare in the New State Budget

BY ANONYMOUS

Environmental Protection Fund gets another \$400 million, and more good news for New York's birds.

**Environmental Protection Fund.** New York State has committed another \$400 million in funding for the EPF, which provides critical support for environmental programs, including Audubon's nature centers and sanctuaries. EPF funding is a solid investment that provides good-paying jobs, drives economic growth, and protects vulnerable wildlife and their habitats. We are pleased that the proposed language allowing funds from the EPF to be spent on staffing for state agencies was not included as part of the final budget proposal.

**Funding Clean Water Infrastructure.** New York State's investments in clean water infrastructure have funded significant improvements to our wastewater and drinking water systems. The final budget provides an additional \$500 million in funding for water quality and clean water infrastructure, and also calls for creating Community Assistance Teams to assist with outreach to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities. This proposal will help ensure that birds and people have access to clean water.

**Capitol for State Parks and the DEC.** The final budget includes \$202.5 million for the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and \$90 million for the Department of Environmental Conservation. This funding will help provide critical maintenance and upgrades to State facilities, investments in natural or green infrastructure, and support for habitat improvement projects. Additionally, this funding supports the continued enhancement of the New York State Birding Trail, which is being overseen by the DEC's Adventure NY program.

**Acting on Climate.** Fifty percent of bird species are predicted to be either "climate-threatened" or "climate endangered" by 2080, including at least fifty species in New York State. We can help fight climate change and support a responsible clean energy transition by continuing to electrify our economy and developing an aggressive plan to reduce carbon emissions. The final budget includes a "Cap and Invest" strategy that would place an economy-wide tax on carbon and several proposals that would phase out the use of fossil fuels in buildings.

**Keeping Our Forests Healthy.** Overbrowsing by deer has an outsized impact on forest health - destroying critical habitat for declining woodland bird species and decreasing our forests' ability to store carbon. As a science-based organization, we support evidence-based wildlife management strategies that utilize hunting as an effective management tool. The final budget included provisions that will extend the youth hunting pilot program until 2025 in order to support the next generation of hunters.



# What Should I Do If I Find a Nest Where It Doesn't Belong?

BY SPOORTHY RAMAN

Some birds are quite comfortable building their homes right next to ours. It's not uncommon to see Mourning Doves in an air-conditioning vent, Eastern Phoebes on a windowsill, American Robins in a wreath, or House Finches in flowerpots.

If you find one, what should you do about it?

## Leave It Be

If you find a surprise nest, leave it be. "You're not supposed to mess with it," says avian ecologist Caren Cooper from North Carolina State University. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, a federal law, protects roughly 1,100 native bird species, including eggs and nests. The list includes wrens, finches, phoebes, hummingbirds, doves, killdeer, and robins—all species that often nest around homes.

Invasive species, such as House Sparrows and European Starlings, are exempt from the law. But you should still let them be, says biologist Robyn Bailey from NestWatch, a community nest-monitoring program run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. While you could legally remove their nests, it's difficult to distinguish a sparrow's nest from a warbler's if you are not an expert. "They can look very similar," Bailey says, and it's better to be safe than sorry.

## Protect the Area

Be patient, Cooper says; young fledge about a month after egg laying. During this time, hang a warning sign near the nest to warn passersby of its presence. Raising chicks takes a lot of energy, so help birds by protecting them from disturbances. Keep cats indoors, and avoid visiting the nest too frequently for photos or videos. "That Instagram feed is not as important as that nest being safe and protected from predators," Bailey says. Nest raiders, such as raccoons and crows, can observe your movements to discover nests.

Don't worry about the mess—most bird species are very clean. Chicks poop into a diaper-like fecal sac that parents carry and dispose of far from the nest. But if you have to clean up any fecal matter or feather dust, Cooper suggests wearing a mask and thoroughly washing your hands with soap.



*Mourning Doves by Duncan Selby*

## Call an Expert

Sometimes, birds will build their nest in an unsafe place for example, in a car tailpipe or gravel driveway. In such extreme cases, don't try to remove it yourself. Instead, call a wildlife rehabilitator to relocate it, Bailey says. "Often those nests are so delicate and fragile that you're going to either damage the nest or potentially any eggs or young in it."

However if a chick has fallen out of its nest, it's safe to put it back without worrying about the parents rejecting it. "The parents aren't all that tuned into smells," Cooper says.

## Hang Nest Boxes

Birds love to nest in dark crannies. They'll happily set up house in any pocket-like nook, even a little-used baby stroller or bike helmet. To encourage better choices, hang nest boxes and nest shelves to lure birds to safer areas.

## Enjoy the View

If you are excited about a nest around your house, consider helping scientists study nesting behaviors by joining programs like NestWatch. You could install a nest camera to watch, from a distance, all the drama that unfolds. "If you enjoy birds," Cooper says, "it's the best close-up way to do so." And, of course, with binoculars you can while away the hours watching parents bring up chicks from a distance.

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See page one of *The Sandpiper* for more on our wonderful dinner event!

