



Great South Bay Audubon Society Newsletter

January/February 2026 Issue # 1

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.



by Joe Abraham, Ph.D.

Greetings GSBAS Members and Friends,

The Great South Bay Audubon Society is proud to be Steward to Brookside County Park. At a recent meeting with Richard Martin and staff, from Suffolk County Department of Parks, and attended by Karen Andres, Director of Brookside Preserve, and myself, I had the opportunity to learn a great deal about the relationship between our organization and Suffolk County.

After the meeting, my interest was piqued as to the history of Brookside County Park, and I thought I might share some background history with you. Brookside has a rich history dating back to Isaac Green. Isaac was born in 1858 in Sayville. He was an architect, who designed buildings in the Sayville area. Brookside was originally part of the Isaac Green Estate, which included Green's Creek and a main lawn. The estate was built in 1897. In 1978 buildings and structures on the property were destroyed by arson. In 2000, the county acquired the

property, which was in poor condition, and cleaned it up. The park was eventually purchased through the Clean Water Act and entrusted to Great South Bay Audubon Society for stewardship.

The park is now considered a nature preserve. 118 bird species have been logged on the property. There are walking trails and a waterway going through the property, so that waterfowl are also evident. Once called “The Swamp”, the land is in reality the headwater’s of Green’s Creek. The property still has what was once the gatehouse and is now used by GSBAS for meetings and as a place to visit. It houses historical pictures and a library.

We invite and encourage members and friends to visit Brookside to enjoy the lovely surroundings and historical background. I have used prior articles in writing this article and would like to note that information came from Constance Gibson Currie as well as the Long Island History Project.



by Jeanne Halton

Happy New Year!

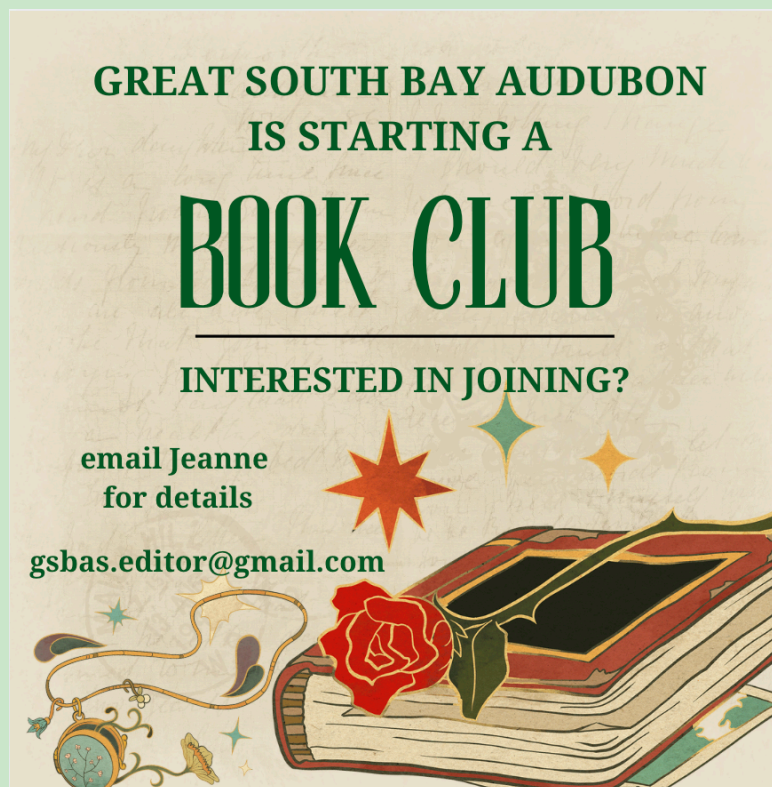
New Year's always brings about a time for change and reflection within oneself. Perhaps you are looking to improve your health and fitness, work on relationships, change your lifestyle or try something new! Well, here at GSBAS we can help you achieve all of the above!!

