



Great South Bay Audubon Society Newsletter

Spring (March-May) 2026 Issue # 2

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!

It is early January as I prepare this article for the Spring newsletter. Snow is on the ground and the Dark-Eyed Juncos are searching the ground for seed droppings. I know we are all waiting for the arrival of warmer weather and the influx of birds that Spring brings.

I am reading an article by a grieving son who visits his deceased mother's garden twice a day. He finds a sense of peace and closeness to her while there. Sitting in the garden, he becomes familiar with a bird flitting around and building a nest. Not the best looking nest he has seen, but nevertheless a miracle. Later, as he watches the bird lay her eggs, and incubate them, he feels a sense of comfort and curiosity, even hope. The anticipation of the new, of something to look forward to. He finds the mother bird's constant call a part of his healing.

As you read this, Spring should have begun to show its face. Warmer weather, the beginning of bird migration, the budding of crocus and other early Spring flowers. Hopefully, our bird walks will have begun (our binoculars and cameras cleaned), and they will have prepared us to see the beauty of nature's avian friends.



by Jeanne Halton

Who's ready for Spring? I know I am!! After all this snow we have had this winter, I am sure of all us are gearing up for green grass and warmer days! With Daylight Savings Time change, we now can enjoy longer days of sunlight! You know who else is ready for Spring...birds!!

Birds need time to discover nesting boxes, so now is the time to put nest boxes. Want to attract American Kestrels to your neighborhood? Their nesting habitats include grasslands, open woodlands, and towns. You can mount their nest box to buildings, posts, and trees. The nest box placement should be 10-30 feet from the ground and should face south or east. Their nesting period is between April and July. Interested in seeing Tufted Titmouse? They liked nesting in forests, open woodlands and towns. Their known nesting period is April-June. When placing a nesting box, place it on an mature trees 5-15 feet from the ground. Face it away from prevailing wind.

There are many more types of birds you can attract to your neighborhood. Interested in learning more? Visit Cornell Lab's nestwatch.org for a list of birds and nest box plans so you can make your own!

Happy Spring!
Happy Bird Watching!



The Summer (June-August) *Sandpiper* newsletter will come out in **mid-June**. 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 **June 5**.



Steve Papa at the Wading River Marsh

***Meet Our Vice President
&***

Program Director: Steve Papa

Hi! I have been a Long Islander for life, growing up in Bay Shore, NY. In college, I majored in Biology with a focus on Ecology. After receiving a Bachelor of Science in Biology from SUNY Stony Brook, I earned a Master of Science degree in Marine Environmental Sciences from SUNY Stony Brook's Marine Environmental Research Center (now called the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences). I have been employed by the federal government for over 30 years; the overwhelming majority of that time as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I work on the recovery of endangered species, conduct Endangered Species Act consultations with other federal agencies, review and participate in the planning of wetland restoration projects and migratory bird conservation, and perform many other functions related to fish and wildlife conservation. I am currently a resident of the Bayport-Blue Point area and greatly appreciate the opportunity to be Vice President of the GSBAS Chapter.

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



January's Speaker: Joseph Jannsen, Decoy Collector by Jeanne Halton

Joseph Jannsen, decoy collector, was the presenter at GSBAS General Meeting held on January 15, 2026. Joe brought many decoys from his collection that were made and used on the Great South Bay. Decoys were made from different materials; ranging from tin, iron, wood, cork and balsa. (Weights were added to the bottoms of the lighter materials.) From 1873-1934, there were dozens of decoy factories across America. Sporting & hunting clubs could be found throughout Long Island for people to hunt shorebirds. Hunting guides would lead the hunters. Birds were shot and used as food for restaurants and ladies' hats! In 1918, shorebird hunting was banned. An interesting fact was a tool that hunters used in the early 1900's. It was called sink box hunting or "coffin boxes". Hunters would sit in the "coffin box" and have decoys, made of iron, placed around the sink box. The iron decoys were so heavy that they made the sink boxes sink and the hunters would drown.



