

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT SOUTH BAY 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. February had some warm days as did March with people wearing t-shirts! Then on our bird walk in March it was freezing and very windy!! I always say Mother Nature is going through menopause! 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've been out looking for the winter ducks. I've seen some Hooded Mergansers in the canal, and we saw some Winter Ducks on our duck walk in March. Ken said there weren't as many as usual.



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'll see how it goes. 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. That will probably start up in the spring and summer! 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. It will save on paper and the

environment.

We will be having our annual dinner at Captain Bill's on May 6th. This is always a great event with great food, a great speaker, and nice raffles. Karen will be working on the new garden at Brookside County Park. It really needed a makeover! We will have events at Brookside, one being with the ribbon cutting for the garden in September. It will not be completed but will have a good start. We will have music by Buddy Merriam and an art show. If you'd like to be in the art show email me. This is always a good event.

We will have a live animal event at Brookside in June. Shakespear in the Park will be in July at Brookside. I'm thinking about having a plein air art painting class at Brookside in the summer. We could also use help on the planning committee for the dinner and for hospitality for our meetings, which happen on the third Thursday of the month. Please remember for the meetings and events, parking is at the Sayville High School across the street from Brookside. All these events with the date and time will be on a news blast so check your computers. So have a good spring and enjoy watching the birds, ducks, and seabirds!



Pheasants for Hunting *by Annette Brownell*

An article appeared in Newsday, Sunday, January 14, 2024, titled "Some oppose breeding pheasants for hunters." In the article it explains how, since 1909, New York State has bred Ring Neck pheasants (not native to North America) for the purpose of releasing them to provide sport for hunters. I am not debating gun ownership or even hunting. But as the article revealed, only about 44% of these birds are actually "bagged" by hunters. The majority are hit by cars, eaten by predators or starve to death because, since having no parents to teach them foraging, they have no skills for survival. This seems like a rather cruel activity that is designed, according to the DEC, "as the introduction to hunting for many people and provides an opportunity for new hunters to learn safe and ethical practices." I have to question the ethical part.



Every fall approximately 30,000 pheasant are released on state-owned land by the DEC. The program costs \$750,000 and "serves no conservational purposes" states Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (Manhattan). Rosenthal goes on to say "The state would engage in the business of bringing animals to life to be shot and killed. I don't think it's the appropriate role for the agency charged with protecting wildlife and the environment. It's state-sponsored cruelty."

She has a point. How does this differ from raising mink for fashion – or killing birds to put feathers on hats (Migratory Bird Treaty Act)?

It seems to me that with all the poor deer out there starving to death and destroying New York State forests, a different approach can be taken to “get young people and other novice hunters outdoors learning firsthand about our natural resources” as is suggested by the DEC. Another thought – Deer Tick and Lyme Disease. It seems that figuring out how to repopulate the woods with fowl would go a long way in managing Deer Tick. Maryland has a quail restoration program and have found that introducing adult quail into an area is much more successful than releasing thousands of chicks. I imagine the same would be true with pheasant. It seems this would be a much better way to spend \$750,000.

Bird Mania

by Karen Andres

Did you see the Bald Eagle in town? Well, they have been discovered in many towns recently and the bird watchers are flocking to see them. They are quite impressive. I have seen them fly over my house. Just the other day while taking my dog for a walk I saw



our local Eagle fly over with some sticks to “feather the nest” so the saying goes. It is so exciting when you spot an unusual bird and naturally you want to get a closer look not realizing exactly where you are or if you are entering a private space. It’s so exciting but possibly disruptive to the locals who have them nesting nearby.

The GSBAS received an email recently regarding such an event. There is a Bald Eagle nesting in a cemetery. The person was upset because the people coming to watch the birds were trampling all over the gravesites. She asked if we could please ask our birding community to please respect those in the cemetery as well as their families who come to visit with loved ones.

It is easy to forget where you are when a bird siting occurs. Please try to remember where you are and be courteous to anyone you might run into while birding. Be mindful, your actions are a representation of the entire birding community. We want to maintain a positive image to the community. Although the people are the ones who will speak out please remember the bird you are trying to capture with your camera lens. We don’t want to scare them, taunt them so we can get that awesome shot of them fleeing their nest etc. Most birders are respectful, but I have run into some who will not reveal where their photos come from to keep the “crazy birders” away.