Looking to improve your health and fitness? Why don't you join our wonderful bird leaders on their bird/nature walks. (See flyer in newsletter with details of when and where the walks are being held.) Or take a walk thru Brookside Park on the trails with an added bonus of seeing many types of birds!

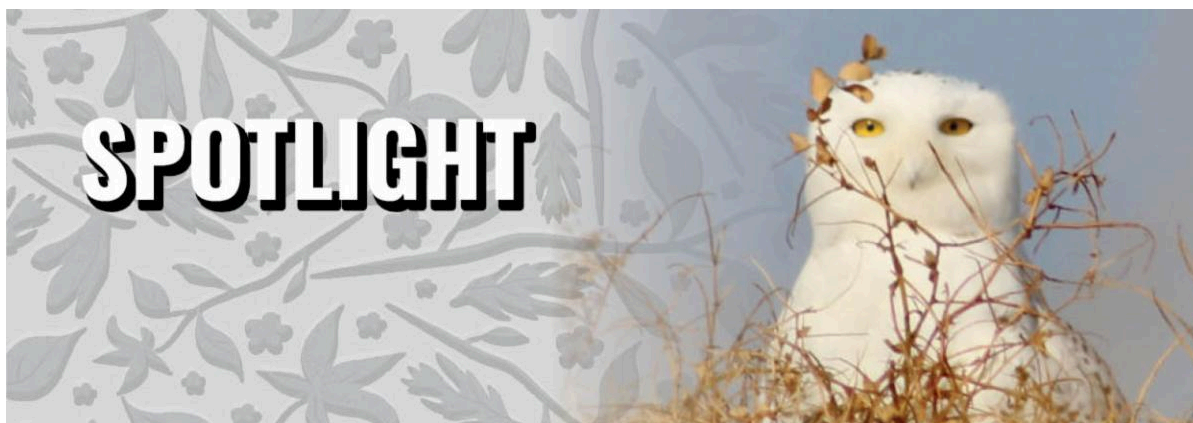
Want to meet new people? Come to our monthly meetings and meet our members and hear great speakers! Another way is to become a docent or helper at Brookside and connect with more people.

Need a change in your life and want to try something new? We are starting a book club! It will begin in February. If you are interested, see the flyer below. I will lead the book club (so please email me by January 25 so I can tell you what book we will be reading) and we will meet at Brookside. Speaking of which, if you have not been in the house at Brookside, you need to come by and see all the

renovations inside. Our wonderful Brookside Director, Karen Andres, and her team, have been doing an awesome job fixing up inside.



The March/April *Sandpiper* newsletter will come out in **mid-March**. If you would like to submit any articles or photos (see photo submission link below) to be included in the newsletter, please submit to me at **gsbas.editor@gmail.com** by **March 5**.





Meet Our Director of Brookside Preserve ***Karen Andres***

Hi! My name is Karen Andres and I am a life long resident of the South Shore from Great River to Sayville. I haven't traveled far from my hometown! I taught Art for 39 years and have been retired for a few years.

I have been a National Audubon member since the early 2000's, but like many national members, I just enjoyed reading the newsletters and magazines. I was never very involved in birding. It wasn't until I retired that I could live out a dream of becoming a Master Gardener. This is when I became more involved in Audubon. Just about the same time as I graduated with my Master Gardener Certificate, I read in *The Sandpiper* that there was a cleanup garden event at Brookside. I went along with about 6 other people and helped to clean up the garden. I was having a conversation with Annette, who was on the board, and she deemed me to be in-charge of designing the new garden. I created a design and asked to come to a Board Meeting to get approval. I got the green light to proceed and with some help from Jody and Bob we got started. Marty, a Master Gardener friend, helped me to get a grant to buy all the necessary items to create a beautiful Native Garden. I was at Brookside a lot. When the current *Brookside Coordinator* was no longer able to do the job, I volunteered my services. The Board approved my appointment and this is how I became the Director of Brookside Preserve. I say *Director* instead of *Coordinator* because that is the title in the by-laws. I have been in this position for just over a year. As Director of Brookside, there are many things to do.

