



# *The Sandpiper*

THE GREAT SOUTH BAY  
**AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY



*by Jody Banaszak*

Hello, my little birding friends! Hope this newsletter finds you all well and hope you enjoyed the holidays and got a lot of nice presents!! I can't believe how warm it was in December. I saw people wearing shorts, t-shirts and flop flops! We'll see how January goes. I'm sure the weather messed up a lot of birds with migrating, even though I've seen robins in the winter before. One winter they came by and ate all the berries on my big holly tree! Hasn't happened yet this year. I hope you're out looking for the winter ducks. I've seen some hooded mergansers in the canal. They are such beautiful ducks.

So, how do you like the new newsletter? It has gone digital!! You can also get it by mail if you don't use or have a computer. We will not be having a meeting this month but will continue next month. We usually take off for January.

As you know we have ring cameras at Brookside County Park. It rings on my phone all the time! So many people go there with their dogs, themselves, or their kids for a walk in the woods. There's even an elderly woman who comes with her shopping bags and sits on the deck watching the birds at the feeders or by the pond. I've even seen turkeys and deer on the cameras. I haven't seen too many of our darling highschoolers though, so that's good. And the park police drop by at different times of the day and night too. It's such a great place.

I wish the old main house was still there for us to see. We have pictures of it in the cottage and it looks really nice with the Green's in their suits, dresses and hats and in little row boats on the pond. Isaac Green was the one who owned the property. Now the County does. Isaac Green designed many houses on the South Shore in Sayville, Oakdale and other towns during the turn of the last century including Meadowcroft and houses for the Vanderbilts, the Bournes and the Cuttings. Must have been nice!!! Wonder if they had birdfeeders!!

Well folks, I hope you enjoy the new newsletter!

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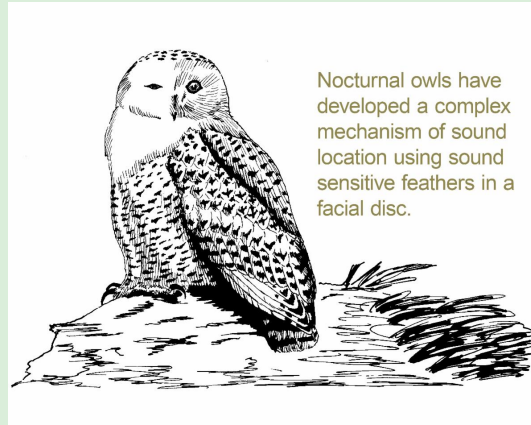


## The Owl

by Steve D'Amato

Most people show an affinity toward owls. Because of their large heads and forward-looking face, owls have the appearance of wisdom.

There are about 236 species of owls in the world in which there are 19 species in North America. Owls can be divided into 2 groups – the Barn and Bay Owls, Family Tytonidae, and all the other owls, Family Strigidae. On Long Island, we have 5 owls that typically nest here: Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, and Eastern Screech-Owl. Formally the Northern Saw-whet Owl – but it is still a Winter visitor, and there was a remnant population of Barred Owls in the climax forests scattered throughout the northern forests of the island, but that may be gone now. Long Island typically has one species of owl, the Snowy Owl, which is a winter visitor in eruptive years from their northern range when their food supply crashes. Because the south shore's barrier island's habitat is similar to this owl's tundra habitat, that is where this species settles.

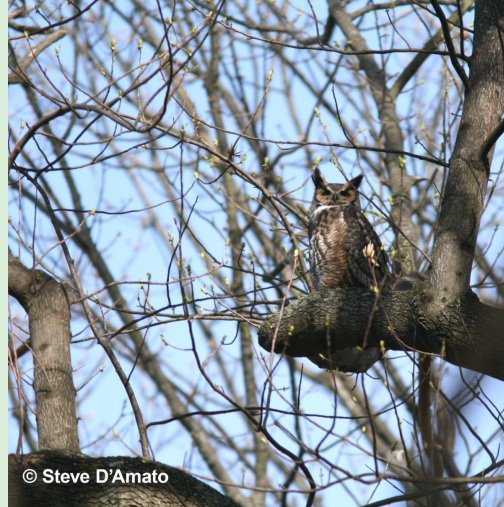


Owls are mostly nocturnal, but some are what is known as a combination crepuscular (dawn and dusk) and partially nocturnal. This group doesn't compete with the totally nocturnal if they share the same territory. Snowy Owls, because of their regular northern, tundra range, can be totally diurnal.

