

# THE GREAT SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Mission Statement

The mission of the **Great South Bay Audubon Society** is to advocate for the conservation of habitats for native birds and other native wildlife on Long Island.

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

ISSUE **LXVIII** • September 2023 - November 2023



## THE SANDPIPER

# Wings of Change

BY ANNETTE BROWNELL



Snowy Owl: Nicole DiGiuse

For the past several years, the GSBAS has written, printed and mailed a beautiful 8-page quarterly newsletter to members and non-members alike. The Sandpiper has been a labor of love and exists as an expression of our collective experiences, photos, knowledge and stories all about our beloved birds.

Our mission at the GSBAS is to advocate for the *conservation of habitat for native birds and other native wildlife on Long Island*. While in many ways we work tirelessly to do all of this, we have delayed a very obvious area of conservation until now.

After this last issue that you hold in your hand - we are no longer printing and mailing our Sandpiper in its current form. We are moving to a monthly online Sandpiper, which will save many trees and eliminate waste - two things we feel are necessary in today's world. Because it is monthly, there will be more engaging stories, beautiful photos and timely information about the many programs available at GSBAS.

We feel strongly that member dues and donations should have a direct line to programs and events and not get caught up in operational expenses.

We hope all will welcome this change and grow along with us. We will still accept bird photos, articles and information from members and the simple redesign will feel very familiar. We may even be able to capture a newer generation of tech-savvy bird enthusiasts who will join our beloved organization.

We are offering mailed digital Sandpiper copies to members at \$4 each. Please pay for 12 months in advance. Checks should be payable to GSBAS and mailed to GSBAS PO Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782.

In September, we will be starting our third Thursday general meetings again at Seatuck Foundation. We hope to see more people taking advantage of our speakers, who are always informative and interesting.

We pride ourselves on having a membership that is forward-thinking and interested in learning about and improving our natural world. We strive to offer speakers that reflect those values.

On September 15th, Miguel Valentin will be joining us again. Miguel is a local Master Bee Keeper who joined us 2 years ago when the world was reopening. You don't want to miss the knowledge and love of bees that he has - as well as - an opportunity to buy some local honey.

Jordan Raphael will be speaking on October 19th. Jordan is a Parks Biologist with Fire Island National Seashore. He will bring updates on our a favorite shore bird, the Piper Plover.

Byron Young will be with us on November 16th. President of Eastern Long Island Audubon Society (ELIAS), Byron is involved in many environmental programs and projects as this has been his life. Byron will be filling us in on some of the environmental challenges of the East End - in particular EPCAL.

Our December meeting is usually a lighter party atmosphere meeting (a personal favorite kind of meeting). January we will take a break and the meet again in February via Zoom so everyone can stay snuggled indoors. Stay tuned for what that program will be.



Yellow-rumped Warbler: John Faulkner

# President's Message

A MESSAGE FROM GSBAS PRESIDENT JODY BANASZAK

Hello my little birding friends! Hope you are all well and enjoying the birds. I've had a nice mixture this summer. I know people say you don't have to feed the birds in the summer but I do. I also have a few bird baths that I fill with water and make sure I clean them before I put new water in. We still have Mal, the mixed white and male Mallard Duck swimming around. He was kind of lost when the Mallards were having their babies. Supposedly his mate/friend, the white duck, isn't dead but in a nature center someplace. I'm sure he misses her.

Our bird walks will be coming up soon and listed in this newsletter. Hope you can make it. Our leaders are great and very knowledgeable. We've also had some great photos from our members. They are so dedicated to picture taking!! We're planning a new garden at Brookside County Park. Karen Andres has designed it. It's going to be beautiful. Christina, from the county parks department has approved it, as it has to be native to the area. There hasn't been too much vandalism lately although they have been littering and sometimes spray painting trees. I just don't get it. We never did that as teenagers. We just hung around smoking pot and drinking beer!! We never vandalized anything. There's also a lot of people going to the park. We will be having our monthly meetings with speakers at Seatuck Environmental Center again starting in September. I'll also start the painting classes up again this fall. Davis Park, Fire Island, will be having their Annual Art Show September 3rd

which I am painting for. It was started by artist Walter Desel, an artist and a Davis Park beach house owner, probably back in the 60's.

It would be held on the boardwalk by his house and got to be so big the church started having it. It's gotten away from artists, and more craft things. One person paints on horseshoe crabs! Practically everyone who owns a beach house and a lot who don't, own a Desel painting!

