

FOUR HARBORS AUDUBON SOCIETY
Stony Brook, Port Jefferson, Mount Sinai, Smithtown

THE FOUR HARBORS
HERON

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 10/4/14, 1st Annual SEATUCK Birding Challenge, 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- 10/5/14, *Celebrating Caleb Smith Park*, 10 a.m.
- 10/5/14, Bird Walk at Caleb Smith, 11:15 a.m.,
- 10/11/14, Avalon Gardens Bird Walk, 8 a.m.
- 10/11/14, Frank Melville Memorial Park/Mill Pond Bird Walk, 11 a.m.
- 10/15/14, A Day in the Life of the Nissequogue River, Caleb Smith,
- 10/20/14, Fall Meeting and Presentation “*Endangered Species Success Stories*”,
Smithtown Public Library, 7:15 p.m.
- 10/25/14, Town of Brookhaven Town Hall, *Greenfest*
- 11/22/14, *Feeding our Feathered Friends*, Sweetbriar, 1-3 p.m.



A Message from the President

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our newsletter!

Our newest board member, Patrice, has been working diligently to get important information to our members and friends.

After reading this, you will discover our local chapter has been hard at work, building wildlife habitat gardens in the area.

Our motto - Changing Long Island, one yard at a time!

Come visit us this Sunday, October 5th, at Caleb Smith Park, where we will have a table and be giving a bird walk at 11:15 a.m.

If you are a teacher or know any teachers, please tell them about the free workshop, *Feeding our Feathered Friends*, on November 22nd, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Don't forget to get outside, and take a child with you!

Susan Krause

Four Harbors Audubon Society
Board

Susan Krause, President

Luci Betti-Nash, Vice President

Joy-Ann Cirigliano, Atlantic Flyway
Projects Coordinator

Elaine Maas, Education Coordinator

Sue Beck, Field Trip Director

Dianne Spitz, Conservation Chair

Joe Kelly, Photographer

Jim LaRosa, Webmaster

Patrice Domeischel, Communications/
Newsletter



A Day in the Life of the Nissequogue River

Joy Cirigliano

A day in the life of the Nissequogue River is designed to celebrate the river and estuary ecosystems and educate participants on the uniqueness of one of Long Island's NY State-designated Wild and Scenic rivers. On a single day, environmental education partners and students all along the river will participate in a Citizen Science Project and will simultaneously collect scientific information, analyze it and share it to portray the status of the river and estuary ecosystem. Students will use hands-on field techniques to describe their sites, catch fish and other water creatures in nets, collect water and invertebrate samples, develop a biodiversity inventory of the riparian zone and analyze water chemistry. Students will examine the physical and chemical aspects of the river, such as where freshwater and seawater meet, the amount of sediments in the water and turbidity and oxygen levels, as well as conduct biodiversity inventories of the flora and fauna in and around the ecosystems. All data collected on these Day's will be posted on this website: <http://www.portaltodiscovery.org/aday/about.htm>

The event is coordinated by the Central Pine Barrens Commission, Brookhaven National Laboratory's Portal to Discovery, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Suffolk County Water Authority. Many environmental groups, such as Four Harbors Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY State Parks, USGS, Sweetbriar Nature Center, Long Island Sound Study, NY Sea Grant, East Hampton Shellfish Hatchery, The Nature Conservancy, the Brook trout Coalition, and the Students Taking Action for Tomorrow's Environment will be teamed with school classes along The Nissequogue River Watershed and Estuary to create a day-in-the-life picture of the ecosystems from the headwaters to the mouth.

