



# The Sandpiper

## Great South Bay Audubon Society

A Chapter of National Audubon Society

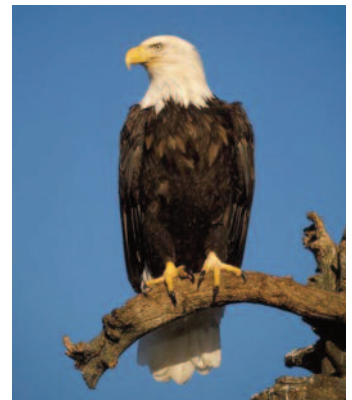
### Make the Green Way Your Way: Garden Responsibly *It's Easier Than You Think*

By Andrea DiGregorio

Long Islanders take great pride in their well-manicured lawns and carefully tended gardens. However, the price of sustaining a showcase yard should not come at the expense of good health and environmental well-being. This article will examine deleterious effects of using unsafe pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and fertilizers, and review ecologically friendly alternatives.

Rachel Carson's groundbreaking book, *Silent Spring*, detailed the far-reaching and devastating effects of synthetic pesticides, and revealed that their harmful effects were not limited to the target pests. Other wildlife also suffered. Birds were poisoned when they ingested infected prey such as insects, fish, or earthworms, or drank contaminated water. The accumulation of the pesticide DDT in some bird species caused reproductive harm, such as eggshells that were so thin that they were unable to withstand incubation: Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon populations were decimated along the eastern seaboard due to DDT contamination.

People also can suffer harm from exposure to the various "cides." Depending on the extent of exposure to, and degree of toxicity of, the toxin, effects on humans can range from the short-term ones, like blisters, rashes, and respiratory discomfort, to the chronic and more serious ones, such as sterility, nerve disorder, birth defects, asthma, depression, anxiety, blindness, and cancer. Young children are particularly vulnerable to environmental toxins, due to their developing and smaller bodies, and lessened ability to cope with toxin and pesticide poisoning. Incidents of exposure that could be tolerated by adults could cause irreversible damage to unborn babies, infants, and adolescents. Children's routine behaviors can place them at greater risk of exposure: children may crawl and play on



*Once endangered by pesticides and overhunting, the Bald Eagle, the national emblem of the United States since 1782, has flourished under protection.*

*continued on page 6*

#### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS and MONTHLY PROGRAMS

All GSBAS Activities are FREE and open to the public. Join us and bring a friend. General Membership Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month, except May, (which is our Annual Dinner), July & August. Pre-program refreshments begin at 7:00. Program begins at 7:30 pm.

**Thursday, March 21**  
**Ticks on Long Island**  
**Dr. Anna-Marie Wellins**

Don't let the fear of ticks stop you from exploring nature! Come and educate yourself about the different species of ticks found on Long Island. Learn how to prevent tick bites, the symptoms to be aware of and the different ways of diagnosing tick-borne diseases. Each attendee will receive a free tick kit. There will also be a question and answer period.

Dr. Anna-Marie Wellins is a member of the Medical Advisory Panel of Stony Brook Southampton Hospital's Regional Tick-Borne Disease Resource Center.

**Thursday, April 18**  
**Warblers! with Joe Guinta**

Warblers are jewels of the birding world. Their colorful plumage and delightful songs makes them the most desired birds to see and identify during spring migration. Joe's presentation will give us information regarding the 35 species of warblers



that are regularly seen in this area. He will discuss their distribution, abundance, habits and ease or difficulty of identification here on Long Island.

*Annual Dinner  
and Fundraiser*  
**Monday, May 6th 2019**  
**Captain Bill's Bayview House**  
*more info on page 4*

### SUMMER CAMP AT BROOKSIDE COUNTY PARK

This summer, Great South Bay Audubon Society will be partnering with Ranger Eric Powers from *Your Connection to Nature* and will be hosting a summer camp right here at Brookside. The camp will consist of 3 one-week sessions, each with a different theme, scheduled for the weeks of July 8, July 15 and July 22.