Well, enjoy the fall with the next group of birds coming around. Hope to see you at the bird walks and meetings. We have some good speakers coming up. Happy birding!!!



Cardinal: Thomas Sarc

# Nature's Best Hope

BY KAREN ANDRES

Every birder loves nature. After all that is where we will find the birds. There's nothing like getting up in the morning and sitting outside with a cup of coffee or tea and listen to the birds. Birds will not come to your back yard if it is devoid of what it needs, water, food, and habitat. I recently watched a wonderful video on YouTube by an acclaimed entomologist and naturalist

Dr. Douglas Tallamy, who is campaigning for nature. I think every birder should watch. Birds need more than seed and water to thrive.!



"Tallamy is one of the most original and persuasive present-day authors on conservation."

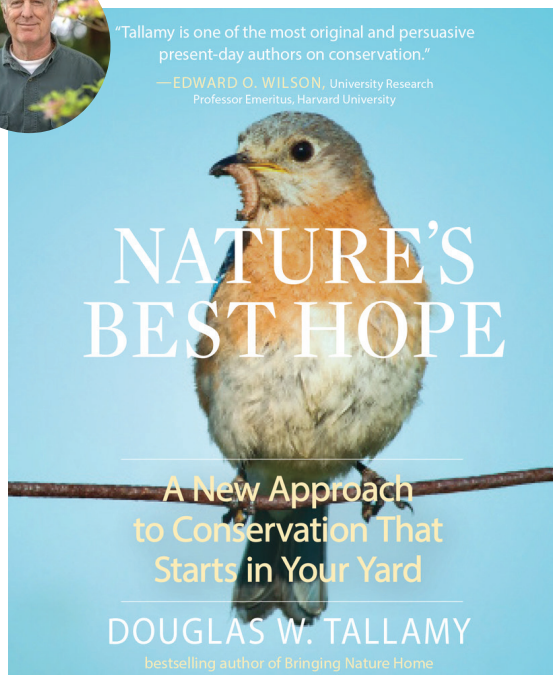
—EDWARD O. WILSON, University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University

## NATURE'S BEST HOPE

A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard

DOUGLAS W. TALLAMY

bestselling author of Bringing Nature Home



# Nature Walks

## 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**

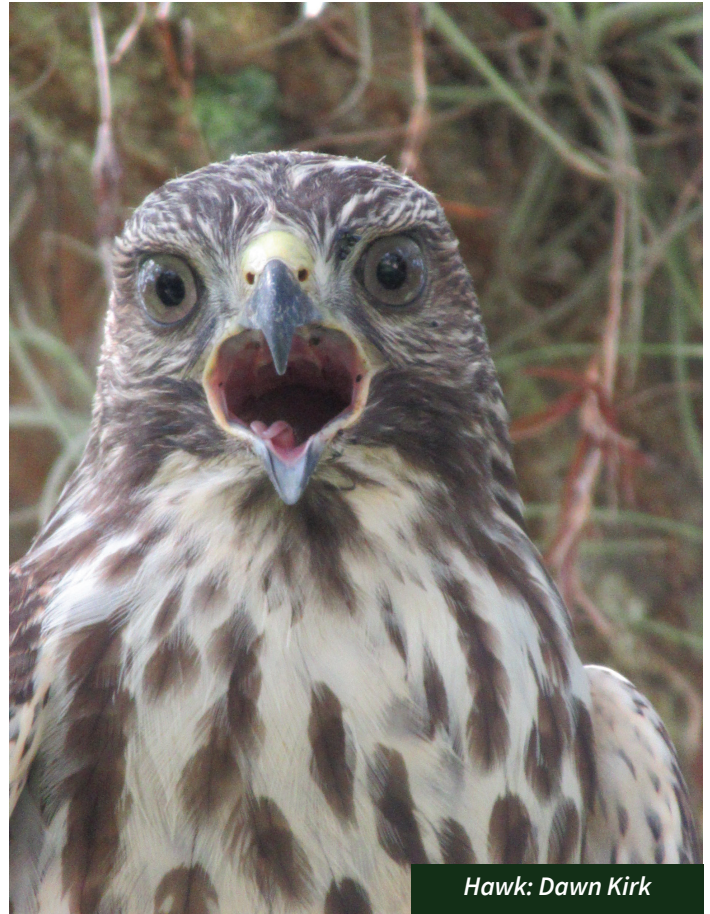
Leaders Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) Sunrise Highway east past Shinnecock Canal. Look for a North Sea Road Noyack sign and bear left on CR52. Stay on CR52 and then turn left at light onto CR38. After 1.4 miles on CR38, turn right onto Noyack Road after 5 miles turn left onto 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.



