



The Newsletter of the Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society
Serving the communities of Bronxville, Eastchester, Edgemont, Hartsdale, Larchmont,
Mamaroneck, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Pelham, Scarsdale and Tuckahoe

Migrating Shorebirds at Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Story and Photos by Cece Fabbro

The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is a great place to visit mid-to-late August to observe migrating shorebirds. I've been doing just that for the past several years not only to photograph the birds but also to try to identify them. As a photographer I find late August



American Avocet

the best time for capturing these birds on film/digital. That's when the juvenile birds—less skittish and more approachable than their adult counterparts—are most abundant and cooperative.

This year, however, I decided to trade my 600mm lens for a spotting scope and pair of binoculars and accompany some Audubon birders to try my hand at identifying some of the more "difficult to identify" shorebirds, i.e. peeps. So, with spotting scopes, binoculars and cameras in tow, we headed out one early hot and sultry Sunday morning to see what there was to see.



Western Sandpiper

As most avid birders know, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is a renowned national and international birding spot. It is also one of the most important

urban wildlife refuges in the United States. Its 9,155 acres comprise many diverse habitats including salt marsh, upland fields and woods, several fresh brackish water ponds, and an open expanse of bay and islands. During the last 25 years, more than 325 species have been recorded there. Our destination that day would be the West Pond (45 acres) and the East Pond (100 acres).

We started at the new visitor center to see if there was any news regarding the Baird's Sandpiper we hoped

to spot, then headed out to the West Pond. As we started down the path an Osprey, fish in talons, flew overhead, landed on a dead tree to the right of us, and commenced eating. We watched for awhile then moved on. We soon spotted Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, a Green Heron, and Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons. A Clapper Rail appeared. Glossy Ibis, Laughing, Glaucous, and Herring Gulls flew by overhead. American Oystercatchers, Common and Forster's Terns rested on a spit of land. Double-crested Cormorants sunned themselves.



Greater Yellow Legs

After a time, we headed over to the East Pond in hopes of spotting the Baird's Sandpiper. The day was getting hotter, the breeze had died and the pond water was like glass. We spotted an American Avocet, many Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, both Short and Long-billed Dowitchers, and two Marble Godwits. Then it was time for a lesson on how to distinguish the differences between all the "peeps". We identified seven different sandpipers including two Baird's and one Buff-breasted Sandpiper, that spent its time darting back and forth searching for goodies in the grassy/mud flats

It was a good day. In all, we spotted 57 species. I came away knowing how to identify at least 15 new species. I also got some good bird shots with my camera and 400mm lens, and learned just how difficult it is to be able to accurately identify shorebirds, especially all those confusing peeps!

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Buff-breasted Sandpiper

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Note: Please, everyone, join us for the next field trip to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, Nov. 12th. Call Doug Bloom for more information.

Cece Fabbro is secretary of BRSS

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Upcoming November Program

Wednesday November 1: Peter Salmansohn, Educational Coordinator Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program and Environmental Educator Constitutional Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary, will present a program entitled "Polar Bears of Churchill, Manitoba" at the Bronxville Library. We will start to congregate at 7:00PM with the program starting at 7:30.

Upcoming November and December Field Trips

Sunday November 5: Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch Site, at Greenwich Audubon Center, Greenwich, Ct. Each autumn thousands of broad-winged hawks and 16 other species of hawks, eagles and vultures migrate southwest over the hilltop at the Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch at the Audubon Center in Greenwich, Connecticut. Meet Doug Bloom 8:30 a.m. at Scarsdale Village Hall to carpool over to the hawk watch site. As always, bring binoculars.

Sunday November 12: Jamacia Bay Wildlife Refuge to see waterfowl, shorebirds and late migrants, particularly at West Pond. Meet at the Wildbird Center on Central Avenue in Hartsdale at 8:30 meet up with members of the Central Westchester Audubon and carpool for the all day visit to the Jamacia Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Sunday December 2: Edith G. Read Preserve and Marshlands Conservancy in Rye are two of the top places to bird watch in Westchester County. A wide variety of birds should be seen as we explore the lake, inlets, marshes, shoreline, woods and ponds. An abundance of waterfowl should be on Playland Lake. Rafts of both Lesser and Greater Scaup along with Canvasbacks, should be there. Redheads and Northern Pintails may be present. The rock jetties may hold Ruddy Turnstone and Purple Sandpipers. The sound should hold loons and grebes and the woods may yield Wild Turkey and Red-tailed Hawks. The feeders may hold Fox Sparrow and purple Finch. Together with the Hudson River Audubon Society with will meet at 8 a.m. at Read.

Saturday December 23: Christmas Bird Count Please join in. We always need volunteers. Call Doug Bloom.

Please kindly contact Doug Bloom if you plan to attend any of the above field trips. Call Doug 713-0630 (days) and 834-5203 (evenings). All field trips are free of charge.