This will be a wonderful nature experience for children ages 4-12. More information will be available on our website and in the next issue of *The Sandpiper* as we work out the details of this wonderful program.

## Mission Statement

*The primary 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.*

## The Sandpiper

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Submission deadline for next issue is **April 12**  
Please send submissions to  
vlvcap@yahoo.com



## The Larry Merryman Memorial Library

is located at Brookside,  
59 Brook St. in Sayville.  
It can be accessed Wednesday  
and Sunday  
from 1 to 3pm.

*Listen to the Voice  
of Nature,  
For it Holds Treasures for You*  
-- Native American Proverb

## President's Message by Jody Banaszak

Hello my little birding friends! Hope you are all staying warm while watching birds out your windows. I know a lot of you brave the cold on field trips and on your own. It's usually worth the trip as I listen to what you have seen and what I see. Several times, while driving west on Sunrise Hwy. from Nichols Road, I've seen a Red-tailed Hawk sitting in a tree close to the road. Of course I don't have my camera and also have to keep my eyes on the road!! A few weeks ago, while driving down 101 from Rocky Point, I saw movement on the side of the road. There are woods on both sides of the street and it is a hunting area. To my surprise, the movement was a huge Red-tailed Hawk eating a road-killed deer! I turned around to take a picture but he flew away. Always the way.

A boy scout, Aidan Donnelly, approached us and asked if he could engage us in his conservation project towards earning the William T. Hornaday Conservation Silver Medal. This medal is earned by completing four conservation projects in four different conservation categories, with each project being at or above an Eagle Scout level project. His project consists of containers set up at different ponds in Great River. The containers were placed at these locations for fishermen to deposit their unwanted fishing line and hooks. These things are dangerous to waterfowl and other animals who use these areas, and are not biodegradable. I've seen dead gulls with fishing line either swallowed or wrapped around their bodies, causing them to die. I've also seen ospreys and gulls flying with fishing line wrapped around their feet, not able to get it off. Aidan gave full instructions for emptying the containers and provided boxes, postage paid, to send to Berkley Recycling. Our board member, Jack Carlson, agreed to take on the retrieving process. This is a wonderful conservation project and we thank Aidan for choosing Great South Bay Audubon Society. I've seen plenty of fishing line with hooks on our beaches during pleasure trips and clean-ups, along with balloons and ribbon, but that's another article. Too bad it's not mandatory to have these boxes at our beaches. Maybe Aidan's project will open some eyes!! Happy birding!



## Looking Versus Seeing by Harry Anderson

"To see a world in a grain of sand . . ." The poet William Blake knew that to look at something does not always mean to see it. We "see" when the eye leads to the mind, and birding is an activity that enables us to see beyond our vision.

It takes more than a casual birder to spot the difference between female Wilson's and Bachman's Warblers, but identification begins with knowing a Robin from a Blue Jay. This extreme, while obvious, requires the same variables: knowledge, experience, focus and interest. Of these, it is focus that makes the difference, and it is probably the most difficult to attain because it requires the suspension of judgement as to what is important and what is not. Seems like a valuable asset that applies to most things we encounter.

You obviously have to encounter birds in the habitat they live in, or in some cases, surprisingly, do not. It doesn't matter if that environment is a rain forest, a suburban backyard, the oceans, or the Island of Manhattan. Seeing the bird in its habitat obviously expands birding beyond a single experience. Bird life in all places acts like the canary in the coal mines. It reacts to what was, is now, and what might become.

Ospreys not returning to Long Island sometime in March, for instance, would signal a major problem. You can only imagine what the complete disappearance of Starlings or House Sparrows would bode, as annoying as they can be. An April headline in the N.Y. Times read, "The Globe's Greatest Travelers Are Dying." The marathon migration of shore birds is falling due to climate change and coastal development. The birds find trouble wherever they go. They are yet another indicator species of substantial, disturbing environmental issues that birders know all too well.