As Director, I am the Liaison with GSBAS and the County. Suffolk County owns the property we are stewards of. I assess the building and trails to make sure there aren't any issues that need to be addressed. I make sure any building issues or repairs are sent to the county for them to put in work orders.

One of my jobs is to organize a committee of docents to open the house and greet visitors. This has always been a challenge. I recently created a small booklet for docents to help them with this task. There are 6 items to do as a docent: fill the feeders, open the building, walk trails and pick up trash, sweep debris off the deck

and porch, engage with visitors about the park's history, observe birds you see and write them in the "Bird Book". All of this, along with Isaac Green's history of the property, are in the booklet. Audubon events like meetings, bird walks, annual dinner, etc. are also included in the booklet for docents to use as talking points to visitors. All of these things will help any docent who is interested in volunteering. We open our doors only 2 days a week. Would you be willing to donate 2 hours a month to showcase our park? It is a beautiful park and I'm sure you will enjoy spending a few hours here.

Slowly we are changing the building to a more functional space for us to be more efficient as an organization and to share with the public. Currently there is a small group of people who have been cleaning, organizing, painting, fixing lighting, and shuffling furniture. I am thankful for this little group. We are getting close to working on the front room (or living room) where we will showcase Isaac Green and the history of the property and his architectural legacy. Once refurbished, it will be known as the Isaac Green Gallery. It's not too late to volunteer to help in this room achieve its beautiful transformation.

We are fortunate to have artist in residence, Steve D'Amato, who has donated several of his beautiful paintings in our building. Once the Isaac Green Gallery is complete, these paintings will be moved to the Library/Board room which will showcase his work as well as other works by members including our former President, Jody Banazak.

I have enjoyed becoming involved with Audubon and hope to learn more about birds and go on the bird walks that Ken Thompson sets up. I love taking walks in the park. It's a small park and can easily be walked in 20 minutes or less. We currently have two trails, black and white. They are marked and there are maps at the entrance to both ends of the white trail. It is so peaceful walking the trails- the birdsong is delightful and you may see and hear some interesting birds early in the morning- especially during migration. I encourage you to visit the park. It is a hidden gem.

GREAT SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

Renovation and repairs. If you are handy, have carpentry skills, like to paint or fix things we need your help.

GARDEN NEEDS

We are in need of a new arbor since the current one is rotting. If you know of anyone who would like to help build a new one or know of a scout who would like to earn their Eagle or Gold award please reach out to Karen at:
gsbas.brookside.director@gmail.com



WHAT WE NEED

We need people to chair the following committees:

- Education
- Programs
- Conservation
- Hospitality

Also needed are Docents at Brookside.

CONTACT

greatsouthbayaudubon@gmail.com

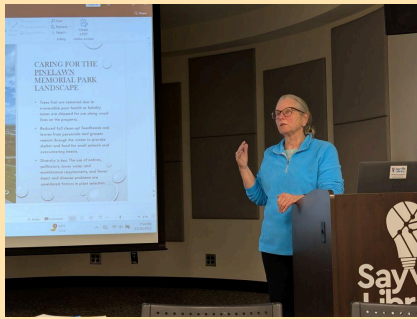
631-563-7716



greatsouthbayaudubon.org

FEATURED ARTICLES





November's Speaker: Pinelawn Horticulturist Donna Moramarco by Joe Abraham

(photo by Marilyn Lehrfeib)

The GSBAS General Meeting on November 20, 2025, the first at the Sayville Library, had Donna Moramarco present. She gave a very interesting presentation on horticultural goals at Pinelawn Memorial Park and Arboretum. She invited members to visit and stroll around the beautiful grounds. Members were pleased with the presentation, as well as, having the meeting in a spacious meeting room, which was comfortably warm. Parking in the lot behind the building was well lit. We hope to see you there at future meetings.