Please keep in mind that your actions can also have a major impact on others you are birding with. Beginner birders can benefit immensely from the knowledge and enthusiasm of a patient and friendly expert who is willing to share their knowledge. I recommend going on one of the Bird Walks the Audubon offers and ask questions.

In the meantime, here are some tips I found on <http://tinyurl.com/ycykyxae> to keep in mind when you are out in the field with binoculars and cameras at the ready.

Ethical Birding Guidelines:

- Be aware of sensitive and threatened species that might be vulnerable to disturbance.
- Do not share nest locations of sensitive species except with appropriate wildlife officials or conservation scientists.
- Stay at a distance where you are not agitating birds or modifying their behavior, especially near nests.
- Leave dogs at home or on a leash if in an area with ground nesting birds. Shorebirds, such as Snowy Plovers, that nest on beaches, are especially vulnerable to loose dogs.
- Do not use in heavily birded areas or for sensitive species.
- Drive slowly and carefully.
- Stay on designated trails, do not trample vegetation.
- If leading a birding group, be aware of group size and make sure it is not so large that

it is damaging the habitat or interfering with others using the same area.

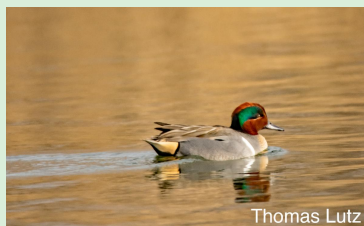
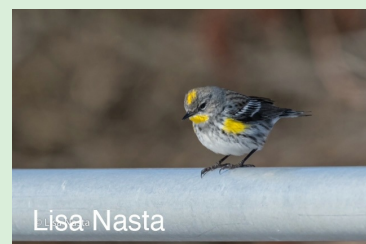
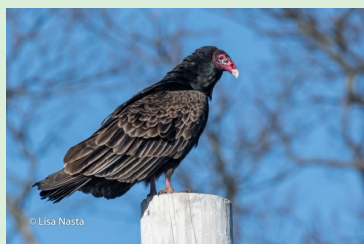
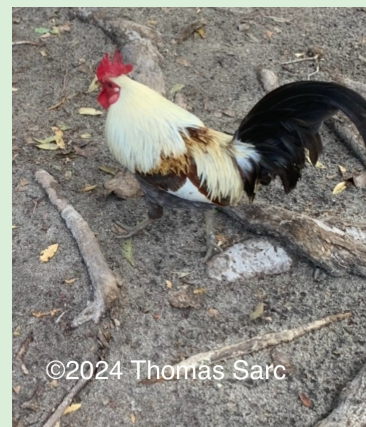
- Make sure all group members are aware of and practicing ethical birding guidelines
- Respect private property rights, only enter with express permission.
- Follow all traffic rules, drive the speed limit, don't park on the road.
- Don't point binoculars towards other people or directly into yards or windows.
- Always be polite and courteous to non-birders you encounter, share your knowledge when appropriate.
- If birding with others, be respectful of the ability of all group members, be encouraging and share your knowledge with beginners.

Ethical Birding Resources:

[Ethical Guidelines](#)

[Mindful Birding](#)

[AMBC](#)





Emily Andres



Chris Braut



Chris Braut



Chris Braut



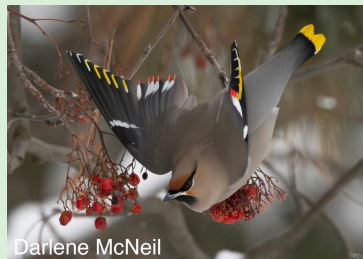
Joe Abraham



Joe Abraham



Meredith McCarthy



Darlene McNeil

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT PHOTOS](#)



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

April 2, 9:30am, Heckscher SP Meet in Field 5 western end.

April 20, 9:00am, Connetquot River SPP Meet in 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 right lane to entrance.

April 27, 8:00am, Valley Stream SP & Jones Beach West End. Southern State Parkway to exit 15S, North Corona Ave. No Corona Ave to Hendrickson Ave (.07 mi) turn right at Hendrickson Ave. Hendrickson Ave. to Fletcher Ave (.3 mi) turn right on Fletcher Ave. Fletcher Ave North to Valley Stream State Park entrance on right (.2 mi). Park at far end of lot.

