

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY!



President's Message

by Jody Banaszak

Hello, my little birding friends! Hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the birds. The winter birds and ducks have left, and the spring and summer ones are arriving. Some are just passing by, and some will stay.



We've been having our bird walks and Ken puts out a little blurb about them a few days later. On one of them we saw a Great Horned Owl fly overhead after the crows kept crowing and chased him away. On one walk, at Hempstead State Park, we heard a lot of birds chirping and Ken and Jack knew who they were!! Jack said some were Bay-breasted and blackpoll warblers. I had never even heard of them. We also saw a Baltimore Oriole. Sadly, some walks were cancelled due to rain. Check your emails for upcoming walks.

We have amazing bird walks coming up and the leaders are great, so knowledgeable! We honored them at our recent annual dinner at Captain Bills, which was also amazing and so well-attended.

Thanks to Annette for doing such a great job getting it all together and thanks to all who donated prizes, came to the dinner and also to the board for helping out. It was nice to see faces I haven't seen in a while! Mike and I won a few nice prizes too!

Our speaker, John Turner, gave a great presentation on the Pine Barrens and conservation. A lot of good important information that most of us did not know about. It's important to save these places, such as Fire Island, for future generations and preserve our island home. I can't even imagine what it would be like without it.

I grew up going to Fire Island when Davis Park was called LEGA Beach. The initials were the first or last names of the men who discovered it. They later changed it to Davis Park. My father built an 18 ft. outboard boat, and we would go crabbing before we went to the beach. I was about 7 years old and would stand on the bow of the boat and call out where they were. He almost

couldn't keep up! The bay was so clean I could see the crabs in the grass. When we got a bushel of crabs, we would go to the beach.

Back then, the entrance to LEGA beach had sand spits and we would beach the boat. Now there are none, due to erosion. So that's why conservation is so important. It's also important for the birds. They need places to live and eat. We don't have to build on every spot on the island and we have to preserve what we have for future generations.

I also want to thank Deputy Supervisor Neil Foley for preserving over 100 acres of open space properties on Long Island. And don't forget to bring your coffee cups and any other garbage home with you and not throw it out of your car window!!! Enjoy the summer and the birds!



The Shape of Things to Come

by Annette Brownell

I love nature. I love natural beauty and shape. I grew up in the era where people who thought they may never be able to afford a home, were able to buy one. People took a lot of pride in their homes and yards. My parents were those people. My father grew up in Brooklyn, terribly poor. When his family moved out here to Selden, his father, like the rest of the neighborhood, built his own house out of cinderblock.

These city folks planted and pruned and manicured their properties. The time came when my mom and dad were able to buy a piece of property from her parents' farm and build their own home. My father landscaped and manicured and pruned. We had Azaleas that were shaped like little round balls and hedges that were square and straight.

One day my aunt took me to Westbury Gardens. There were huge Azalea bushes there in all sorts of irregular shapes. Beautiful! I started noticing plants all around, with wonderful free-spirited shapes! Forsythia was not designed to be a square bush! Crazy.

I tried to encourage my father to leave his bushes alone – let them become who they were meant to be. I was fairly unsuccessful. But my yard is another story. I clip and prune too, but it's for maintenance sake. I regularly prune my trees, taking out the unnecessary, removing big wood from bushes and clipping out dead. Maintenance is important for health trees and shrubs.



As of late, however, I have seen the most horrible thing happen. People aren't pruning their azaleas into balls. They are pruning their oaks and maples into balls! At first it was in these townhouse complexes – trees hideously chopped and maimed. Now it's everywhere. PSEG is a major culprit.

But so are my neighbors – and your neighbors. Drive down the road and you will see – it's like an epidemic. Horrifying! Beautiful health trees with their wonderful huge branches reaching toward the heavens, housing and protecting all sorts of God's creatures – with their arms cut off. When did we get so stupid?

Nature is beautiful. Natural shape is beautiful. We all have one. Take care of the shape that was given to you and take care of the nature that has been entrusted to you.

A Walk in Brookside Park

by *Elaine Kiesling Whitehouse*

I enjoy walking in Brookside Park in West Sayville, which is across Brook Street from Sayville High School. One day I walked to my favorite spot beside the pond and noticed a large black backpack near the edge of the pond. I assumed it belonged to one of the students who had forgotten it. I walked over to it to see if there was a nametag, but I soon realized



it was not a backpack at all. It was a big snapping turtle! It was close to a yard long and had visible claws about four inches long. I did not get close enough to get an accurate measurement, needless to say.

