Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society is looking for committee and board members interested in making a difference! HOBAS works to protect wildlife and preserve habitat through conservation action, awareness, education, and advocacy. We are especially focused on strengthening our conservation, fundraising, children’s programming, and outreach committees, but there are other opportunities available. We also are looking for administrative help with regards to research and developing new bylaws, and best practice policies.

Volunteers must be able to commit to monthly board meetings, which are conducted on the third Wednesday of each month (except for December and July) at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. Anything beyond this monthly meeting will be up to your individual preferences and availability. This is an unpaid, volunteer position.

We seek a mix of cultural, age, racial, gender, and professional diversity for the board. You do not need to be an expert in anything, just interested, engaged, and excited about conservation and wildlife. Please see our website (www.hobaudubon.org) for more information about the chapter. If you are interested in becoming involved, please e-mail hobaudubon@gmail.com. Resumes are welcome.

Thank you!

Adopt-A-Highway Program

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers who participated in our Adopt-a-Highway Program monthly cleanups in 2014, and helped to keep clean our one-mile stretch of Pulaski Road in Huntington. The new season begins in March. The spring cleanup days are:

- Sunday, March 8
- Saturday, April 18
- Sunday, May 3

Cleanups are conducted at 8:00 AM and usually take about an hour and a half. Meet at the WPW Growers parking lot across from Wicks Farm.

Please consider joining us for our spring cleanups. Share in the fun and camaraderie!

For more information please send an e-mail to Simone (s.daros@aol.com).
Annual Appeal

Thank you to everyone who supported our 2014 Annual Appeal. It takes money as well as hard work and commitment to fulfill our Audubon mission. Your support enables HOBAS to remain a strong and viable chapter dedicated to environmental education and to preserving natural habitats and protecting the creatures that live in them.

Monarch Butterfly Update
Alex McKay

The World Wildlife Fund has reported that a formal census by Mexican environmental authorities has revealed the number of monarch butterflies on their wintering grounds has rebounded 69 percent from last year’s low of 1.65 acres occupied. The numbers remain very low at 2.79 acres, the second smallest forest surface occupied by the butterflies in over 20 years of monitoring. Half of the estimated 57,000,000 wintering monarchs are concentrated in El Rosario Sanctuary, one of twelve traditional sites, about the size of one and a half football fields, making them more vulnerable to winter conditions in Mexico.

Entomologist Lincoln Brower, a monarch expert, has said that anything below 4 acres leaves them in “the danger category.” Next year’s spring migration and summer breeding season with be another turning point for the monarchs. The need to restore large areas of milkweed lost to pesticide-resistant crops and the widespread use of glyphosate (Roundup) is critical.

Volunteers Needed

English Ivy Pull at Shu Swamp
Join the Shu Crew to help restore one of the finest preserves on Long Island. Wear clothes and shoes you don’t mind getting muddy. If you have tools and gloves, please bring them. Snacks and water will be provided. Call 516-695-0763 to register.

- Saturday, March 14 at 10 AM
- Saturday, April 11 at 12 noon

Directions: From 25A take 106 north to Oyster Bay. Make left onto Lexington Ave, then another left onto West Shore Road. Directly after Mill Pond (on the left) bear left and go up the hill on Mill Hill Road. Make a right on Beaver Brook Road, which will become Frost Mill Road. Shu Swamp is on the left, just before a railroad trestle. Do NOT use your GPS. You will end up in the wrong place.
Message from the President
Stella Miller

Wildlife Viewing Ethics

Recently Newsday ran an article on winter wildlife photography. While an interesting read, unfortunately nowhere in the article did I read anything about critical wildlife viewing ethics. Because of this, I would like to use my Message from the President to repeat an article from a couple years ago, but which, thanks to the surging popularity of wildlife photography, bears repeating.

As so many know, venturing out into nature is good for us, physically, mentally, and spiritually. As we explore the outdoors, there is always the chance that we may encounter wild animals, an exciting bonus to the day. Observing wildlife is one of life’s richest experiences and thanks to the many television shows that are now broadcast about animals, as well as the internet, the appreciation of wildlife has never been greater. Unfortunately, bad behavior on behalf of the observers can sometimes occur. Last winter a majestic all-white Snowy Owl was seen on Long Island for several weeks. Unfortunately, due to the postings of the bird’s exact location, the owl was regularly harassed by quite a number of people. As winter approaches, and winter migrants such as owls begin their trek down to visit us, it is important to remind wildlife enthusiasts about proper behavior when viewing wildlife – in all seasons. Wild animals must be treated with respect and wildlife watchers and photographers need to behave responsibly. There is a code of ethics that we must all follow while observing wildlife, both for the well-being of wildlife and your own safety. Peeking into the secret world of wildlife is tremendously gratifying, but the following guidelines must be adhered to:

Avoid getting too close – It is natural to want to be as close as possible to an animal, but this is a big no-no. The closer one gets, the more threatened and stressed the animal will feel. Keep your distance; binoculars and/or a spotting scope will enhance your viewing experience, while allowing the animal you are observing to feel more comfortable. A more rewarding viewing experience will occur when the animal is behaving naturally, without being disturbed.