Hawk: Dawn Kirk



Red breasted Merganser: Thom Lutz

# Art & Photography

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



**Least Sandpiper**  
*Kristin Cooney*



**Common Tern**  
*Lisa Nasta*



**Coopers Hawk**  
*Bob Glasser*



**Spur Winged Plover**  
*John Abraham*

## Herd of Bees?

BY ANNETTE BROWNELL

I have an ant problem in my kitchen – for years -every spring and summer. I have looked in the basement under the kitchen area, outside the windows, trying to figure out where they are coming from. I have coated the counter with liquid dish soap to trap them, put peppermint essential oil on a Q-tip and stuffed it in the electrical outlet where the ants pour out. I tried Terra ant traps. Nothing works.

One day a young man showed up at my door selling exterminator services. Hmmm. Tempting. I asked some questions. I want the ant problem in my kitchen solved. He was very excited to tell me that the exterminating service starts at the road and covers everything. “But it will kill the spiders and other insects” I told him. “Yes!” he was happy to agree. “No, you don’t understand. I don’t want to kill my insects, just the ants in my kitchen.” After several minutes of fruitless discussion, I convinced him that I didn’t want his service. I coated my counter with Diatomaceous Earth – which is a mess -but the ants are gone.

Pollinators keep our ecosystem thriving. Pollinator insects include thousands of species of bees, flies, moths, butterflies, beetles (yuck) and other insects. The European Honeybee is our favorite pollinator, but not the only one. We humans have worked with honeybees for thousands of years and they are wonderful to educate people on the importance of insects. However, they compete with native bee species for space.

Balancing the presence of honeybees while protecting native insect populations is a complex balance. It requires careful monitoring, habitat preservation and responsible land management. It means acting responsibly in the ecosystem of your own backyard as native bees, honeybees, pollinators and many beneficial insects share that space.

Insects are not the only ones affected by pesticides. So are songbirds, small mammals – and eventually you and your family.

According to the DEC, Suffolk County uses more pesticides than any other county in New York State! Yikes!!! The US is the largest pesticide-consuming country in the world. These are not bragging statistics.

As a long time herald of the importance of trees -especially the giant Oaks, as they are home to hundreds of species of beneficial insects, I never thought I would see the day where I had to agree that nearly every insect is a beneficial insect in the ecosystem.

Let’s help them out. Don’t use pesticides and lawn chemicals.

A weed free lawn isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. But children running around barefoot and bunnies eating dandelions is.



*Bee on Milkweed: Janet Gremli*

# Majestic Botanic Delights

BY ANNETTE BROWNELL

Think of your garden as a feeding station and safe haven for bees, birds and other wildlife, with flowers, berries, seed heads, etc - A Bee proverb

For many years we have had a pollinator garden at Brookside County Park. Over the last several years it has suffered some abuse at the hands of our local vandals who have destroyed the fence, forced us to remove the bird bath and wrecked the arbor and Trumpet vine. Neglect has also gotten its way as volunteers have dwindled.

In July we had a garden work day to begin to revitalize the garden, get rid of weeds and over grown plants and to make a decision as to whether or not the garden should be moved to a sunnier space.

Several people came to help, which was just wonderful! Thank you so much! I'm embarrassed to say that I didn't catch everyone's name and don't want to offend anyone by omission.

That day I met Karen Andres, having recently completed her Master Gardener. Karen has offered to fill the open position of garden coordinator. She spent a good amount of time researching and designing a wonderful garden that will incorporate the existing garden and the new sunnier location garden spot that we chose, with native, deer resistant plants.

Karen is working with Suffolk County Parks to develop a garden comprised of Long Island native plants, in compliance with the County's initiative. We are so excited to have Karen as a team member.

Karen will be developing a team of volunteers to share their love of gardening and create an exciting living space for a higher purpose. If you are interested in being part of the team, please email Karen at [1karenandres@gmail.com](mailto:1karenandres@gmail.com).