Hog Island by Mary Rasmussen

I longed to see Puffins, Atlantic Puffins-those colorful penguin-like birds. I wanted to see them in the wild, in their native habitat. I knew I would have to go north.

One day, while perusing an Audubon magazine, I noticed an ad for an Audubon camp on Hog Island, Maine. This camp, which caters to adults, teenagers and families has multiple sessions, each with a different theme. Themes such as Joy of Birding and Art and Nature. They all include a boat trip to see Puffins and other sea birds in Muscongus Bay, in the mid-coast of Maine, as well as other field trips. The boat trips not only include Puffins, but other sea birds such as Razorbills, Black Guillemots, Double Crested Cormorants and a variety of Terns.

I decided to become a camper and fell in love with camp and Hog Island. The bunk houses are rustic, but beautiful. The island is natural and beautiful, with plenty of walking trails. The food is plentiful, healthy and delicious. Three times a day, a large bell is struck calling everyone to come and eat. In between meals, one can explore the museum, attend a lecture or take part in a project organized by visiting instructors. Campers can learn how to catch and band birds and color T-shirts with natural dyes. In the evenings, there is music performed by staff and volunteers.

Hog Island, though available for nature lovers through the Audubon Society, for years became more renowned with the development of Project Puffin. Initiated by Dr. Steven Kress in 1973, Project Puffin was an effort to re-establish nesting Puffins on Eastern Egg Rock Island, where they had been extirpated. He transferred Puffin chicks, Pufflings, from Newfoundland to the island. They were looked after and using decoys and social attraction methods, they returned and were nesting 8 years later. Puffins spend most of their lives at sea and breed at 5 years. Patience was necessary.

A few years after being a camper, I became a volunteer. I could enjoy all that Hog Island offers-to be on the island in exchange for a little labor. Volunteers are responsible for cleaning the bunk houses, doing dishes, and chopping vegetables. But once the chores were done, I could participate in activities and go see those amazing Puffins again.

***A Little Birdie Told Me...Q & A with Brooke
Ramirez,
Owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Oakdale and East
Setauket
By Jeanne Halton***



Questions submitted by Karen Andres

Question #1: How often do I need to clean out my bird feeders?

Brooke's Response: I get this question a lot! A good general rule is to clean your bird feeders every couple of weeks. During hot, humid, or rainy weather-or if the feeder is really busy-it's best to clean them about once a week. Any time seed looks wet, clumpy, or moldy, it should be emptied and cleaned right away. Using fresh, high-quality seed also makes a big difference. When there aren't fillers that birds tend to ignore, seed doesn't sit in the feeder as long, which helps keep it fresher and extends the time between cleanings. Clean feeders help keep birds healthy and happy in your backyard and extend the life of the feeders.

Question #2: What is the best way to clean out the tube style bird feeders?

Brooke's Response: Another great question! First, dump out any old seed and take the feeder apart-if you can. Wash all the pieces in warm, soapy water, a tube brush makes cleaning the inside much easier-we carry tube brushes at Wild Birds Unlimited. Rinse everything well and let it dry completely (in the sun if possible) before adding fresh seed.

I'll be hosting a presentation on keeping bird feeders clean and safe within the next couple of months. To get advance notice, people can join our text club or stop by one of our shops anytime.

Text **OAKDALE** to (855) 687-7479 to sign up for updates and event notifications.

****Do you have a **birding question** you would like to ask Brooke? Email me at: gsbas.editor@gmail.com I will do my best to include your question, and Brooke's response, in our upcoming newsletters!***

Parks and Trails: Gardiner County Park
This park article was submitted by Christine Larkin

Park Name/Address: Gardiner County Park, Montauk Highway, Bay Shore 11706

Why Christine loves to visit this park: My favorite park is Gardiner Park in Bay Shore. It is a beautiful preserve that has natural pathways and lots of trees. I especially love that it runs to the Great South Bay. I am local who loves to walk here. I grew up in the neighborhood behind Sagtikos Manor, which is across the street from Gardiner Park. We played on these grounds before it was a park. It still reminds me of the Native Americans who used to be here and the farmers who had farms here. It's a natural oasis that I love. I have wonderful memories.