April 30, 9:30am, St. Josephs Campus Brentwood. North of Southern State Parkway.

Take Sunrise Highway to Brentwood Rd. north approximately 2.5 mi look for the main entrance. Meet in the parking lot in front of building 4.

May 4, 7:00am, Central Park. Meet at 7 a.m. on Central Park West at 77th Street (opposite the Museum of Natural History). One of the best trips for our club. You must register for this trip.

Text or email to Vera Capogna 516-639-5430 vlvcap@yahoo.com.

May 6, 5:30pm, Annual dinner at Captain Bill's. (See below for more info.)

May 7, 9:30am, Belmont State Park. Exit 38 of the Southern State Pkwy. Meet in the parking lot on the east side of the lake.

May 11, 7:00am, Alley Pond Park. Northern State Pkwy to Exit 23, which reads: Cross Island Parkway, Union Turnpike and Alley Pond Park. Go to Union Turnpike (NOT Alley Pond Park). At the signal light, turn right onto Union Turnpike. Proceed to the next signal light which is Springfield Blvd and turn right. Go about 4 blocks to 76th Ave. Turn right onto 76th Ave. and proceed to Alley Pond Parking lot on your left.

May 12, 9:30am, Connetquot River SPP Bird & Breakfast. Reservations required 4\$ at Eventbrite.com search #NatureAdventure, plus 8\$ parking fee per car – unless you have yearly Empire pass.

May 14, 9:30am, Hempstead Lake. Southern State Pkwy. to Exit 18 (Eagle Ave.) and proceed south to the second parking lot. Turn right and then left into parking lot 3.

GSBAS ANNUAL DINNER



Captain Bills Restaurant
122 Ocean Ave Bay Shore, NY 11706
5:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Guest Speaker: John Turner

John Turner, one of the Co-Founders of the *Long Island Pine Barrens Society*, has been deeply involved in numerous conservation endeavors. John is also an accomplished author of several books.



Ten things I learned by Reporting Bird Bands on Long Island

by Lisa Nasta



One day in December of 2016 I was sitting in my car in a McDonald's parking lot in Islip eating French fries and there was a gull sitting on the hood of my car looking at me through the windshield.

I noticed it had a band on one of its legs that was blue with white letters "LTL". I took a photo of it and reported the band information to www.reportband.gov where most bands can be reported.

I received a certificate of appreciation via email telling me that the gull was a female banded as an adult that spring near Varennes, Quebec Canada. This was my very first encounter with a banded bird.

Since then, I have reported on over 100 banded birds on Long Island. Based solely on my personal experience, here are ten things that I have learned:

1. Ring-billed gulls are banded on their breeding grounds near Varennes, Quebec Canada.

This is true for all 16 that I have reported. Four of which I have encountered in multiple years in the same area. Since 2009, 15,000 ring-billed gulls have been banded by researchers from The University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM)

2. Some birds can live at least 20 years.

In 2018 I spotted a Royal Tern at Islip Beach with a leg band "EYY" (see photo). Imagine my surprise to find out it was banded as a chick in 1998 in Ocean City, Maryland 20 years ago! Then in 2020 a Common Tern I spotted at Nickerson Beach was banded on Great Gull Island as a chick in 2000 who was also 20 years old! They are the oldest birds I have reported so far. Not far behind were an 18 and a 16-year-old Brant seen at Heckscher State Park in 2021.

3. A bird may have a duplicate color-coded band number.

Most birds can be identified by reporting the color-coded band and they are much easier to read in the field than the federal band. But to my surprise, for one American Oystercatcher I saw at Nickerson Beach I was asked if I also knew what the federal band number was or at least a partial because there was another American Oystercatcher with the same code. Unfortunately, I did not photograph that band, so the bird was left

unidentified.

4. Banded Herring Gulls and Great black-backed gulls come from Maine.

So far, of the 5 gulls I have seen all have been banded in Maine. Three of which were banded on Appledore Island. You can report Appledore gull bands on the Gulls of Appledore website and in return will get a history of the gull. For instance, one Great-blackbacked gull I saw at Heckscher State Park in October of 2020 was 12 years old, a well-documented breeder and this was the first time it was spotted off Appledore island. One of the Herring gulls also seen at Heckscher State Park in October of 2020 was 8 years old and has been reported multiple times on Long Island in the first few years of its life then not reported again until a year before I saw it.