Observe briefly – If you are looking at baby birds in a nest or an animal foraging for food, etc., remember that they are going about their day and you are interrupting their normal behavior. Each time an animal is disturbed, it is put at a disadvantage because it has expended precious energy needed for survival. In addition, your presence at a nest or den site could alert a predator to the natal zone, thereby advertising an easy meal.

Learn to recognize signs that the animal is uncomfortable with your presence – Animals are unpredictable and you need to continually be aware of the animal’s response to your presence because what it might tolerate one minute could change within seconds. Some general clues to watch for are:

- The animal runs or flies away or toward you (such as a bluff charge).
- The animal appears nervous and keeps looking at you with head up and ears pointing toward you.
- The animal doesn’t resume its normal activity, or "settle down". Birds may chatter angrily in your presence.
- In the case of a roosting owl, if the owl looks directly at you, it is now aware of you and could be uncomfortable.
- The animal begins to display in some manner, such as a Piping Plover’s “broken wing” display.

Don’t pursue an animal – Never chase an animal trying to get better glimpse or photo. Don’t follow animals or behave in any way that might be seen as “harassment.” In addition, please keep your dogs on a lead and never allow them to “flush” birds and other animals.

Move quietly, slowly, and in plain view – Loud noises, sudden movement or an unannounced approach startle animals, causing a stress response.

Use a blind if possible – Your car makes a wonderful blind, but please, for safety sakes, remember to pull completely off the road.

Use calls and recordings of calls with moderation – Overuse of such devices can interrupt breeding cycles, drive birds from their territories, or make animals “call shy” so that they may not respond to the real thing.

Do not feed wildlife – Have you ever heard the phrase, “A fed bear is a dead bear?” Sounds extreme, but in many cases, it is true. Wildlife can quickly become habituated to humans. It does not take much more than one productive encounter with a human for a wild animal to associate us with food, thereby leading to potentially dangerous or uncomfortable human/animal conflicts. These rarely end well for the animal. All it takes is one accidental nip from the wild animal, or a couple of uncomfortably close encounters for the animal to be euthanized as “dangerous”. In addition, feeding waterfowl bread and other non-nutritious foods is detrimental to their health and disrupts normal behavior.

When in large groups, break up into smaller groups – Small groups of people are less disturbing, usually talk more quietly, and tend to act in a more responsible way than big groups do.

Do not disturb the habitat you are in – Always stay on the trail. Otherwise you could be trampling important food sources or rare vegetation. (Continued on next page.)
Message from the President (Continued)

Respect the rights of your fellow viewers – Other viewers have a right to see the undisturbed wildlife that you are viewing. Don’t flush birds or other animals, thereby perhaps ruining the chance for other observers to see it.

In summary, as ethical wildlife watchers, we must place the needs and safety of wildlife first, protect habitats, and respect the rights of others. A rewarding wildlife watching experience is one that consists of animals behaving as naturally as possible in their own environments, not reacting to our presence. Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon promotes responsible recreation and if you follow the simple guidelines provided above, your experience will be enhanced. Please behave in a way that promotes responsible and respectful wildlife viewing!

Out on a Limb
Alex McKay

Looked out my kitchen window a couple of weeks ago and noticed three unusual visitors at my hanging tube feeder. A trio of young deer were placidly helping themselves to what remained of the sunflower seed. I shooed them off from the back door, but a few nights later a quartet showed up just after dark. They were quite brazen and merely ambled off as I walked out to the feeder. They stopped to look back as I continued toward them talking softly and then they finally scampered around a fence into my neighbor’s yard. I don’t mind feeding squirrels and this year’s mob of blue jays, but I draw the line at deer. I’ve taken to bringing the feeder in at night and rehanging it in the morning.