*All photos taken by Christine Larkin.

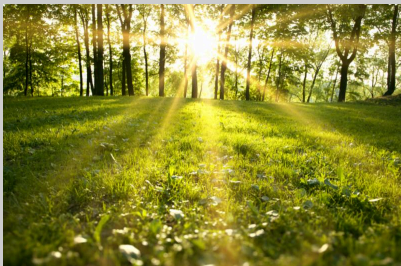
If you have a favorite park, why not share it with our members! Email me (gsbas.editor@gmail.com) the name of the park and why you enjoy visiting the park.





Winter Wonderland by Karen Andres

We had a lovely post Christmas snowfall. My husband, Mark and I went up to Brookside to do some shoveling followed by a walk in the woods. The trails were snowy, but there were footprints in the snow, so we weren't the first to take the walk. Peaceful is the one word I would use to describe our walk. It was so quiet and peaceful in the park. We saw a Bald Eagle land in a tree far away. We also visited the racoon family who live in a hollow of a tree. Nature is amazing to witness. Walking through the park is something everyone should do on a regular basis. Do you know that walking in nature has beneficial benefits to your health and well-being? Take a walk and see how much better you feel afterwards.



Weekend Nature Walks 2026

Saturday, January 10, 8:00 am @ Connetquot River SPP: Bird and Breakfast Leaders Edith Wilson, Ken Thompson, Helga Merryman, Jack Carlson Reservations required \$4 at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) search #NatureAdventure

Sunday, January 11, 9:00 am @ Montauk: Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120), Ken Thompson (631-612-8028) Meet at Lighthouse parking lot. Latecomers can still join in the vicinity of the restaurant overlook. Directions Route 27 to 27A to end.

Saturday, February 7, 8:30 am @ Jones Beach West End: Leaders Mike Cooper (516-523-2369), John Gluth (631-827-0120) Meet in the marina parking lot near the Coast Guard Station at West End.

Saturday, March 7, 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.

Saturday, April 18, 8:30 am @ Connetquot River SP: 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. Parking fee may be required.

Saturday, April 25, 8:00 am @ Valley Stream SP & Jones Beach West End: Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120) Vera Capogna (516-639-5430) Southern State Parkway to exit 15S, North Corona Ave. North 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.

Sunday, May 2, 7:00 am @ Central Park: Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120), Vera Capogna (516-639-5430) Meet at 7 a.m. on Central Park West at 77th St (opposite the Museum of Natural History). One of the best trips for our chapter! You must register for this trip. Text or email to Vera Capogna 516-639-5430, vlvcap@yahoo.com