I sat on the park bench for a while and took a few pictures. It must have seen me there because in a few minutes it stuck its head out all the way and lumbered to the edge of the pond and slithered in. I could see a trail of bubbles following its path as it swam away underwater.

Ugly as it was, I was glad to see it because it indicated species diversity and good health of the pond. I wondered how old it was.

According to Internet sources like Britannica.com, a snapping turtle weighs about 23 pounds and has an average bite force of 209 Newtons of force. They can bite off a finger. They are not usually aggressive in the water, but they may lunge and snap while on land.

A snapping turtle can live to be about 45 years in the wild. The oldest documented snapping turtle was named Thunder. He died in 2016 at the age of 150 at the Newport Aquarium near Cincinnati.

GSBAS NEEDS YOUR HELP

There are many ways to get involved with the GSBAS. Volunteering at Brookside, attending an event or even helping with scheduling monthly programming!

It's not a very time-consuming job or a scary one. There are a lot of

resources to help and, of course, the board of directors will help with input. The position entails booking programs for 7 months, supplying the details for the newsletter and confirming with them before the program. Easy Peasy! Contact Annette for more information@ nettiesbaskets2@optonline.net.



Young and Adult Great Horned Owls

by Ellen Weinstein



BABY & ADULT BALD EAGLES

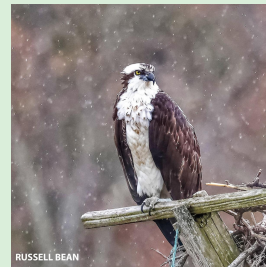
by Karen Hill Maloney



An osprey clawed his neck with his talons because the Eagle took over its nest.

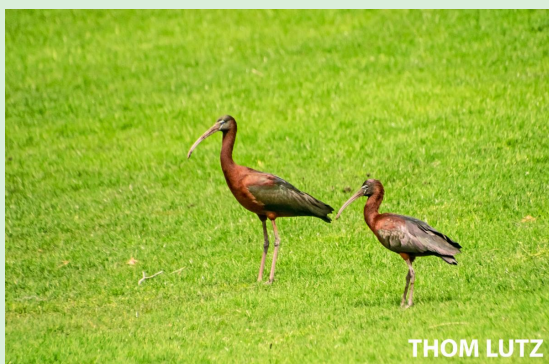
EAGLES, RED TAILED HAWK, & OSPREYS

by Russell Bean



GLOSSY IBIS & WOOD DUCK

by Thom Lutz



TURKEY by Karen Andres



Robin Feeding its Hatchling by Joe Abraham



[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT PHOTOS](#)

Norman Levy Walk by Ken Thompson

Our walk was at Norman Levy Preserve in Merrick NY. We started off with perfect weather for a spring walk. Bright sunshine and little or no wind and cool temperatures. While we were doing our introductory circle we were visited by a couple of the resident Monk Parakeets.

There are nests in and around the park vicinity, they are active and raucous and have adapted to their non native surroundings. Wall Lizards.

The general birding was so remarkable as we tallied 24 species, a highlight for many was some lingering Green Winged Teal. On our way back to the parking lot we encountered another non native species that is in the park. Italian Wall Lizards.





May Dinner Review

by Annette Brownell

On Monday, May 6, we held our annual dinner at Captian Bill's. The evening was a terrific time. As always, the food and service were excellent. We had lots of really good raffle prizes, including several gift certificates or gifts from local businesses that support Great South Bay Audubon. Nearly 120 people attended and many people who could not attend supported us by purchasing raffle books.

We played a "right/left" game to see who would win the centerpieces donated by Bayport Flower Houses. It was a scream – literally! Everyone screamed when the word "scream" was said. Just too much fun!

John Turner was our guest speaker. That night John was wearing his Pine Barrens hat and gave us an interesting history of the Pine Barrens and its significance to Long Island life. He also shared insights as to what creatures and plants live there and what is happening to preserve this precious space.

Legislator Steve Flotteron from Legislative District 11 joined us to share what his district and Suffolk County as a whole is doing to improve water quality and open space issues in Suffolk County. We really appreciate the legislator taking the time to visit with us and speak with our members.

Steve D'Amato's lovely painting of a Prothonotary Warbler was well received. We appreciate that each year Steve designs and creates a painting to donate at the dinner.

Thank you to each person that helped, came, donated and made this event wonderful.

GSBAS **Annual Dinner**

DONORS

The GSBAS gratefully acknowledges the following donors, who made tonight possible.