Unusual visitor to bird feeder

The deer dilemma is widespread and increasing on Long Island and in the suburban metropolitan area. From East Hampton and Southold to Lloyd’s Neck, to Staten Island, and up the river to Hastings-on-Hudson, a variety of management options have been exercised to try to manage the exploding deer population. From fencing and repellants in local settings to fertility control, capture and kill, bait and shoot, controlled hunting with professional sharpshooters, and traditional licensed hunting in larger areas, diminishing the deer population and the damage it causes has been largely a failure. The deer population of eastern Long Island, now estimated at between 25,000 and 35,000, has barely stabilized while it has increased rapidly westward in areas such as Crab Meadow, Eaton’s Neck, and Lloyd’s Neck. The deer population on Staten Island, numbered at 24 in 2008, rose to over 750 in 2013. Unchecked, the population can double every two to three years, with young does having a single fawn and older females capable of having twins or even triplets.

With crop and ornamental damage, alteration of forest ecosystems and understory, accidents with automobiles, and the spread of Lyme disease, deer over-abundance has resulted in considerable economic loss for farmers, nurseries, vintners, parklands, homeowners, and the general human population. An east end vineyard has fenced off sixty acres with eight foot fencing at a cost of $40,000. Most recently, the Village of East Hampton has hired a non-profit to sterilize over 150 deer at a cost of over $100,000. 114 females were sterilized over twelve nights of using dart guns and trucking the animals to a surgical area. An earlier plan to cull as many as 3,000 east-end deer using federal sharpshooters failed when the towns could not agree and hunters and animal rights advocates objected to the kill. Under an agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Long Island Farm Bureau, Federal sharpshooters using silencers operated at night from tree stands and trucks with property owners permission and harvested only 192 deer out of a scaled back target of 1,000. At east-end town meetings, deer control is a regular topic of debate. The proliferation of fencing is a current concern while the regulations to control the effects of fencing are being considered. Fencing drives deer from one property to another and in places forces them to use roadways, increasing the possibility of accidents. The spread of eight-foot fences is also questioned as a mar the landscape.

The Village of Lloyd Harbor has for several years been employing a combination of legal bow hunting and professional culls by trained sharpshooters. Last year, 170 deer, including 19 euthanized by police after road incidents, were removed from the village. Road kills and damage from the remaining deer continue as another program moves forward this winter. On adjacent Eaton’s Neck, where my backyard quartet performs, a public meeting drew over 150 residents to hear DEC biologist Josh Stiller explain deer biology and the various methods of control. With firearms and bow hunting is illegal in the town, lethal controls are not an option in Huntington without Town Board action. Any effort for contraceptive or sterilization control would have to be organized, funded, and coordinated with the DEC by local civic associations or other organized groups. To date, no action has been planned.
Out on a Limb (Continued)

Moving away from the problems of Long Island, we note with interest plans by the New York City Parks Department to fence six acres at Buck Hollow Park on Staten Island to protect a reforestation project from browsing deer. Exclosure projects such as this and the vineyard fencing in Southold, while effective, are expensive as is a contraceptive vaccine approach to be used in Hastings-on-Hudson. Using PZP delivered through a dart, the contraceptive approach is a non-lethal method of control that has been tested on Fire Island and other isolated sites with varying results. A problem is that PZP treatment may need to be repeated every few years with the same deer.

Back on Long Island, we note that deer from Blydenburg Park in Smithtown have been crossing busy Route 347 to woodlands behind the state and county office complex where they have been pursued by bow hunters, much to the chagrin of nearby residents. Deer from Westchester have wandered into Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx where they have been illegally hunted by bow hunters from tree stands.

The deer dilemma leaves few easy options for management. Most efforts have been local and controversial and costly. A comprehensive regional program would need leadership and direction. The DEC is not an animal control agency but a regulatory agency that licenses and sets limits on hunting; however, permission from local landowners and municipalities is needed for hunters to operate legally. Objections from animal rights groups can defeat culling and hunting controls. The use of non-lethal enclosure, sterilization, and contraceptive controls is narrowly localized, expensive, and largely ineffective except possibly in the long run. As Gertrude Stein would say, a dilemma is a dilemma is a dilemma. Stay tuned.

Douglas Caracappa
Stella Miller

It was with great sadness and utter shock that I received the news from his sister Denise that long-time member and supporter Douglas Caracappa had passed away from pneumonia. A familiar and welcome face on our field trips and at monthly meetings he was also an ardent fundraiser for the chapter, participating in our annual Birdathon and raising significant funding for our monthly speaker program year after year. Quiet, reserved, and shy, Doug had a tremendous heart and a deep love for nature and birds. We shared a special friendship, talking about his goals for the future, and sharing a good laugh last year when he mistakenly sent me a Happy Hanukkah card for the holidays. He may have gotten the holiday wrong, but his handwritten sentiments were beautiful and just right. That was Doug; his heart was always in the right place. Doug may have left this earth much too soon, but he will remain forever in our hearts. Rest in peace, Doug. You were a kind and gentle man and you will be missed by all of us at Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon.