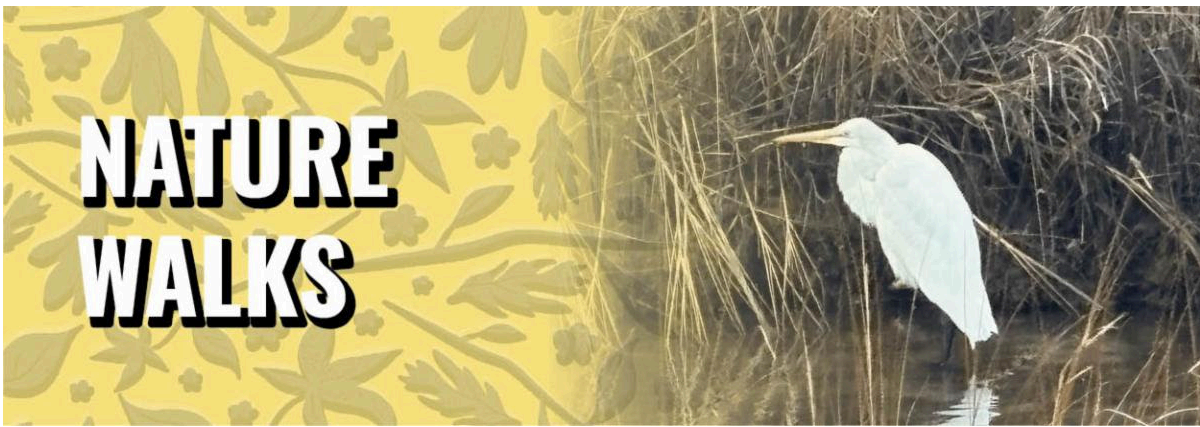
Saturday, May 9, 7:00 am @ Alley Pond Park: Leaders Mike Cooper (516-523-2369) John Gluth (631-827-0120) Northern State Pkwy to Exit 23, which reads: Cross Island Parkway, Union Turnpike and Alley Pond Park. Go to Union Turnpike (NOT Alley Pond Park). At the signal light, turn right onto Union Turnpike. 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 10, 8:00 am @ Connetquot River SP: Bird and Breakfast Leaders Edith Wilson, Ken Thompson Helga Merryman, Jack Carlson Reservations required \$4 - Reservations at Eventbrite.com search #NatureEdventure. Registration fee, plus \$8 parking fee per car - unless you have yearly Empire pass.

Sat & Sun May 16/17, 7:00 am @ Sterling Forest and Bashakill: Leaders John Gluth (631-827-0120) Vera Capogna (516-639-5430) 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 there and continue to Park Visitors Center parking lot on Old Forge Rd. Overnight at Wurtsboro Days Inn (845-888-8727). You must register for this trip. Text or email to Vera Capogna 516-639-5430 vlvcap@yahoo.com.

Saturday, September 12, 2026 8:00 am @ Connetquot River SP: Bird and Breakfast Leaders Edith Wilson, Helga Merryman, Ken Thompson, Jack Carlson. Reservations required \$4 at Eventbrite.com search #NatureEdventure, plus parking fee per car - unless you have a yearly Empire pass.

NATURE WALKS



Tuesday Nature Walks 2026

Tuesday, Mar 24, 9:30: Sunken Meadow SP

Meet in the main parking lot in front of the main pavilion near the traffic circle.

Tuesday, March 31, 9:30: Heckscher SP

Meet in Field 5 western end.

Tuesday, Apr 7, 9:30: Jones Beach WE SP

Meet in the parking lot at the Marina near the Coast Guard Station.

Tuesday, April 14, 9:30: Robert Moses SP

Meet in Field 5 at the northeast corner.

Tuesday, April 21, 9:30: Norman Levy & Jones Beach WE

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 28, 9:30: St. Joseph Campus Brentwood

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.

Tuesday, May 5, 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 12, 9:30: Shinnecock

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.

Tuesday, May 19, 9:30: 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.

Tuesday, May 26, 9:30: Oceanside & Jones Beach

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) Maybe ending at Jones beach.

Tuesday, Jun 2, 9:30: Suffolk County Farm

350 Yaphank Avenue Yaphank NY. Take Sunrise Highway to exit 57N, Horseblock Rd. Bear right onto County Road 21, Yaphank Ave. Travel approximately one mile to the Cornell Cooperative Extension on left. Turn left onto the entrance road. Take your first right and follow down and meet at the visitors parking area on your left.

Morton National Wildlife Refuge Walk by Ken Thompson

On November 15, 2025, John Gluth and I walked at the Morton National Wildlife Refuge in Noyac. We were greeted by the usual gang of seed seeking local moochers. We saw twenty four species for the morning. We saw some early Surf Scoters, Red-breasted Mergansers and Bufflehead Ducks. Needless to say, we saw the local Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Downy Woodpeckers and a legion of American Robins. It's always a pleasant walk and the weather was delightful.