David's Island Update

Congresswoman Nita Lowey has secured an additional \$9 million for the clean-up of the 78-acre Davids Island adjacent to Glen Island County Park in New Rochelle. The new funding for the FY 2007 (Oct 1, '06 to Sept. 30, '07) comes on top of the previously secured \$9.1 million three-year funding for this project. According to Peter Feroe, a spokes-

Welcome New Members

Bronxville: Kimberly Eierman, Elizabeth Jones, Maureen Prochasles, Janet Puckhaber, Barbara Vaccaro, Gary Weir. Eastchester: Joan Coughlin, Leah Lazzaro. Hartsdale: Constance Pierce, Florence Richman, Joanne Tejera. Larchmont – Hilda Demsky, Angelika Leissel, Jerome Rosenfeld. Mamaroneck: Rima Rosenthal, Elizabeth Saenger. Mount Vernon : Eddie Jerido, Linda Murphy. New Rochelle: Curtis Birnbach, Frances Carlin, Patricia Cohen, William Handelman. Pelham: Alice Greene, Robert Lepple. Scarsdale: Mark Babuin, Judith Elkins, Mary Everett, John Hanish, Stanley Janow, Phyllis Jasey, Michael Kutzin, Miriam Popp, Lesley Pottey, Michael Trupp, Herkus Von Letkemann. Tuckahoe: Carolyn McLaughlin.

Long Island Sound Stewardship Act – On its Way to the President

By Al Caccese

Great news from inside the Beltway! The Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, which was first introduced on June 20th, 2004, passed the House of Representatives on September 28th and the Senate during the early morning hours of September 30th, 2006. There has been a remarkable amount of excitement for this bi-state, bi-partisan, and bi-cameral measure, which authorizes \$25 million annually through 2011 to protect important recreational and ecological areas around the Sound and to improve access to this nationally significant estuary.

In the House, the bill was championed by the Co-Chairs of the Long Island Congressional Caucus, Representative Robert Simmons from Connecticut and Representative Steve Israel from New York. The entire Connecticut delegation co-sponsored the bill as did the vast majority of the New York delegation. In the Senate, where the bill was previously passed upon unanimous consent in 2004, the bill continued to enjoy the steadfast support of Senators Lieberman, Clinton, Schumer and Dodd.

The bill had a number of changes from the initial version. These resulted from numerous meetings and briefings had by Audubon New York, Audubon Connecticut, the Regional Plan Association and Save the Sound with the New York and Connecticut Congressional delegations and with the House Resource Committee during the first half of 2005.

Additionally, a number of public meetings were held around the Sound to ensure continued public input into the process. In June of 2005, the Subcommittee on Oceans and Fisheries held a field hearing in Groton, Connecticut and based on testimony presented therein the language of the bill was amended in various ways.

In an attempt to achieve consensus, difficult accommodations were made, including one involving underwater lands. It was generally believed however, that although the bill was not perfect, it would still be very, very useful to achieve the up-land goals and objectives of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative. The amendments and accommodations resulted in a consensus measure that enabled it to be moved out of the Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee and ultimately out of the House Resource Committee. For updates on this legislation please visit

www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship/

Long Island Sound is a national treasure and, in the view of Audubon New York, we are delighted that the federal government is willing to financially partner with the states and their municipalities for the restoration and protection of this vital resource. You can help us now by writing your Congressional Representatives thanking them for voting on this important measure. For more information contact Sean Mahar at smahar@audubon.org.

Al Caccese is the Director of Conservation and Government Relations for Audubon, New York.

Birds do it, plants do it, even human beings do it...

In our part of the world, autumn migrations has been in full swing for many weeks now. From hawks to butterflies, thistles to milkweeds and even "snowbirds," migratory movement surrounds us. It's still not too late to get out and observe the movement. Field trips have been scheduled throughout the autumn. On Sunday, October 8th, BRSS members were on a field trip to Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge on one of the Atlantic Flyway's most active flight paths. On the New Jersey shore in full view of Atlantic City, 68 species were observed, highlighted by a Golden eagle, Harriers and Perigrine falcons, a Seaside sparrow and many others.

The next migratory species field trip will be on November 5 for a hawk watch at the Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch Site, Greenwich Audubon Center, Greenwich, Ct. Each autumn thousands of broad-winged hawks and 16 other species of hawks, eagles and vultures migrate southwest over the hilltop at the Quaker Ridge Hawk Watch at the Audubon Center in Greenwich, Connecticut. Meet Doug Bloom 8:30 a.m. at Scarsdale Village Hall to carpool over to the hawk watch site. As always, bring binoculars

Photo Courtesy Orlando Hidalgo



Forsters' Terns and Laughing Gulls at Brigantine

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Hawks in Migration

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Canoeing Constitution Marsh With BRSS

An early autumn, Sept. 24th, two-hour interpretive canoe paddle through winding channels lined with cattails and other native plants of the famed Constitution Marsh was led on a gorgeous Sunday afternoon by Eric Lind,



Eric Lind, director of Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary, holds up and talks about the wild rice growing in the marsh. West Point is in the background.

director of Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary. Nine participants on the BRSS-sponsored trip observed and learned about the near shore environments of the tidal Hudson, the natural history of the marsh and the surrounding Hudson Highlands. 32 avian species were sighted including an immature bald eagle, black, mallard and wood ducks, green-winged teal, a northern harrier, red-tail hawks, chimney swifts, turkey vultures, great blue herons and a snipe. In addition, Marsh wren nests, muskrat lodges, bull rushes and stands of wild rice were observed up close.