The Nissequogue River is the river with the largest "Flush" of the four rivers on Long Island, with an average mean daily discharge of 40 cubic feet per second. (USGS) It is 9 miles long and has a 40 square mile drainage area. The watershed, including Smithtown Bay, has been designated by Birdlife International and the National Audubon Society as a Globally Significant Important Bird Area (IBA # 120) and is notable for its colonial nesting birds, including Piping Plovers, Common Terns, and Least Terns. It is also a major migration corridor for migrant waterfowl and songbirds. New York State's Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act protects those rivers of the state that possess outstanding scenic, ecological, recreational, historic, and scientific values. The Nissequogue River and portions of the watershed have been designated Scenic and Recreational under this program and are regulated by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. This designation affects management, protection, enhancement, and control, of land use and development in the river corridor.

There are also a number of sites throughout the watershed designated as New York State Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats. The fish and wildlife habitat consists of two distinct areas totaling approximately 82 acres. The first area comprises approximately two-thirds of the habitat area, and consists of vegetated "dredge islands" along with the adjoining beach and dunes to the south and east of Short Beach Town Park. The second area to the west of the mouth in and adjacent to Sunken Meadow State Park comprises approximately one-third of the habitat area, and is similar in composition to the first. This important habitat serves as home to a variety of species including osprey and other birds mentioned above, as well as a number of important fish species including, alewife, menhaden, brook trout and striped bass.

Wetlands - both freshwater and saltwater - are critical habitat found throughout the watershed. They serve as an important resource in terms of hydrology, ecology, aesthetics, recreation and education. Large tidal wetlands are located in the estuarine sections of the Nissequogue River (north of Main Street, Kings Park) and at Sunken Meadow Creek. Freshwater wetlands are found throughout the watershed at many of the ponds and in the freshwater stretches of the river. While wetlands are protected by State regulation, they are still threatened by adjacent land uses including development, road construction and groundwater and runoff pollution. Data collected from A Day in the Life of the Nissequogue River can be used to aid in assessing the health of the river to decide the advisability of establishing programs and projects to restore the ecosystem to its former biodiversity. For more information on the river, see:

<http://www.rpa.org/nissequogue/actions/introduction.html>

<http://library.rpa.org/pdf/RPA-Nissequogue-River-Stewardship-Action-Plan.pdf>

GREAT PLACES TO BIRD

Lily Pond, A Hidden Delight

Patrice Domeischel

If you are anything like me, you are always looking for new, exciting birding locations. Lily Pond County Park, a little known preserve in Nesconset, provides the opportunity to view birds in a variety of natural habitats. Within its borders are marshland, woods and a few open areas catering to a wide-variety of birds and wildlife. Luckily for Lily Pond, FHAS board member Dianne Spitz acts as its unofficial guardian, taking a proactive stance in maintaining and protecting the preserve, clearing debris, snipping at unruly vines, and watching over its trails. She has done this for the past 20 years. Diane and I, along with FHAS president, Susan Krause, walked its environs and spoke about the history of Lily Pond and the birds and animals within, which was a welcome excuse to bird as well!

In 2005, a bill passed by the Suffolk County Legislature provided provisions to protect 90 acres of this land, fifty acres of which were wetlands. Efforts to preserve Lily Pond Park had been in the works for some time. The Legislature voted in 1978 to appraise and acquire the property, and an article in Newsday in 1979 entitled, "Who Cares if this Wetland turns into a Garbage Dump", complete with disturbing photos and descriptions of "old washing machines, clothes dryers, tires, wrecked cars and mattresses" stated proposals to purchase the property had already been ongoing for 19 years. But the 2005 bill finally culminated in the protection of one of the last complete freshwater ecosystems remaining on Long Island.

Today, those who visit Lily Pond may see wildlife including fox, raccoon, turtles, frogs, and of course birds of all types; warblers, woodpeckers, thrushes, sandpipers, ducks. Rarities such as the Summer Tanager, Lawrence's Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Purple Gallinule, and Saw-whet Owl, have been recorded here over the years. Snapping turtles nest at Lily Pond, and Great Horned Owls have been known to nest here.