Celebrate Earth Day Beach Cleanup at Target Rock
Saturday, April 25 at 9 AM

Join Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon and the US Fish and Wildlife Service as we work to keep this beautiful wildlife refuge trash free in celebration of Earth Day! Snacks and water will be provided for the Volunteers.

Registration an absolute must: Please call 516-695-0763.

Directions: From Main Street (Route 25A) in the Village of Huntington, take West Neck Road for 5 miles, continue on Lloyd Neck Road which ends at Target Rock Road, follow Target Rock Road for 0.5 miles, the entrance is on the right. The refuge entrance is 2.2 miles east of Caumsett State Park.
MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Membership meetings and most activities of the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society are free to members and nonmembers. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at the Cold Spring Harbor Library except for the months of July and August. Our refreshments will be set up and ready for you at 6:45 PM so that you will have ample time for socializing. The program starts promptly at 7:30. For full program descriptions as well as speaker biography, please go to www.hobaudubon.org.

Wednesday, March 11, 7 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. The Coyotes are Coming with Michael Bottini. The coyote (Canis latrans) has greatly expanded its range in North America over the last century, and it is now found in every state except Hawaii and every Canadian province. Long Island is now one of the few large land masses in the continental U.S. without a breeding population of coyotes. But wildlife biologists think that will change soon. Mike Bottini is a veteran naturalist, outdoor educator, and environmental consultant. He has taught field ecology, environmental science, and natural history courses at St. Lawrence University, Southampton College, and CUNY, has published three books, and is an award-winning columnist.

Wednesday, March 18, 7:15 PM – Meeting of the Board of Directors at the Cold Spring Harbor Library.

Wednesday, April 1 – Deadline for the May-August Killdeer.

Wednesday, April 8, 7 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. Let’s Get It On: How Birds Reproduce with Douglas Robinson, Ph.D. Spring is the breeding season for many birds, but what does that entail? Before nestlings can be produced, a lot has to happen. From claiming territories to enticing a partner to raising young, tonight we will cover the basics, the mysteries, and the complexities of avian reproduction of some common, and not-so-common, birds of Long Island. Professor Doug Robinson is an evolutionary biologist whose teaching and research experiences have focused on organismal biology and behavior. He has taught classes on animal behavior, ecology, ornithology, vertebrate biology, general biology, environmental science, and anatomy and physiology.

Wednesday, April 15, 7:15 PM – Meeting of the Board of Directors at the Cold Spring Harbor Library.

Wednesday, May 13, 7 PM – Membership meeting at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. Grasslands, a Vanishing Landscape with Jenny Murtaugh - NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Tallgrass prairies once covered 140 million acres across the United States. Today, all that remains is between 1% and 4%. Short and mixed grass prairies are also declining. As grasslands are our fastest declining habitats, so are the birds that utilize them. Tonight we will explore these vanishing ecosystems and their inhabitants. Jenny Murtaugh is a Wildlife Technician in the Wildlife Diversity Unit within the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Bureau of Wildlife. She has done research through the DEC, the NYS Museum, and SUNY ESF related to coyote genetics and ecology, fishers, Kamer blue butterflies, frosted elfin butterflies, grassland birds, marsh birds, MAPS bird banding, and winter raptors. She is currently focused on a revision effort of NY’s Species of Greatest Conservation Need list and Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern species for the State Wildlife Action Plan.

HOBAS Membership Form

For $20 a year you can be a member of Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society. Your membership will help support conservation efforts, and educational and youth programs. As a member you will receive our newsletter, an open invitation to our monthly guest lectures, field trips, and events, along with special member’s only discounts and events.

Please fill out this form and mail with your check payable to:
Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society
P.O. Box 735
Huntington, NY 11743-0735

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ____________________________
State __________________ Zip ________
e-Mail ____________________________

HOBAS never sells or shares your personal information.

THANK YOU!
FIELD TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Go to hobaudubon.org for detailed trip descriptions.