Black Capped Chickadee (photo by Ken Thompson) Ken Thompson & Downy Woodpecker (photo by John Gluth)



Blydenburgh County Park by Ken Thompson

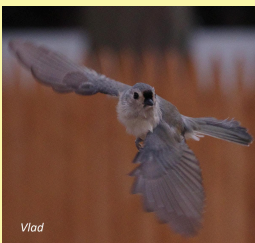
Our walk on October 28, 2025 was at Blydenburgh County Park in Hauppauge. Eighteen folks showed up on a chilly morning that got chillier as we finished our walk. The walk started out slow, but at the end we had a flurry of birds. Flocks of Robins and White Throated Sparrows were near the campgrounds. We had a flock of Slate-Colored Juncos near the dog runs. One of the Juncos was a rich blue colored bird, something I have never seen before. (Photo taken by Linda)



SUBMITTED BIRD PHOTOS



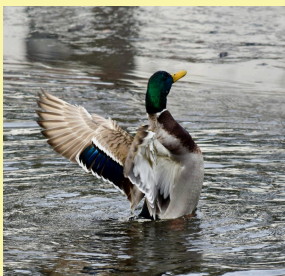
Titmouse~Vlad Zaitsev



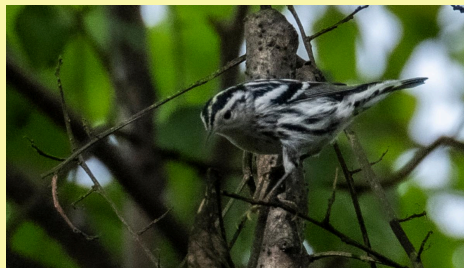
Titmouse~Vlad Zaitsev



Titmouse~Vlad Zaitsev



Mallard~ Amy Brownell



Black & White Warbler~ Joe Abraham

Goldfinch~Thom Lutz



Yellow Rumped Warbler~
Joe Abraham

Piping Plover~Thom Lutz



Black Belly Plover~
Thom Lutz



[Click here to submit photos!](#)

GSBAS Photo Gallery



GSBAS Holiday Dinner Party~Joe Abraham



Blue skies at Brookside~Karen Andres



Serviceberry Trees in position~Karen Andres



Serviceberry Trees with rainbow~Karen Andres



Serviceberry Trees are planted in dedication to past, present, & future Audubon members & volunteers~Karen Andres

Monthly General Membership Meetings

*Our monthly meetings are held at **Sayville Library** beginning at **7 PM** every third **Thursday** of each month.*

January 15- guest speaker: Joseph Jannsen; Topic-Long Island Shorebird and Duck Decoys

February 19-guest speaker: John Hallowell; Topic-Operation SPLASH (Stop Polluting and Littering and Save Harbors) SPLASH volunteers patrol the South Shore waters by removing debris, monitoring & identifying pollutants, as well as their sources.

March 19-guest speaker: Jordan Raphael, National Park Service Biologist-Management and Conservation of Shorebirds on Fire Island National Seashore

April 16-guest speaker: Drew Panko, Fire Island Raptor Enumerators-Annual count of migrating raptors on Fire Island

May 4 from 6-9 PM: Our annual fundraising dinner! This year to be held at Timber Point Country Club in Great River! More information to come! Save the date!



Hello Great South Bay Audubon Members and Friends!

We thank you for your continued participation in being a member of our local chapter of Audubon! We hope you enjoy our bird/nature walks & hikes, attending our general meetings and annual fundraising dinner and presentations related to birding, nature and conservation.

In order to continue to present these activities, we depend on the dues and donations of members and others. In the past, people have paid dues when they joined. This will still be the case. However, in order to better know whether members have paid or not, all dues are now due by **May 1st** to remain a member in good standing. More information to renew your membership will be coming soon.

Thank you and have a wonderful birding season!

GSBAS Board Members

great south bay audubon society | PO Box 267 | Sayville, NY 11782 US

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