Fast forward to the present: as I awaited Sue and Dianne, I decided to take a peek. Walking through an opening I found off the street, I followed a narrow trail a short way, immediately being treated to the sight of the pond before me and flushing four loudly protesting frogs as they hopped away into the water before me. My eyes zoomed to the sight of a Kingfisher as it flew by. I took in the expanse of the pond and the surrounding beauty. A short time later, the three of us made off into the woods searching and exploring. A Great Horned Owl had been seen on an almost daily basis. We took off, with that eventual destination in mind. Ten or fifteen minutes into our walk, we hit a hot spot. Warblers flitted back and forth above us in the tall trees; multiples of Black-and White, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo. Our heads and bodies jerked, the "birders dance" back and forth, up and down, seeking the best view of the constant frenetic movement high above us. Our walk that afternoon netted a total of 27 species, including a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and a Northern Waterthrush. The owl did not make an appearance, but we will save that for another day.



As we concluded our walk, I thought about the work it takes to maintain the acres of trails contained within the preserve. Large Phragmites, an invasive species, threaten to engulf the marshland, crowding out native species, and a plan needs to be instituted to eliminate this pest. Wisteria, also, is taking over entire areas of the park. Work to maintain Lily Pond's trails is ongoing, and volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to lend a hand, please send an e-mail to:

fourharborsaudubon@gmail.com.

Lily Pond Park and Preserve is located at the end of Steuben Avenue in Nesconset. Please park 100 feet from end of street before it curves. The road narrows at end, and parked cars may make it difficult for homeowners to exit driveways.

The Four Harbors Audubon Society Wildlife Habitat Display Gardens

Joy Cirigliano

The Four Harbors Audubon Society is pleased to announce the completion of this year's final garden at Fort Salonga Elementary School. This is the eighth in their "Native Plant Wildlife Habitat Display Garden" series, as part of the National Audubon Society's Atlantic Flyway Initiative, and their own "Bird Friendly Community" and "Audubon in the Parks" campaigns for Smithtown Township. The installation of the Fort Salonga Elementary School Wildlife Habitat Garden was completed on September 27th. Volunteers from Four Harbors Audubon, LI Master Gardeners, Kings Park PFA, KPCSD Grounds and Custodial staff, and a member of the KPHS SEAS Club helped with the installation.

Four Harbors Audubon's first native plant display garden, a "Bird and Butterfly Native Plant Display Garden," was installed at the Nesconset Branch of the Smithtown Library, 148 Smithtown Blvd, Nesconset, in the summer of 2012. It was followed by a large (100' x 25') "Wildlife Habitat Native Plant Display Garden" in front of the Main Bath House at Sunken Meadow State Park, Sunken Meadow Pkwy, Kings Park, two weeks before hurricane Sandy hit in October of 2012. Both gardens survived the hurricane with no problem.

Two more Native Plant Habitat Gardens followed in 2013, the first at the Kings Park Branch of the Smithtown Library, 1 Church Street in Kings Park, in June, and the second at Caleb Smith State Park, 581 West Jericho Tpke., Smithtown, in July. Additionally, The Kings Park High School Environmental Club, S.E.A.S., at 200 Rte. 25A, Kings Park, with a donation of plants and time from Four Harbors Audubon, improved the habitat in their courtyard around their pond as an on-going project, for habitat garden number five.

In December of 2013, Stony Brook's Avalon Park and Preserve's S.T.A.T.E. (Students Taking Action for Tomorrow's Environment) Volunteers partnered with Four Harbors Audubon to grow native seedlings and saplings for use in both of their ongoing habitat restoration projects and native plant gardens. A possible Native Plant Sale is being discussed for the future.

The sixth garden and third Library Habitat Display Garden was installed this past June at the Smithtown Library's Main Branch, 1 North Country Rd, Smithtown, by the gazebo. The seventh, which happens to be the fourth and final Library garden was installed on the rear of the property at the Commack Branch of the Smithtown Library at 3 Indian Head Road, Commack, on September 6th. It was the first partial "Woodland" Native Plant Wildlife Habitat Display Garden. The eighth garden in the series, as part of a schoolyard, will be used with the K-3 curriculum. Schoolyard "on-site field trips" for experiments on biodiversity and other curriculum driven syllabi will take place in the spring. Native seeds such as corn, beans, squash (the Native American 'Three Sisters') and sunflowers grown by the Elementary School, as part of their curriculum, will be planted in these gardens. Insects and birds can be observed and recorded as part of the science programs in this "outdoor classroom."