Field trips are free, unless otherwise specified, and open to the public. Newcomers are welcome. Binoculars are advised. Carpooling is possible, gas and tolls are shared. The trip leader is not responsible for arranging carpools, but will provide names of others who are interested in carpooling. Registration is necessary. Call the trip leader by 9:00 PM Thursday for a Saturday trip and by 9:00 PM Friday for a Sunday trip. You may participate if you didn’t register, but we will not be able to notify you of any changes or cancellations without your phone number. Call the leader if in doubt about the weather. For the comfort and safety of all participants, there is no smoking on field trips.

**Croton Point Park**
**Sunday, March 1, 9 AM.** Bald Eagles can be found here in winter as well as many hawks. We will also look for elusive Short-eared Owls. Waterfowl in area include Scaup, Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, and Bufflehead. Leader: Blair Broughton. Call 631-885-1881 to register. Directions: Take Route 9 to Croton Point Ave exit; follow signs.

**River Otter Adventure**
**Sunday, March 29, 10 AM.** Join us today as biologist Mike Bottini leads us on a field trip to look for evidence of one of our most elusive creatures, and Long Island’s favorite comeback kid, the river otter! The location will be provided when registering, but it will be somewhere on the North Shore between Fort Salonga and Oyster Bay. Co-leader: Stella Miller. Call 516-695-0763 to register.

**Shu Swamp/Sagamore Hill Beach**
**Sunday, April 5, 9 AM.** An early spring walk in different habitats. Starting at Shu Swamp we will search for Wood Ducks and Rusty Blackbirds while observing skunk cabbage and spring ephemerals. At Sagamore Hill, we will walk the trail to the beach on Cold Spring Harbor. Leader: Blair Broughton. Call 631-885-1881 to register. Directions: From 25A take 106 north to Oyster Bay. Make left onto Lexington Ave, then another left onto West Shore Road. Directly after Mill Pond (on the left) make a left, go up the hill on Mill Hill Road. Make a right on Beaver Brook Road, which will become Frost Mill Road. Shu Swamp is on the left, just before a railroad trestle.

**Central Park**
**Sunday, May 3, 8 AM.** One of the finest spots around for warblers and other spring migrants as well as breeding birds. The array of birds that can be seen is dazzling! Leader: Sharon Brody. Call 516-433-5590 to register. Directions: Meet at the Boathouse, accessed from the pedestrian entrance on Fifth Ave near 76th St. Walk downhill veering left past the Alice in Wonderland statues, by the north side of the sailboat pond toward the right, up the hill, cross the roadway and to the Boathouse.

**Hempstead Lake State Park**
**Sunday, May 10, 9 AM.** Hempstead Lake State Park is an IBA that supports large numbers of flycatchers, warblers, tanagers, and a mix of other birds from mid-April to late May. We hope to observe some spring migrants today. Please note there is a parking fee. Leader: Blair Broughton. Call 631-885-1881 to register. Directions: Southern State Parkway West to exit 18 (Eagle Ave) and proceed south to the second parking lot. When you pass the booth, make a left and proceed to that parking lot.

**Sterling Forest**
**Sunday, May 17.** Details and directions will be in the May Killdeer and on the website.
Programs for Children

Sharing our Beaches with Birds:
Poster Workshop for Kids
Sunday, March 22, 2 PM
at the Cold Spring Harbor Library

Today we will first learn about beach nesting birds with an interactive program. Once we have learned just how interesting, important, and imperiled these birds are, we will turn artsy and create posters which will be made into signs for posting at Hobart Beach in Northport to educate the public and help protect the birds’ nesting grounds. This is your chance to make a difference in the lives of birds, while doing something fun at the same time! For ages 8 and up. Registration is a must as space is limited. Please register by calling 516-695-0763.

All attendees will be informed of where their signs will be posted and will be invited to join us at a Be a Good Egg Campaign Awareness Day.

Signs of Spring
Sunday, April 12, 1 – 3 PM
at Bailey Arboretum

Join us for our next Little Naturalists program, as we celebrate the return of Spring! We will read a story about animals in Spring, make a fun animal craft, and venture outside to take a walk to look for signs of Spring. For ages 5 - 8 and their caregivers. Registration is a must as space is limited. Please register by calling 631-903-5556.

Directions: Long Island Expressway to exit 41 North or Northern State Parkway to exit 35 North. Proceed north on Route 106 towards Oyster Bay. Make a left onto Northern Boulevard/Route 25A (west). By the police booth, make a right onto Wolver Hollow Road. Make a right on to Chicken Valley Road. Continue to Oyster Bay Road. At Bayville Road (Barney’s restaurant is on corner) make a right. Continue to Bailey Arboretum.