Most owl wings are adapted for silent flight. From the air's impact on the leading edge of the covert feathers to the hardened, comb-like leading edges of the exposed portions of the primary feathers, the sound of air passing through is negated to almost zero.

Another adaptation for nocturnal owls is sound location. Some species of owls are adapted to hunt in total darkness (but never have to go this far in nature). Unlike bats, owls do not produce a high frequency noise and use it for echolocation. Nocturnal owls have developed a complex mechanism of sound location using sound sensitive feathers in a facial disc. These are called filofethers the visible facial disc covers that group of filofethers in which the end of those feathers just extends beyond the main feathers of the facial disc. Now these facial discs are parabolic in shape, thus the incoming sound is directed to a focal point (the same principal as the 'dish' in a satellite television), and the focal point of the parabola is the ear. When a sound source (prey) makes a noise, the owl will turn its head so the the sound source (prey) is in a direct line in front of the filfeathers. Now the ears are not placed symmetrically on the head, one is actually 'higher' on one side of the facial disc than the corresponding ear on the other ear. This allows the time for sound to arrive to reach each ear differently. The skin around the opening of each ear is also different, presumably to further sound source location. Add all this together, and you have the perfect night hunter.





[Click to find out HOW TO JOIN OUR ORGANIZATION?](#)

## *The Birds and Bees Protection Act*



We received a letter from Erin McGrath, policy manager from Audubon New York, about the Birds and Bees Protection Act, that had officially been signed into law by Governor Hochul. They thanked us for our dedication to this issue.

The use of pesticides is a toxic threat that is endangering the health of birds, people and other wildlife. Chemically related to nicotine, they are commonly applied as seed treatments to corn, soy and wheat crops. They are aimed at pests but impact birds and other pollinators. they can prevent songbirds from orienting themselves for migration. So glad it passed!







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## UPCOMING NATURE WALKS

**Saturday February 3, 8:30 AM**, Jones Beach West End. Leaders Mike Cooper (516-523-2369), Bob Grover (516-318-8536). Meet in the parking lot near the Coast Guard Station at West End.

**Saturday March 9, 8:30 AM**, Bob Laskowski Memorial Duck Walk. Leaders Bob Grover (516-318-8536). Meet at Brookwood Hall, Islip Town Park in East Islip on Irish Lane between Montauk Hwy and Union Blvd.

**Tuesday March 19th, 9:30 AM**, Oceanside & Jones Beach. Southern State Pkwy. to Meadowbrook Pkwy. South to Merrick Road (27A). Go west on Merrick Road a short distance, turn left on Mill Road and bear left (on Main Street). Turn right on Atlantic Avenue to Waukena Ave. to Park Avenue to Golf Drive (brown signs from Atlantic to Oceanside Marin EC). Maybe ending at Jones Beach.

**Tuesday March 26, 9:30 AM**, Sunken Meadow SP. Meet in the main parking lot in front of the main pavilion near the traffic circle.

**Tuesday April 2, 9:30 AM**, Heckscher SP. Meet in Field 5 western end.

**Tuesday April 9, 9:30 AM**, Jones Beach WE SP. Meet in the parking lot at the Marina near the Coast Guard Station.

**Tuesday April 16, 9:30 AM**, Robert Moses SP. Meet in Field 5 at the northeast corner.

**Saturday April 20, 8:30 AM**, Connetquot River SPP. Leaders Bob Grover (516-318-8536), Ken Thompson (631-612-8028), John Gluth (631-827-0120). Meet in the parking field. Entrance is on the westbound side of Sunrise Highway (Rte. 27) west of Pond Road. If coming from west to east, take exit 47A and go to the next overpass, Oakdale Bohemia Rd., to cross over bridge, then head westbound and stay in the right lane to entrance.

**Tuesday April 23, 9:30 AM**, Norman Levy & Jones Beach WE. Southern State Pkwy. south to Merrick Road (27A). Go east on Merrick Road approximately 1/8 mile and turn right into the Norman J. Levy Park.

**Saturday April 27, 8:00 AM**, Valley Stream SP & Jones Beach West End. Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120), Bob Grover (516-318-8536)). Southern State Parkway to exit 155, North Corona Ave. N. Corona Ave. to Hendrickson Ave. (.07 mi) turn right. To Fletcher Ave. (.3 mi) turn right. North to Valley Stream State Park entrance on right (.2 mi). Park at far end of lot.