Steve Papa, program director and Joseph Jannsen, decoy collector
Photo by Joe Abraham



Arbor at the Native Pollinator Garden New bench facing the garden
Photos taken by Karen Andres

Scouting in America

by Karen Andres

As a mother of an Eagle Scout, I am familiar with what it takes to earn the badge. As the director of Brookside Preserve, I have had the pleasure of not only working with the Boy Scouts, but the Girl Scouts as well. The aspects of scouting that I feel are valuable is the learning how to carry yourself in the grownup world. School, while challenging, is organized into a neat package for the students to follow. Not following the schedule, students may not earn the grade. In scouting, the scouts learn how to manage their time, plan, research, budget, lead, interact with adults and businesses, all to bring their project full circle. Once all their hard work is completed, they can proudly say they achieved the highest rank, whether it's the Boy Scout rank of Eagle Scout or the Girl Scout rank of the Gold Award. Both take hard work that the scouts need to do on their own.

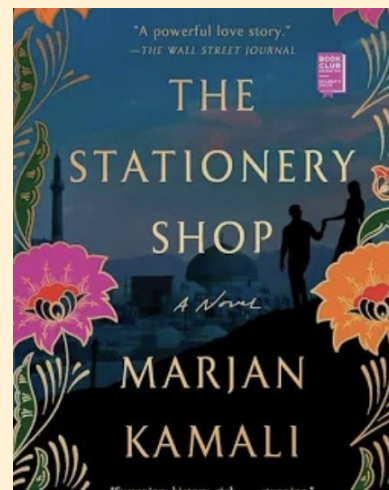
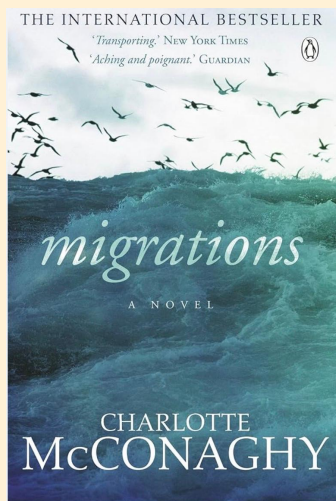
We have the honor of working with a boy scout to help him earn his Eagle Badge and a girl scout working on her Gold Award. Jack Southward earned his rank of Eagle Scout by helping us in our Native Pollinator Garden. The arbor that was there was old and rotting. We needed a new one and Jack was more than happy to build us a new one. He also installed a bench for park visitors to sit on and view the garden. Our Gold Award candidate, Abigail Dean-Stahl, is in the process of telling the history of the park and its original owner, Isaac Green, by installing signs in various strategic places throughout the park's trails. Abbie is nearly done with her project and I cannot wait to see the final results. We will post photos of Abbie's project when completed. Great South Bay Audubon is grateful to these young people and hope they have learned a lot in the process. We wish them success in their future.

Audubon Book Club

by Jeanne Halton

Our Audubon Book Club (ABC) held its first book on March 4. We had a great start to our book club with five members attending! Members met at the Audubon Brookside house. Our first book we read was [Migrations](#) by Charlotte McConaghy. We had stimulating conversations and discussed our different viewpoints and perspectives. Most of us enjoyed the book.

Our next book we will be reading is [The Stationery Shop](#) by Marjan Kamali. We will be meeting on April 8 from 2:00-3:00 PM at Brookside. If you're interested in joining us, email me at gsbas.editor@gmail.com.



The Next Chapter
204 New York Ave.
Huntington, NY 11743 US

"We just did a HUGE book buy of used ornithology books. **If you like birds, you really should stop by.** We have so many, we temporarily took over the record display near the science table and filled it with bird books."

HOURS:

Monday - Thursday: 9:30am - 10pm

Friday - Saturday: 9:30am - 11pm

Sunday: 10am - 9pm

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 do I go about setting up a bird feeder in my yard?