AUDREY'S BAKERY

AVINO'S

BAYPORT BLUE POINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BAYPORT FLOWER HOUSE

BUOY 35

CAPTAIN BILL'S

THE FISH STORE IN BAYPORT

ISLIP ARTS COUNCIL

LA SCALA

LI DUCKS

SPIRIT OF HUNTINGTON ART CENTER

STUDIO THEATRE

VIVA LA VIDA

WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Thank You

Photo by Bob Labuski





Our Brookside County Park Update

by Karen Andres

Spring is a beautiful time to take a walk through Brookside Park. The daffodils have bloomed along with some crocus in the lawn. The park is full of life. This past fall we were lucky enough to have an Eagle Scout candidate refurbish the wooden bridge and extend it so you don't have to walk through mud to get to the other side. Along with the bridge he marked the two trails we have in the park. The larger one is designated as the White Trail with a smaller one designated as the Black Trail. In the near future, the county will be putting up trail maps at two points near the trails.

Not only has Spring arrived, so have the invasives. What is an invasive plant? Invasive plants reseed themselves quickly. Some invasives self-pollinate like the burning bush and others like English Ivy produce fruit which the birds love to eat. The birds then distribute the seeds as they happily fly away. Typically invasive plants are non-native which gives them an advantage because they have no pests or diseases which may keep them in check in their native country. They are also very aggressive and crowd out native species in our forests.

This April and May we had two invasive removal days. The last Sunday in April we were fortunate to have two Stony Brook University students come to the park to help me cut the English Ivy that was climbing trees in the park. If left unchecked it would eventually kill the trees. We worked on the space between the White and Black trails.

The first Saturday in May we had a small crew sponsored by the Save the Great South Bay Creek Defender team and Girl Scouts in the park cutting the ivy and burning bush on the east side of the park. The ivy and burning bush are especially heavy on that side due to the fact that the neighbors have planted them in their yard. This is something to keep in mind when planting in your own yard. While ivy makes a nice ground cover it can easily get away from the ground.

We will soon get ready to start planting our Native Pollinator Garden. There is plenty of work to be done at the park. If you have the time and a special skill, I encourage you to reach out and ask what volunteer opportunities, we may need at the park.

Brookside Park Photo credit: Karen Andres



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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

PO Box 267 Sayville, NY 11782



May 21, 9:30am, Oceanside & Jones Beach Walk Southern State Pkwy. to Meadowbrook Pkwy. South to Merrick Road (27A). Go west on Merrick Road a short distance and turn left on Mill Road and bear left (on Main Street) turn right on Atlantic Avenue to Waukena Ave. left to Park Avenue to Golf Drive (brown signs from Atlantic to Oceanside. Marine EC)

May 28, 9:30am, Shinnecock Dune Nature Walk. Sunrise Hwy. East to Exit 65 South to Montauk Highway. Go east and follow signs to Ocean Beaches. Cross Ponquogue Bridge and turn left at the traffic light. Go to end of road to parking lot at inlet. We meet at the ocean overlook parking area south of the road.

Live Animal Presentation Thursday, June 20th @6pm We are excited to welcome back Sweetbriar Nature Center to Brookside County Park for our live animal presentation. It's always fun to see wild animals up close. It's also good to learn their stories of why they are in captivity and how we can make an impact in protecting nature. Please bring a lawn chair, refreshments if you choose and your choice of bug protection, as the event is outdoors. The program starts at 6 pm and we look forward to seeing you.

The Brookside garden is getting a face lift. Master Gardener Karen Andres has been busy designing, researching and beginning much needed work to recreate a beautiful natural space.

Many hands make light work. If you enjoy garden work (soil releases endorphins) and would like to work under Karen's guidance to help this new garden become a reality, please contact Karen.

Watch for our Fall Ribbon Cutting event details to follow!

GREAT SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

President: Jody Banaszak 682-278-4059 crabnose88@yahoo.com

Vice President: Open

Treasurer: Annette Brownell 631-260-8089 nettiesbaskets@optonline.net

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

Brookside Coordinator/Garden: Karen Andres, greatsouthbayaudubon@gmail.com

Editor: Suzanne Wittenberg suzanne@spiritofhuntington.com

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

Mike Maler, mamaler@hotmail.com, Suzanne Wittenberg suzanne@spiritofhuntington.com, 631.889.1949

Committee Chairs:

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.

Click to Subscribe to Our Newsletter



631.563.7716 | P.O. Box 267, Sayville NY 11782

greatsouthbayaudubon@gmail.com

greatsouthbayaudubon.org

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

[Unsubscribe spiritofhuntingtonartcenter@gmail.com](mailto:spiritofhuntingtonartcenter@gmail.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by spiritofhuntingtonartcenter@gmail.com powered by



Try email marketing for free today!