



The Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society Newsletter

Serving from Fort Salonga in Suffolk County to Oyster Bay and Centre Island in Nassau County

Volume 9, Issue 3
September - December 2021

The mission of the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society is to protect wildlife and preserve habitat through conservation action, advocacy, and education. This chapter territory serves both Huntington and Oyster Bay townships with its all-volunteer chapter 501c3 non-profit established in 1961.

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A Mourning Dove Love Letter from the Editor



Written and photographed by Alexandra Martinez

It was mid-May, probably a Saturday or Sunday because I remember relaxing and drinking two cups of coffee that morning, thinking to myself, "What is that mourning dove doing?" I've come to recognize the mourning dove coo and the distinct flutter of their wings and it seemed like it was relentlessly flying back and forth my side yard for hours. Later, I went outside and just happened to take a glance over at a planter on the side of my house and thought to myself, "Hmm, that's odd. I don't remember leaving dried up and dead flowers in that planter." I could've sworn I cleaned it out. Shortly after that, our backdoor exit was unusable as a mourning dove had inconveniently and not the least bit conspicuously made a nest in a planter way too small for it and its growing family.

That's when I learned about mourning doves, like they often mate for life, they almost always lay just two eggs, and they're also not the best when it comes to nest building. While other, more meticulous birds often spend several days to as long as two weeks building their nest, mourning doves will throw their haphazard platform of sticks together in a few hours or a single morning. And, they pick the most inconvenient spots, such as potted plants, hanging plants, planters, and any dish-shaped objects that they can drop their minimal brush into. Apparently, mourning doves are notorious in the bird world for being the worst nest builders. However, mourning doves are clearly resourceful at using human products to minimize their workload.

Needless to say, we didn't use our backdoor for about a month. The incubation period for mourning doves is about two weeks and the nesting period once the babies are hatched is about 12-15 days.

Oh, one more thing I learned this summer. They'll nest up to six times in a single year. Luckily we waited for the first of the family to fly our planter coop before we moved it to a more ideal location that meant we could use our kitchen-exit. However, another planter was taken over by what I can only assume to be the same pair of mourning doves. It sometimes seems like they have no spatial awareness. And after that brood was done, they moved onto the spotlight above my next door neighbor's front door.

So amongst a sort of post-pandemic, but really not-so-normal Summer of 2021, like many of you I am sure, I delved deep into the curiosities of nature and tried to really enjoy my home and surroundings. In doing so, I ended up hosting an expanding flock, learning more than I intended to about mourning doves, and thoroughly enjoying the beautiful and oftentimes breathtaking - but sometimes bonkers - wonders of nature. I hope you did the same during your summer months and I wish you a fabulous fall foliage season.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

October Program
October 13th
7PM via Zoom

"Wake Me Up Before You Dodo"



Description: Some ecologists say that Earth has entered a sixth mass extinction event. Many bird species are currently imperiled by climate change and human actions. Dr. Coby Klein teaches ecology at Baruch College and will guide us through a discussion of why birds become extinct by probing some recent extinctions of North American birds and help us learn what we can do to prevent future ornithological disasters."

Dr. Coby Klein is a researcher focused in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from The Graduate Center, City University of New York and an adjunct professor at Baruch College. A HOBAS director for several years, Dr. Klein is a birder, bird bander, bird researcher, and general all around bird enthusiast.

Registration Link:

<http://bit.ly/HOBASOctober2021>



November Program:
November 10th
7PM via Zoom

"Inside the Mind of a Whale"

Description: Do dolphins have names? Do whales use tools? What do we know about the capacity of whales' brains? Join us for a fascinating talk by Nomi

Dayan, Executive Director of the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum about some of the most complex species on the planet. Marvel at the depth that sets whale behavior apart, including sophisticated memory skills, advanced societal structures, and unique dialects. Find out what researchers have uncovered about whales' thinking and their amazing behaviors in the wild.

Nomi Dayan has a Master's degree in Museum Education from Bank Street College. As Executive Director of the CSH Whaling Museum, she uses her personal interests in the wonders of the world to drive her work at the museum, which she's been a part of since 2008.