Karen Andres

## Montezuma Wetlands Complex is an Important Bird Area

BY ANONYMOUS

Egrets: New York Audubon

Montezuma Wetlands Complex lies within the heart of New York's Finger Lakes region. Covering 50,000 acres, the complex includes a host of diverse habitats important to many migratory and resident wildlife species, including one of the largest migratory concentrations of waterfowl in the Northeast.

Nearly 1,000,000 of more than 25 different waterfowl species pass through the Complex during migration, including hundreds of thousands of Snow Geese, Mallards and Black Ducks. In the summer, it offers breeding habitat for hundreds of Cerulean Warblers, and it's considered one of the most significant stopover and foraging locations for migrating

shorebirds in upstate New York.

Also found here is the Montezuma Audubon Center (MAC) – a partnership with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation – which hosts thousands of visitors annually. Through a variety of programs, including For the Birds!, Youth Sportsman Summer Camp, and MARSH! (Montezuma Alliance for the Restoration of Species & Habitat), adults and children are connected to nature and learn how their actions can influence habitat health.

# The Single Most Important Way to Make Your Binoculars Last

BY AUDUBON MAGAZINE

Binoculars are a big investment for many birders. Yet we toss them haphazardly in a bag, wear them while scrambling through brush, and drop them in mud. Then there are bigger catastrophes, says Rich Moncrief, who has worked for Zeiss's nature unit for 21 years. He's seen them crushed under cars and chewed by hyenas. But breakage is probable even with careful use. "It's mechanical," he says. "You will wear it out."

To prolong the life of your bins, pay attention to moving parts. Eyecups break most often; they deteriorate from twisting or degrade from accumulated sweat, bug spray, and sunscreen. The focus knob, hinge, and diopter adjustments can get jammed with sand, grit, or salt. These eventually interfere with the glass lenses and prisms inside and impair your view.

Avoid these problems by running your optics under warm water when you return from the field, especially if you've been in salt spray or sand. "What's the first thing you do when you get off the beach? You rinse off," says Mike Lilygren, cofounder of Maven, a Wyoming-based manufacturer. "Do the same thing with your optic." Most binoculars are waterproof and can be submerged. (Confirm waterproofing details for your model.) As you clean, move the hinges, knob, and eyecups. Then let them air-dry. This is the single most important practice to make your binoculars last.

Be careful with the lenses. A piece of grit can scratch the antireflective or protective coating and do permanent damage. Wiping with a shirt can also leave a scratch; always dab with a microfiber cloth. "We really can't recoat the lenses," Moncrief says. In the field, blow on a dirty lens, and ideally use a lens brush, an alcohol-based spray, and a microfiber cloth in that order. At home, wash with a drop of dish soap if needed. Finally, store them where they get air circulation, especially if you live in a humid area. Don't leave them in direct sun.

Without upkeep, repair is inevitable: A focuser might stick, or your view may cloud, potentially causing headaches. "If it doesn't seem quite right," Moncrief says, "you don't want to let it go." Warranties come in two flavors. A limited warranty covers defects, including internal repairs at the maker's discretion. An unlimited one covers all damage except that done deliberately. Either kind can extend a few years or for the product's lifetime. Consider the fine print when shopping for a new pair.

To use a warranty, contact your manufacturer to describe your issue. Many will mail you replacement eyecups. More serious issues will require you send in your binoculars. It can be painful to be parted from your optic, but when it comes back spruced up, it's worth it.

**Handle your binoculars with confidence on your next adventure.**

**In the Bramble** When moving through rough terrain, keep your binoculars close to your body. A chest harness will help prevent most bouncing and banging, or you can sling your shoulder strap around one arm so it's running diagonally across your chest. If your clambering is particularly harsh, use your hand as a shield to take the hits.

**In the Car** Don't leave your binoculars on the dash, especially on a sunny day. The windshield acts as a lens, focusing light and causing bins to overheat. This can expel the fog-proofing gas inside your gear and rapidly degrade it. Also keep your optics in their case while driving so that they don't rattle around.

**In the Rain** Whatever precipitation you encounter, you're safe. Water won't hurt your binoculars, but it can get in the way of your view if it pools in your lenses. Place your ocular covers over the eyecups as a rain guard. If you need to clean droplets off the lenses, dab (don't wipe) with a microfiber cloth.