**Tuesday April 30, 9:30 AM**, St. Joseph Campus, Brentwood. Take Sunrise Highway to Brentwood Rd. north approximately 2.5 mi. Look for the main entrance. Meet in the





## **Volunteer Day at Brookside** *by Karen Andres*

On November 21st Students at Sayville High School had their first, possibly annual, Volunteer Day. Sayville students participated in various areas volunteering their time throughout the community. Brookside was lucky to have approximately 20 students volunteer to help in the park. Some students picked up litter throughout the park trails, some raked leaves away from the house and move branches that were trimmed by the county to a better location for pickup. There were some scraggly shrubs near the house that were removed, and most importantly wood chips were spread in the garden areas. Karen Andres and Marty Garbarino, our Master Gardener volunteers helped with the direction of the students. A shout out of thanks go to Mrs. Sonja Anderson, Mr. Rick Caskey and Mr. Anthony Deangelis, the Sayville High School Teachers who helped organize the student volunteers. Mrs. Anderson is eager to get her students into the park for more volunteering and possibly environmental research.







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## ***Eagle Scout Project at Brookside County Park by Jody Banaszak***

In November, a Sayville High School student approached us with a request to undertake a project at Brookside County Park for his Eagle Scout Badge. Luca Hart, a member of Troop 184, chose to reconstruct one of the small bridges spanning the numerous streams in the woodland area. He obtained approval from both us and Christine Boelke, an Environmental Technician from Suffolk County Parks. With assistance from his father, other individuals, and fellow scouts who helped move supplies, Luca successfully completed the project. I personally visited the site several times during the construction, and it turned out to be quite different from my expectations. Luca completed the project on December 16th, and the result is impressive, making the area much safer to navigate. Additionally, Luca plans to install signs providing directions to the various trails. Thank You Luca, for a job well done!





**The Great South Bay Audubon Society  
has a lot going on! JOIN US**

**January – No meeting.**

**February 15**, Wildman Steve Brill will be joining us. Steve is a naturalist, environmental educator and author of several books. He also hosts foraging tours! You can check him out at [wildmanstevebrill.com](http://wildmanstevebrill.com). This is a real opportunity! He will also be doing book signing.

**March 21** – Tom Damiani from North Shore Audubon will be sharing with us from his many experiences. We haven't picked a topic yet, so stay tuned.

**April 18** - Still to be determined.

**May 6** – Annual dinner at Captain Bill's – more details to come.

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**On Thursday February 15th the GSBAS  
Presents Speaker "Wildman" Steve Brill  
America's Go-to Guy for Foraging!**

Don't miss this exciting indoor event where our speaker will share information about edible and medicinal wild herbs, greens, roots, nuts, and seaweeds!

Coffee will be served at **7 PM**, and the 90-minute demo will begin at **7:30 PM**, at **Great South Bay Audubon Society, 550 South Bay Ave., Islip, NY.**

The event is free, and reservations are not required!



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**GREAT SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY LEADERSHIP**

**President:** Jody Banaszak 682-278-4059

**Vice President:** Open

**Treasurer:** Annette Brownel 631-655-4405

**Membership Director:** Joe Abraham

**Recording Secretary, Artist in Residence:** Steve D'Amato. 631-264-8413

**Board Members:**

Steve D'Amato , Robert Bender - 631-921-0591, Joe Abraham 631-379-8113, Karen Andres - 516-769-3604

**Committee Chairs:**



**Brookside Coordinator:** Bob Bender 631-921-0591, **Garden:** Karen Andres 516-769-3604

**Hospitality:** Open, **Programs:** Annette Brownell 631-655-4405

**Publicity:** Open, **Newsletter/Marketing:** Spirit of Huntington Art Center

**Dinner Chair:** Annette Brownell 631-655-4405 **Newsletter/Marketing:** Spirit of Huntington

**Nature Walks:** Ken Thompson, **Star Foundation:** Save the animals rescue 631-736-9207

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*For the people who don't use or have a computer, we will still have a printable copy of the bi-monthly newsletter available upon request.*

*They cost \$4 each. We ask that you pay \$24 in advance. Please send checks made out to the GSBAS, PO box 267, Sayville, NY 11782.*

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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.

Great South Bay Audubon Society | P.O. Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782

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