Birding, one way or another, forces us into the world and once in, we have the power to act as necessary; but action is difficult and usually political. That, in itself, is not a reason to stop. It is also a highly effective way to exchange your cellphone in hand for binoculars.

# Great South Bay Audubon Society

## General Membership Meetings and Programs

All General Membership Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month (except for May, July and August). Join us at 7:00 pm for pre-program refreshments and casual conversation. Our bird experts will be on hand to field your questions, discuss equipment and share their favorite birding spots.

**LOCATION FOR MEETINGS:** Seatuck Environmental Association located at the Scully Estate, 550 South Bay Avenue, Islip NY 11751. **Directions:** Sunrise Highway (Rte. 27) to Exit 45 (Rte. 111/Islip/Smithtown), Follow signs to Rte. 111 South toward Islip. Rte. 111 ends at Main St. (Rte. 27A). Turn right onto Main St. (Rte. 27A). Turn left at first traffic light onto South Bay Ave. The entrance to the Environmental Center is almost exactly one mile south of Main St. on the right.

## Louise Titus Memorial Tuesday Walks

**Tuesday Mar 19, 9:30 am Sunken Meadow SP** Meet in the main parking lot in front of the main pavilion near the traffic circle.

**Tuesday Mar 26, 9:30 am Heckscher SP** Meet in Field 5 west end

**Tuesday Apr 02, 9:30 Jones Beach West End** Meet in the parking lot at the Marina near the Coast Guard Station.

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

**Tuesday April 16, 9:00 Gardiners Park**

**Tuesday April 23, 9:00 Norman Levy & Jones Beach West End** Southern State Pkwy. to Meadowbrook Pkwy. south to Merrick Road (27A). Go east on Merrick Road approximately 1/8 mile and turn right into the Norman J. Levy Park.

**Tuesday April 30, 9:00 Massapequa Preserve** Take Southern State Pkwy. to Exit 30 (Broadway south) to Pittsburgh Ave. Turn left, then go 2 blocks to Parkside Blvd. Park on street, and walk into the park.

**Tuesday May 7, 9:30 Belmont SP** Exit 38 off the Southern State Pkwy. Meet in the parking lot on the east side of the lake.

**Tuesday May 14, 9:00 Hempstead SP** 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.

*Full list of Tuesday Nature Walks for the year can be found on [GSBAS.org](http://GSBAS.org) under the Events and Programs tab.*

## Weekend Nature Walks

**Sunday March 3, 8:30 am, Bob Laskowski Memorial Duck Walk** Leader: Bob Grover (516-318-8536) Meet at Brookwood Hall, Islip Town Park in East Islip on Irish Lane between Montauk Hwy and Union Blvd.

**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 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.

**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 15S, North Corona Ave. Take North Corona Ave to Hendrickson Ave (.07 mi), turn right at Hendrickson Ave. Take Hendrickson Ave. to Fletcher Ave (.3 mi), turn right on Fletcher Ave. Take Fletcher Ave North to Valley Stream State Park. Entrance on right (.2 mi). Park at far end of lot.

**Sunday May 5, 7:00 am, Central Park** Leaders: John Gluth (631-827-0120), Nick Laviola (631-678-7866)

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 chapter!

**Saturday May 11, 7:00 am, Alley Pond Park** Leaders: Mike Cooper (516-523-2369) Bob Grover (516-318-8536)

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.

**Sunday May 12, Connetquot River SPP, 8:00 am Birding & Breakfast** Leaders: Bob & Edith Wilson, Ken Thompson Helga Merzlyman, Jack Carlson Continental breakfast hosted by Great South Bay Audubon. Reservations required - call Connetquot River State Park Preserve at 581-1072 to register. Registration fee \$4. plus \$8 parking fee per car - unless you have yearly Empire pass.