Brooke's Response: Every yard is different. You'll want to find a location that works for you and the birds! Place your feeder where birds feel safe, but can easily see the food. It's also helpful to think about their flight path from nearby shelter to the feeder so you can avoid droppings over places like patio furniture.

Take note of whether you have trees to hang a feeder from, or if a pole system like our "Advanced Pole System" would work better for your yard. Bringing photos of your yard to Wild Birds Unlimited is a great way for us to help you determine the perfect spot for your feeders.

Question #2: Is one type of feeder better than others?

Brooke's Response: Different feeders attract different birds-and so does the food you put in them. Hopper feeders and tray feeders are what we call foundational feeders because they attract the greatest variety of bird species.

Finch feeders are more specialized and attract fewer types of birds, but they can be very rewarding, especially if you enjoy watching American Goldfinches.

Choosing a bird feeder is really a personal decision and we can help narrow down the best options on what birds you'd most like to see in your yard.

Question #3: When I get the feeder set up & filled with food, will the birds come to the feeder right away or will I have to wait? If I have to wait, how long is too long to know if the birds are just not interested?

Brooke's Response: Birds are naturally cautious: When they notice something new in their environment-whether it's a feeder or a new type of food-they want to make sure it's safe before using it.

Because of that, it can sometimes take time for birds to start visiting a new feeder. When we first moved into our home, it took about six weeks before birds started using our feeders because the previous owners had never fed birds. Now they sometimes find a new feeder within an hour!

If it's taking more than a few weeks, check that the seed hasn't become clumpy from moisture or developed an odor. Keeping feeders clean, filled, and stocked with fresh food will help encourage birds to give them a try.

Question #4: Are there special foods to attract songbirds? If yes, what are the foods?

Brooke's Response: Yes! Certain foods are especially effective for attracting songbirds. At Wild Birds Unlimited, we carry only foods that birds actually eat-never any fillers.

Different foods attract different species. Peanuts, suet, Nyjer seed, and specialty blends can all help bring in a wide variety of birds, especially when paired with the right feeder. Offering a variety of foods is often the best way to attract the greatest number of species.

One favorite to try is our Cardinal Confetti blend. Northern Cardinals love it, but many other birds enjoy it too.

Question #5: What is the average cost to set up a feeder in my yard?

Brooke's Response: Our goal at Wild Birds Unlimited is to help people set up a bird feeding station that fits their yard and their budget. We carry a wide variety of feeders and supplies starting around \$10 and going up from there.

You can spend as much or as little as you're comfortable with and we're always happy to help customers choose the setup that will work best for them. Our mission is to bring people and nature together-and to do it with excellence-and helping someone get started feeding the birds in their own backyard is one of the best ways to do that.

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: Inlet Pond County Park ***by Jeanne Halton***

Park Name/Address: Inlet Pond County Park (North Fork Audubon Society are stewards of this park), 65275 County Rte. 48, Greenport 11944 11706

Why I loved this park: My husband and I took a ride out to Orient one weekend recently and on the way back, we stopped to visit another Audubon Society's park. We were both pleasantly surprised by the size of the park! There were marked trails (about 1.5 miles) with different colored blazes, which took us through woodlands (where you can see many native species of trees and plants), past a freshwater pond that has an observation platform with seats, and down to the Long Island Sound. At the beginning of the trail is a kiosk where you can see the trail map. You can walk through a butterfly garden or sit and watch the many birds that come and visit their filled bird feeders. To find out more about this park, visit the North Fork Audubon Society website (www.northforkaudubon.org).

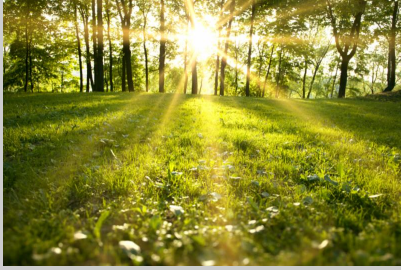
If you have a favorite park, why not share it with our members! Email me (gsbas.editor@gmail.com) the name of the park and why you enjoy visiting the park, as well as any pictures you may have taken.