5. Common Loons have a combination of color-coded leg bands on both legs.

In Feb 2021, I photographed a Common Loon on the water at Jones Beach CGS with right leg bands visible (see photo). I contacted Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) who have a Loon research and conservation program. Unfortunately, they needed to know the color codes on the left leg as well (or a partial on the federal band) to narrow it down to the individual bird and I did not get a photo of the left leg or a glimpse of the color. They were only able to tell me that it was banded as an adult and it could have been one of several Loons banded from Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, or New York (Adirondacks).

6. Mallards migrate.

In my ignorance, I thought of Mallards as being a year-round local pond duck, but a banded drake I saw in Dec 2021 on Pine Lake in West Islip proved different. It was banded that September near Pembroke, Ontario Canada.

7. Many Atlantic Brant were banded locally.

Out of the 20 Brant I have reported, 14 were banded locally in Oakdale NY in Feb. of 2021. 5 were banded in Nunavut, Canada in the summer in various years. One was banded in Atlantic City, NJ Feb. 2019. A few were also fitted with backpack transmitters and or leg geolocators (see photo) all part of an Atlantic Brant migration and breeding ecology study in collaboration with a few wildlife agencies NYDEC, NJDEP and CWS.

8. Some Royal Terns head here in the fall before heading south for the winter.

Of the 24 Royal Terns I have reported most (22) were banded in Hampton City or Chincoteague, Virginia. One was in Maryland and one in North Carolina. Time frame was approximately from the end of August to the end of October. A few have been seen for multiple years.

9. Bands can sometimes fall off.

This past week I saw a Ring-billed gull at Islip beach with a federal band. I recorded the number and checked it against my spreadsheet of all the birds I have ever reported. It turns out this bird was a match to a gull I have also seen at Islip Beach in 2020 and 2022 but during those instances it also had a color-coded band, but this time it did not. Sometime in the last two years it lost its color-coded band.

10. Lastly, there is so much to learn about birds.

Bird banding data are useful in both scientific research and conservation. Researchers can learn about dispersal and migration, lifespan and survival rate, reproductive success and population growth or decline. I am happy to do my part.

Additional bird species on Long Island I have reported not mentioned above: Piping Plovers, Peregrine Falcons, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Canada Geese, Snow Goose, Mute Swan, Northern Shoveler, Glaucous Gull, and Black Skimmers.



Reader Submission

by Rachel Peden

"I don't know how people deal with their moods when they have no garden, raspberry patch or field to work in. You can take your angers, frustrations, bewilderments to the earth, working savagely, working up a sweat and an ache and a weariness. The work rinses out the cup of your spirit, leaves it washed and clean and ready to be freshly filled with new hope. It is one of the reasons I am addicted to raspberry patches. The pie is purely symbolic."



Hello Great South Bay Audubon members and friends: We are ready to start a wonderful birding season with many activities. We are planning hikes, a dinner, a festival, and presentations related to birding, nature and the environment.

In order to present these activities, we depend on the dues and donations of members and others. In the past people paid dues when they joined. This will still be the case. However, in order to better have members know whether they paid or not, all dues are now due in February. I understand that members for the most part have been unaware of this new policy.

We encourage our participants and former members to please send in your membership dues at this time. You can access a membership application or pay through Pay Pal by going to our website www.greatsouthbayaudubon.org

Thank you and have a wonderful birding season. - Joe Abraham

Great South Bay Audubon Society Membership

As a member of the Great South Bay Audubon Society you will receive our award-winning, bi-monthly newsletter "The Sandpiper"! Membership also includes access to the beautiful Brookside County Park, with 8 acres of trails for guided nature walks, ponds and waterways, wildlife including deer, foxes, and wild turkey, and the unique opportunity to connect with a community of like-minded individuals with a wealth of knowledge on Long Island's native species.

Annual Membership \$20 Annual Membership Senior (62+) \$15
Renewal \$20 Renewal Senior (62+) \$15

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GREAT SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

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Vice President: Open

Treasurer: Annette Brownell 631-260-8089

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

Board Members: Steve D'Amato, Robert Bender, 631-921-0591, Karen Andres, 516-769-3604

Committee Chairs:

Brookside Coordinator/Garden: Karen Andres 516-769-3604

Hospitality: Open, **Programs:** Annette Brownell 631-260-8089

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

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

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.

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