**Sat & Sun May 18 & 19, 7:00 am, Sterling Forest and Bashakill** Leaders: John Gluth (631-827-0120) Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) From Tappan Zee Bridge, take I-87 to Sloatsburg exit 15A, take the exit for Rte 72 (Sterling Mine Rd.), 1- mile up Rte 17. Continue west on Rte 72 for 3 Miles until you reach Rte 84, Long Meadow Rd. Continue up long Meadow Rd to Sterling Lake Rd (4 Mi). Turn left and continue to Park Visitors Center parking lot on Old Forge Rd. Overnight at Wurtsboro Days Inn (845-888-8727).

*Full list of Weekend Nature Walks for the year can be found on [GSBAS.org](http://GSBAS.org) under the Events and Programs tab.*

# CHAPTER NEWS

## May Dinner

The sun is already setting noticeably later in the day, and spring will be here before we know it.

So will our annual dinner! As usual, it is being held the first Monday in May, May 6th, at Captain Bill's in Bay Shore.

We have already begun planning and collecting prizes for raffles. Donations of items of a nature theme are appreciated, as well as gift certificates from favorite restaurants or places to go, like theaters or museums. We have a donation letter available if you are willing to get a few donations. Many hands...

Steve D'Amato has generously agreed to donate another original painting. This subject for this year is an adorable pair of Barn Owls. A professionally framed painting will go to the lucky winner of this special raffle.

Our speaker for this year's dinner is nature photographer Jim Colligan. Jim's love of photography began in college and continued through active duty in the US Army and into the many aspects of his life. Originally from Nassau County, upon retirement Jim and his wife moved

to Shelter Island 12 years ago, where his love for nature and wildlife photography really blossomed. He is a trustee at the Mashomack Preserve and a councilman. Although Jim has traveled extensively around the world, most of his nature photography is from eastern Long Island.

His presentation will prove to be exciting as it is full of talent, knowledge, and as Jim would say, "having the proper equipment."

For more information about the Barn Owl, see Steve's article below.

## Upcoming Art Show

We are planning another Art Show to be held at Brookside County Park over the summer. Anyone can contribute their work, including sculptures, paintings, photographs and other art work. This has proved to be a fun event in the past, and we hope that many more people will participate. Let me know if you are interested.

-Jody Banaszak

## Painting Class

Our painting class in January was another success! Our subject was a Belted

Kingfisher sitting on a branch. I showed two different backgrounds and half of the class incorporated one background in their painting and the other half chose the second background. Each artist put their own twist to the painting making them all unique. Our next class will be **March 16th from 2-4pm** at Brookside County Park. Fee for the class is \$20 including supplies. Email me at [crab-nose88@yahoo.com](mailto:crab-nose88@yahoo.com) to register one week before class.

Jody Banaszak

## Stop and Shop Fundraiser

Our Cash for Causes fundraiser continues as we add a \$25 gift card, along with the \$50 cards. This is a "risk free, have to eat anyway" fundraiser. We hope that more people will support this activity. Mail a check made payable to Great South Bay Audubon Society (GSBAS) to Annette Brownell at 1411 Saxon Ave., Bay Shore NY 11706, along with a stamped, self addressed envelope and the cards will be mailed to you.



## The Barn Owl

by Steve D'Amato

The Barn Owl is one of the most nocturnal hunters of any of the owl species. Like all nocturnal owls, it has very good night vision but it has many adaptations for nocturnal hunting via sound: the shape of the facial disc, the locations of the ears, etc. Under experimental conditions, it was shown that these adaptations have allowed Barn Owls to hunt in absolute zero light, using sound only. These tests were able to rule out hunting via a prey's infrared signature or odor!

Adaptations of the Barn Owl's head include the following: 1) Ear locations are not bilaterally symmetric but at different levels on both sides of the head. This allows sound to arrive at different times on each ear and helps the owl triangulate the location of the prey better. 2) They have circular facial discs with loose, fluffy, acoustically transparent feathers. Beneath are several layers of densely packed, stiff, acoustically reflective feathers, called



*Sneak peak at Steve's pencil sketch that will be the basis of an original painting.*

filoplume feathers, which now comprise the facial ruff. The facial disc and ruff are in the shape of a parabolic dish. Sound striking the filoplumes on the facial ruff are transmitted to the ears, which are at the focal points of each parabola. The sound-waves that strike the filoplume feathers most directly allow the owl to pinpoint the location of the sound source. Thus, the owl

can strike its prey without even seeing it.