Photo: Tina Fa'apoi/Target Tamers

# New Motus Station Will Track Migratory Birds Flying Over the Long Island's North Shore

BY AUDUBON NEW YORK

Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary: Diana Wilson/Audubon

OYSTER BAY, NY (June 2023)— The new Motus station installed at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay, NY will help track migratory birds by picking up radio signals from any bird with a radio tag that flies within several miles of the site. The station will connect the Sanctuary's important bird habitat to the global Motus network, increasing the network's coverage of the Long Island's north shore.

“Motus” means “movement” in Latin and refers to the network's ability to track bird migrations from Canada south to Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

With the help of the National Audubon Society's Migratory Bird Initiative team, the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center was able to purchase and install the station on their new visitor center this June.

“The Sanctuary is perfectly positioned to track birds that are passing through the migratory pathway on Long Island,” said Kathryn D'Amico, center director at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center. “We are so excited to have this technology at our center and be part of the migratory bird initiative at Audubon. Collecting this data will help us research and protect birds, and the places they need throughout the Atlantic flyway, and on their international journeys.”

Motus is especially critical in studying smaller birds fitted with nanotags, which are tiny radio tracking devices often as light as an aspirin tablet. Nanotags provide an alternative to the heavier satellite radio transmitters researchers use to track movements of larger species such as hawks and owls.

When a radio tagged bird flies nearby, it sends a ping to the Motus tower's antenna. Data from the nanotags are transmitted to ground-based receivers, rather than an orbiting satellite. The data is automatically uploaded to the internet, where anyone can view it.

Wood Thrush, whose numbers have significantly declined in recent decades, are one species that staff hope will ping the new Motus station.

Long Island is an invaluable place for many birds, whether they use its varied habitats to nest, spend their winters, or as a stopover site during migration to places further North or South. A Motus tower on the North Shore of Long Island can track both birds in and around the Long Island Sound, such as Piping Plovers, as well as those that make use of woods and other inland habitats, like Wood Thrushes. Motus technology has the potential to track individual birds and

reveal how they are using the surrounding habitat, or where they encounter difficulties .

This new addition will be the fourth Motus towers installed on Long Island, and among the thousands of Motus towers across the Western hemisphere. Each new tower fills an important gap in migratory bird research. The tower at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center can detect birds tagged by other researchers and add to their data, thus contributing to bird migration research across the entire hemisphere.

“We are so excited to add this Motus station to our arsenal of conservation and education tools,” said Julie Nelsen, education manager at the Sanctuary. “This will be a wonderful new way to connect people of all ages with the work done all around the hemisphere to study and conserve birds, all while getting to be a part of that work.”

The visitor center viewed from the garden entrance. A swath of bright red and other flowers stands in between the viewer and the center. The Motus station is blocked by a large tree.

The Sanctuary's native plant gardens and wooded areas attract a variety of bird species that they hope to be able to track. Photo: Diana Wilson/Audubon

North America has lost nearly 3 billion birds over the last several decades. The growing Motus network can help gather important data on the movement of birds, ultimately helping us better understand and protect them throughout their life cycles.

The data collected also supports Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative, which brings together tracking, banding, and eBird data across the Western Hemisphere to help improve conservation planning for imperiled birds.

“Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative is working with researchers across the hemisphere to develop a more complete picture of the places migratory birds need to thrive throughout their annual cycle,” said Bill DeLuca, migration ecologist with the National Audubon Society. “The Motus network plays a key role in not only filling in some of the gaps in the knowledge we have about migratory birds, but it also helps us tell the story of migration, connecting people to this amazing biological phenomenon.”

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**THE SANDPIPER**

# Karen Unmasked: Exploring Identities

BY ANNETTE BROWNELL

Karen Andres is fairly new to to GSBAS. She is one of those hidden members who sends in her dues but hasn't invested time into the organization. She began to think about volunteering after retiring from a 38 year teaching career. On her list of things to do in retirement was to get her Master Gardener certificate from Cornell Cooperative Extension as well as find areas in her community to volunteer. There was a call this spring for volunteers to help with the garden at

Brookside County Park. Bingo! This is what she was looking for. As a longtime resident of Sayville, Karen can walk to the park and volunteering as a Master Gardener was a perfect fit. She is looking forward to working at the park to make it a wonderland for pollinators, birds and the community. She hopes there are people out there like her who would like to make this park a native showcase with her.