These Display Gardens and Restoration Projects are possible due to collaborative grants from New York Audubon, donations from Avalon Park and Preserve in Stony Brook, NY, plant and monetary donations from members of The Four Harbors Audubon Society, donations of plants and time from the Long Island Master Gardeners, and donations in time from The Long Island Master Naturalists, Students Taking Action for Tomorrow's Environment (STATE), Kings Park High School SEAS Club (Student Environmental Action Society), Sierra Club, Audubon New York, and the general public.

Four Harbors Audubon is grateful to its local State Parks in its IBA, The Smithtown Free Library District, and the Kings Park Central School District for the ability to put these gardens on properties where the public can see them and enjoy the wildlife they attract. As more people discover that Native Plants don't need to look "weedy" and begin to use them in their own yards, an impact will be felt in the increase of plant biodiversity and then animal biodiversity. Hopefully this will coincide with a paradigm shift in the way we garden, decreasing the amount of lawn, increasing the amount of beds, and decreasing the amounts of pesticides, fertilizers, and water consumption. The National Audubon Society, through its Flyway Initiative has asked its chapters to focus on a Conservation outcome for everything they do. By installing native plants, restoring habitats, having native plant sales which put native plants back into the suburban environment, and working with many diverse groups to further these goals, it is hoped that a Conservation impact will be felt.

For more information on these and other projects that Four Harbors Audubon Society is involved in, please contact: Joyann Cirigliano

Atlantic Flyway Projects Coordinator
Four Harbors Audubon Society
(631)766-3075



Fall Meeting of Four Harbors Audubon

Smithtown Public Library

Monday Oct.20,2014 7:15 PM

Join us and learn about your local chapter of Audubon.

At 7:30 there will be a power point presentation:

Endangered Species Success Stories!

Join us as we learn about the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, whooping crane, and many other animals that have been saved from the brink of extinction.



Learn what you can do to help preserve our magnificent wildlife.

Four Harbors Audubon and
Sweetbriar Nature Center

are inviting you to a free teacher workshop,

Feeding our Feathered Friends,

Saturday, November, 22

1-3 PM.

This is a Birdsleuth Ambassador Workshop and will include lesson plans, a birdfeeder for your classroom, and lots of ideas for engaging your students with the natural world.

For more information, or to register, please contact skrause442@yahoo.com

The 1st Annual SEATUCK BIRDING CHALLENGE Saturday, October 4, 2014, 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Enter the 1st Annual Seatuck Birding Challenge and help promote bird watching and conservation across Long Island. Beginner, experienced and competitive birders welcome. Fall migration promises large numbers of birds and a great diversity of species.

Raise funds for Seatuck or your own conservation cause while increasing awareness and support for Seatuck's conservation work, educational programs and nature centers.

It promises to be a BIG day on Long Island!

- Teams of 3 to 5 people - register as a team or join one of ours!
- Special Student (8th Grade & Under) and High School categories (these teams allowed an extra adult chaperon/coach)
- Teams may bird anywhere on Long Island (including Brooklyn & Queens), but checklists must be handed in by 5 p.m. at the Suffolk County Environmental Center - 550 South Bay Avenue in Islip
- Barbecue reception for all participants - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Awards for the most species tallied in various categories
- Entry Fee: \$50/person, \$10 Student & High School categories
- Sponsorships available!

• More information and registration at www.seatuck.org or contact Trish Manzi at (631) 581-6908 or trish@seatuck.org

Follow Four Harbors on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/4harborsAudubon

You may also e-mail us at: fourharborsaudubon@gmail.com