Nocturnal owls also have another adaptation: the leading edges of the flight feathers which are in open contact with the oncoming air have their featherlets stiffened and slightly turned upwards. This allows the air to pass through them making no noise. So these owls strike their prey in the dark with no hint of an oncoming attack!

# CHAPTER NEWS

## GSBAS Working to Protect Forage Fisheries

Forage fish (sardines, anchovies and herring) and invertebrates (krill and horseshoe crabs) are at the basis of the marine food web, playing a critical role in the ocean ecosystem. They are the food source for many sea birds as well as larger fish, such as tuna, salmon, cod and shark. Although not eaten directly by humans, forage fish support a billion-dollar industry of commercial and recreational fishermen. This industry supports over a million jobs across our country.

Forage fish are threatened as demand increases. They are being depleted to make fertilizer, cosmetics and fish meal. As a result, seabird populations have decreased by up to 50% since 1980, and overwintering bird species are considered in significant decline.

Scientific research focused on foraged fish is necessary to support the need for an ecosystem-based management, understanding the critical role of forage fish in successful marine conservation.

Great South Bay Audubon Society is excited to partner with National Audubon in their initiative to bring public awareness to the importance of forage fisheries. New legislation is needed to determine a nationally consistent definition of "forage fish", which will allow for legislation to focus on forage fish species that are "unmanaged." An example would be that there are no biologically based catch limits for some forage fish, such as river herring and shad.

As this initiative develops, we hope that our members will partner with us in by attending informative programs, and by contacting governmental officials that we can partner with (templates can be provided for a letter-writing campaign).

-Annette Brownell

## A Little Conservation Note

by Jody Banaszak

I have a project I hope you all can help me with. And it's not hard to do! You all know how I feel about litter bugs and plastic bags lining our streets and trees. It kills me when I go to the grocery store and find plastic vegetable bags and flyers left in the cart. Every time I drive by a su-



Photo By Ken Thompson

*Jones Beach nature walk attendees were treated to relatively milder temperatures and a total of 28 species of birds.*

permarket or other stores, on Sunrise Hwy., with multiple stores, my blood pressure goes up when I see all the litter tangled in the chain link fence. So I was thinking: When you go to the grocery store and take a sale flyer, give it back to the person behind the counter if you don't need it any more instead of leaving it in your cart to blow in the wind. Only take a bag for produce if you're going to use it instead of leaving it in your grocery cart to blow in the wind. Don't throw your coffee cups and cigarette butts out the window. Save a newspaper bag and put it in your car to put garbage in or wait until you get home to throw it out. Those bags are also good for picking up dog poop when you walk your dog and are free! Plus, you are recycling and saving money. If you do your part to help the environment, just think of how good you will feel and how nice our planet will look!

## Breakfast & Birding Recap

January 12, 2019

With below-freezing temperatures, twenty seven hardy birders showed up at Connetquot State Park Preserve for our winter Breakfast and Birding. The event is a partnership between Environmental Education Office of NYS Parks and Great

South Bay Audubon Society (GSBAS).

The stars of the day were found on the river, across from the mill: a Wilson's Snipe and a Rusty Blackbird. In total we had 26 species of birds-- not bad for a cold winter day.

-Ken Thompson

## Jones Beach Recap

February 2, 2019

With a break in the frigid weather, nine hardy birders showed up at Jones Beach for our February weekend walk led by Bob Grover. We started at the Coast Guard boat basin with temperatures in the teens and ended at the Nature Center with 30 degrees. We had 28 species of birds for the morning.

The channel was still partly frozen and the sandbar mostly ice covered, but still held some shorebirds and gulls. In the marina itself we saw Common Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter and Bufflehead. Our walk to the beach did not produce the hoped for Snowy Owl. On returning from the beach we saw a Peregrine Falcon making a meal of a Surf Scoter.