NFAS kiosk with trail map NFAS butterfly garden

**Photos by Jeanne Halton*

Weekend Nature Walks 2026



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 #NatureAdventure. 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 #NatureAdventure, 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.

SUBMITTED BIRD PHOTOS



American Goldfinch~
Joe Abraham



Northern Mockingbird
protecting his territory~
Joe Abraham



Red-Breasted Merganser~
Joe Abraham



Cardinal in the
rhododendrons~
Joe Abraham



Yellow Rumped Warbler~
Joe Abraham



Ruby Throated
Hummingbird~
Jeanne Halton

[Click here to submit photos!](#)

GSBAS Photo Gallery



February Walk at Jones Beach West~
Joe Abraham

Monthly General Membership Meetings

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

Light refreshments will be available throughout the meeting.

March 19-guest speaker: Trudy Battaly

Topic: Fire Island Raptor Enumerators-Annual count of migrating raptors on Fire Island

April 16-guest speaker: Jordan Raphael, National Park Service Biologist-Management and Conservation of Shorebirds on Fire Island National Seashore

SAVE THE DATE:

Monday, May 4 from 6-9 PM: Our annual fundraising dinner!

To be held at The Mansion at Timber Point in Great River! Check for your invite either through email, mail or check it out on our Facebook page! Be sure to enter the discount code for \$30 off for current members!

Come Join Us for a Night of Fun And Prizes!
**Great South Bay Audubon's Annual
Dinner**

The Mansion at Timber Point

398 Great River Road
Great River, NY

Monday, May 4, 2026

6:00-9:00 PM

Guest Speaker: John Turner

Topic: "The Goatsuckers of Long Island: Whip-poor-wills, Chuck-will's-widows, Nighthawks"

5:30-6:00 PM: *preview raffle selections/purchase raffle tickets*

6:00-6:30 PM: Welcome & Refreshments

6:30-7:30 PM: Buffet Dinner

7:30 PM: Speaker Presentation

8:15 PM: Raffle, 50/50 & Centerpiece winners announced

Dinner tickets: \$90 members, \$120 nonmembers

Current members will receive a discount code. Check your emails for the code.

Includes: beer, wine, buffet dinner and dessert

50/50 raffle tickets: 5 for \$10 or 15 for \$20

Raffle baskets: \$20 per sheet of 25

Payment options: mail in or online.

Due no later than April 17, 2026.

For purchasing tickets, scan the QR code below.

If you prefer to pay by check, mail your check payable to **GSBAS** at:

GSBAS, P.O. Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782

Please include number of tickets you are purchasing and names of all guests on mail in tickets.



BECOME A MEMBER



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. (Our membership year is July 1-June 30.)

We encourage our participants and former members to please send in your membership dues on or before they are due. If your dues are not paid by , your membership will be dropped. You can access a membership application or pay through Pay Pal by going to our website www.greatsouthbayaudubonsociety.org

Thank you and have a wonderful birding season!

GSBAS Board Members

Great South Bay Audubon Society Membership Form

As a member of the Great South Bay Audubon Society, you will receive our newsletter, *The Sandpiper*, quarterly. Also included in your membership, is access to the beautiful Brookside County Park, with 8 acres of trails for guided nature walks, ponds & waterways, birds and wildlife. You can also attend our monthly general meetings with sensational guest speakers and have the opportunity to connect with other members!

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Mail membership form to: GSBAS, PO Box 267, Sayville, NY 11782

Current GSBAS Board Members

President: Joe Abraham *jabraphd@hotmail.com

Vice President: Steve Papa

Treasurer: Glenn Reed, CPA, CGMA *gsbas.Treasurer@gmail.com

Recording Secretary: Mary Rasmussen

Corresponding Secretary: Amanda Wilson

Brookside Director: Karen Andres *gsbas.brookside.director@gmail.com

The Sandpiper Editor: Jeanne Halton *gsbas.editor@gmail.com

Website Manager: Heather Gallagher

Past President: Jody Banaszak

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

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



Try email & social marketing for free!