It was a nice day with mild temperature and bright sunshine, a great day for a nice walk on the beach. -Ken Thompson

# Captree Christmas Bird Count Results

The Captree CBC was conducted on Sunday, 16 December 2018 under challenging conditions of 15-20 mph north-east winds and rain. Despite the difficulties, coverage was excellent and the species total of 117 was right there between our 57-year average of 116 species and our ten-year average of 118.

Some of the more unusual species were:

Red-necked Grebe-Robert Moses SP  
Virginia Rail- West Sayville area  
American Bittern-Cedar Beach/Oak Beach/Captree area  
Turkey Vulture-Islip area--only the second ever on this count  
Two Northern Saw-whet Owls

4 Eastern Phoebes  
38 Tree Swallows-Cedar Beach/Oak Beach/Captree area  
Marsh Wren-Heckscher area  
3 Purple Finches  
2 Lapland Longspurs-Democrat Pt and West Sayville area  
White-crowned Sparrow-Captree SP  
Baltimore Oriole-West Islip feeder  
Orange-crowned Warbler -Fire Island Lighthouse  
Common Yellowthroat -Heckscher  
Palm Warbler-Cedar Beach area  
There was also a spectacular crush of Razorbills on the ocean front, totaling 1,145! To put this in perspective, the previous CBC maximum was just 12.

The most disappointing misses were: American Wigeon--the first time missed in 57 years, Northern Pintail, Black-bellied Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Bonaparte's Gull, Great Horned Owl, American Kestrel--(present today, of course) and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Many counts were lower than usual, which is not surprising given the obstacles to detection caused by wind and rain.

The compilation dinner at Villa Monaco in West Islip seemed especially cheerful and festive this year, and we gratefully acknowledge a generous contribution again this year from the Great South Bay Audubon Society, reducing the cost of the meal for participants. -Pat Lindsay

## Make the Green Way Your Way *continued from page 1*

chemically treated lawns, and play with and orally explore objects that have been in contact with noxious chemicals.

Exposure to toxins in pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, can occur in numerous ways, such as through inhalation, dermal contact, and ingestion of contaminated food. However, one source of exposure is of particular concern to Long Islanders: our drinking water. The sole source of drinking water for millions of people in Nassau and Suffolk Counties is the underground water from our aquifer, replenished by surface-water seepage. However, the various "-icides" easily migrate through Long Island's porous soil, and into our groundwater. Over 117 toxic pesticides have been detected in Long Island's groundwater, including atrazine, which is one of the most widely used herbicides in this country and has been linked to cancer, and metalaxyl, a fungicide that can cause kidney and liver damage, and is toxic to birds.

Fertilizers not only contribute to the pollution of Long Islander's drinking water, but also have been linked with degradation of our local marine environments (such as the Great South Bay Estuary) and the near-devastation of the Peconic Bay scallop industry. That is, runoff from the use of nitrogen-rich fertilizers has been associated with the formation of the infamous "Brown Tide," which has plagued Long Island and caused decline in eelgrass, shellfish, and finfish.

Although these statistics are disconcerting, hope is on the horizon for a safer, less toxic future. For example, *Silent Spring* spawned an increase in environmental awareness, which contributed to the widespread banning of DDT in the U.S.A. and the founding of the Environment Protection Agency. The positive results of the DDT prohibition are well known to Long Island birders: Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon populations have made an astounding comeback. Indeed, what GSBAS member hasn't been thrilled to see our national bird symbol – the Bald Eagle – soar majestically over Suffolk County locales such as Connetquot State Park.

One need not be an environmental activist, like Rachel Carson, or an EPA administrator to make a positive impact on natural surroundings. Responsible use of weed and pest control

is within everyone's reach, considering the easy availability of organic and environmentally friendly alternatives in readily accessible establishments such as The Home Depot and Lowe's. And, if one's inclination to engage in environmentally friendly gardening is somewhat lax, Suffolk County and New York State regulations may well provide the impetus to "go green". With a view towards reducing the amount of nitrogen released into ground- and surface-water through fertilizers, Suffolk County Local Law 41-2007 prohibits the application of fertilizers between November 1st and April 1st. Violators may be fined up to \$1000. New York State also has fertilizer bans, which prohibit the following: (1) application of fertilizers containing nitrogen, potassium, or phosphorous between December 1 and April 1; (2) application of fertilizer within twenty feet of surface water unless there is a vegetative buff of at least ten feet, and (3) application of fertilizer onto sidewalks or roads where it can run off into storm drains or nearby waterways. Financial penalties can range up to \$1000 for each violation.

There is no need for the gardening enthusiast to lament that fertilizer restrictions will lead to the demise of the carefully cultivated emerald-green lawn. Generally, only newly established lawns or those with poor soil need phosphorous-containing fertilizer. Phosphorus applied to lawns that don't need it will not be used and can wash off, causing water pollution and harm to fish.

Moreover, there are many natural ways to reduce weeds and pests, such as: (1) applying corn gluten to lawns in late April (this prevents new weeds from germinating, and is a natural source of nitrogen), (2) mulching (this adds nutrients to lawns and shades out weeds in plant beds), (3) planting climate-adapted and disease-resistant native plants, (4) cutting grass long (at least 2.5 inches, which encourages longer, healthier roots and thus makes the grass compete better with undesirable weeds) and (5) managing weeds between cracks and stone areas by using a high-acid spray like vinegar to kill the above-ground portion. More environmentally friendly lawncare tips can be found online on the DEC website.

So, channel your inner environmentalist, and "go green" in your lawn care.

# BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

Compiled by Helga Merryman

December and January



Opening my outside door on an unusually warm day, I was greeted by a song sparrow singing his heart out, a sound that was muffled inside my winterized home. Rain gurgling through the downspouts, children at play or soft bird songs were some of the more enjoyable sounds heard before environmentally efficient windows were developed. Double pane storm windows are great to keep weather out but at the cost of not allowing sounds of life in. We've likened some bird calls to objects not recognizable today, such as the Blue Jay's call described as a squeaky clothesline pulley (an antiquated sound). The Saw Whet Owl is supposed to sound like someone sharpening (whetting) a knife and an American Bittern during mating season recalls the "oong-KA-chunk" of a pile driver.

I'm writing this at the beginning of February and so far winter has been very mild on Long Island. I've received reports of large flocks of Robins descending on neighborhoods, most likely to strip trees and bushes of berries (maybe they become sweeter after frost has set in).

We had 10 participants for this survey period, some for one month and some for both, Banaszak, Caruso, Fogarty, Garben, Merryman, Nasta, Kremer-Parrott, Paltridge, Sorenson and Wilson, the 8 areas covered were, Babylon, Blue Point, Deer Park, East Islip, East Patchogue, Islip, North Babylon and West Sayville. Thank you everyone for joining us to end last year and to begin this new one with the survey.

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. Anyone is welcome to join the survey at any time during the counting period from November to March.

### How Does the Survey Work?

- 1) The counting period is 5 months from November to March. You may choose to participate for only one month, several months or the full period of five months.
- 2) During the first 15 days of each month, keep your feeders filled. Whenever you view your feeders, count the number of each individual bird species you observe. Report the highest number of each individual species seen at any one time, e.g., if you see ten Cardinals on the 1st, five on the 2nd, three on the 3rd - report the highest number observed, i.e., 10. These birds can actually be at your feeder or attracted to your yard by the feeding activity.
- 3) Make five (5) copies of the form printed below, use (1) form per month to record the highest number of individuals of any species that you see at one time.
- 4) No later than the 19th of each survey month, mail your completed form to Helga Merryman, 38 South Carll Ave., Babylon, NY 11702. You can also email your sightings and photos to me at eider55owl@optonline.net. Please put FEEDER SURVEY in the subject line. I will compile the information and the results will be published in the following issue of *The Sandpiper*.

**Survey Data:** period from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Survey Data: periods December 1 - December 15 2018 and January 1 - January 15 2019

Red-tailed Hawk 0/0	Blue Jay 53/33	Towhee 0/0	House Sparrow 130+/68
Sharp-shinned Hawk 2/3	American Crow 11/8	Fox Sparrow 6/ 5	
Cooper's hawk 3/4	Black-capped Chickadee 21/23	Song Sparrow 16/9	OTHER SPECIES
Rock pigeon 30/ 30	Tufted Titmouse 13/7	White-throated Sparrow 37/ 26	Mallards 7/6
Mourning Dove 84/116	Red-breasted Nuthatch 7/ 3	Dark-eyed Junco 42/49	Hooded Mergansers 3/8
Monk Parakeet 0/0	White-breasted Nuthatch 14/11	Northern Cardinal 27/25	Mute Swans 0/2
Red-bellied Woodpecker 9/9	Carolina Wren 13/5	Red-winged Blackbird 1/0	Ring-billed Gull 0/1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1/0	American Robin 30+/ 1	Common Grackle 40+/4	Kingfisher 1/1
Downy Woodpecker 14/13	Northern Mockingbird 4/3	Brown-headed Cowbird 0/ 0	
Hairy Woodpecker 3/3	Brown Thrasher 0/0	House Finch 29/41	
Northern Flicker 2/0	European Starling 43/ 79	American Goldfinch 65+/31	

# Great South Bay Audubon Society

President: Jody Banaszak (631) 278-4059

Vice-president: (Position Pending)

Treasurer: Annette Brownell (631) 665-4405

Recording Secretary: Nicholas Laviola (631) 678-7866

## Board of Directors

Vera Capogna (516) 639-5430

Jack Carlson (631) 988-6808

Steve D'Amato (631) 264-8413

Michael Maraviglia (631) 338-0549

Arlene Rawls (516) 712-9514

## Committee Chairs

Hospitality: Open

Conservation:

Michael Maraviglia (631) 338-0549

Membership: Position Pending

Publicity: Helga Merryman (631) 669-6473

Education: Jack Finkenberg

Audubon Activist: Open

Newsletter: Vera Capogna (631) 563-4969

Nature Walks: Ken Thompson (631) 612-8028

Programs: Jamie Brower (631) 627-9432

Librarian: Vera Capogna (631) 563-4969

Annual Dinner:

Annette Brownell (631) 665-4405

Mailing: Ken Thompson (631) 612-8028

Email Responder: Vera Capogna (631) 563-4969

Answering the GSBAS Direct Phone:

Helga Merryman

GSBAS Direct Phone Number (631) 563-7716

GSBAS website: GSBAS.org

GSBAS email address: info@gsbas.org

For wildlife in need of rescue please call

The STAR Foundation (631) 736-8207



## Have you seen this sign on lawns around your neighborhood?

It is intended to raise awareness about nitrogen pollution and is supported by a coalition of Long Island environmental and civic organizations. Home owners bearing this sign have pledged not to use chemicals on their lawn. (Please read this important article about nitrogen pollution beginning on front cover of this issue.)

Great South Bay Audubon Society  
PO Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782  
A Chapter of National Audubon



## Great South Bay Audubon Society Membership

Become 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     New Membership Senior (62+) \$15  
 Renewal \$20             Renewal Senior (62+) \$15

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



## Directions to Brookside County Park 59 Brook St, Sayville 11782

The park is located on the north side of Brook St., just east of, and diagonally across from Sayville High School. Look for the large white sign that says "Brookside County Park".

**From the West and East via Sunrise Hwy:** Sunrise Highway to Locust Ave. South, to Montauk Highway. Make a left onto Montauk Highway. Then a quick left onto Brook Street. (traffic light). Continue 2 miles, just past Sayville High School. The entrance to the park is on the left (north side of street). Look for the "Brookside County Park" sign. You may park in the high school parking lot and walk across the street to the park.



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**Or Current Resident  
Dated Material: Please Do Not Delay**