Registration Link:

<http://bit.ly/HOBASNovember2021>

Please visit our website & social media for updates & additions to field trips & programs!

Photos from McGill Library & Jorge Vasconez



The Goldfinch to the Sunflower

Written and photographed by Alexandra Martinez



"What affinity is it brings the goldfinch to the sunflower - both yellow - to pick its seeds?" This question, once posed by none other than naturalist, philosopher, and writer Henry David Thoreau, was one I asked myself last summer as I witnessed the miracle of nature in live action. I found myself to be quite

Thoreau-esque

as I sat in my backyard, poised and hidden with a Nikon zoom lens trying to capture a goldfinch feasting on my sunflower, and reflecting upon living amongst such natural beauty.

So, what is beyond this natural liking that goldfinches have to sunflowers? I have lived in my bungalow in Huntington Beach for four years. Each year, we take hold of our earth and plant a few more flowers, experiment with a few new flora, adding flowers and greenery to the landscape. It wasn't until last summer that I grew my first sunflowers. And it wasn't until last summer that I spotted the first goldfinches in my yard. At first, my friend noticed the canary-like-creature atop a string of lights. The bright yellow feathers were noticeable from far away. Next came the twitters and warbles. Some say it sounds like the American Goldfinch is saying po-ta-to-chip with a very even cadence. Regardless of how you interpret its unique song, once you know the song of a goldfinch you'll be able to recognize it anywhere. And once I heard their song, I couldn't stop hearing it. And once I grew those mammoth sunflowers, I didn't stop seeing those fast flecks of yellow float freely through in, up, and out of my yard.

Many birders swear that the yellow flowers are what attracts the yellow bird. It doesn't seem as if there is a clear verdict on if this is the case, perhaps it is as simple as familiarity (yellow) breeds enjoyment (deliciousness)? Or perhaps, it's that they prefer the black oil sunflower seeds that offer more nutrition and calories for the birds? Goldfinches and I share something in common; we are vegetarians! Goldfinches are apparently amongst the strictest of vegetarians in the bird world; they have an entire vegetarian diet and will only accidentally swallow the occasional insect. In fact, their seed based diet can be considered vegan!

So what affinity is it that brings the goldfinch to the sunflower? Perhaps we need to be okay with the uncertain answer, but rather simply enjoy these acrobats of the air as they feast on their favorite color-coordinated fauna. Do yourself a favor, plant some sunflowers in your yard next spring.

Passenger Pigeons and Chestnut Trees

By Julie Sullivan

In 1980 when we bought our house, situated on a densely wooded hillside in Centerport, I discovered a young American chestnut tree with a pink lady slipper orchid growing beneath. Could this tree be the one that survived the chestnut blight? Well, it did survive long enough to produce nuts, many of which I sent to SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF). There the nuts were used for crossbreeding with other partially blight-resistant trees, or to be genetically modified to resist the blight fungus, then pass this trait to future generations.

This past spring I came across a 15-foot tall chestnut sapling downhill from the original tree, plus another sapling further away where I had planted one of the burs. A few weeks later, I found other young trees growing in Nassau County on a similar sand and gravel hillside of mostly white and red oaks, along with pink lady slippers, plus hillside blueberries and pitch pines. That got me wondering how many other American chestnut trees are extant on Long Island where blight resistance could slowly evolve – with or without genetic assistance - for the trees to live long enough to produce viable nuts as mine did.

The story goes that blight, or chestnut bark disease, was brought to America in the early 1900s on an Asian chestnut import that spread this fungus to approximately 4 billion American chestnut trees in the mid-Atlantic zone.¹ Prior to that event, American chestnut was a dominant keystone species, roughly 25% of all the trees from Maine to Mississippi - supporting all forms of wildlife, especially billions of passenger pigeons along their migration route. It is believed these birds depended on the huge mixed hardwood forests for their spring nesting sites and winter "roosts," but mainly for food, which included huge annual masts of chestnuts.² Around the turn of the century, billions of these magnificent birds (having evolved about 4 million years ago,³ and about 85 million years ago for the prolific chestnut trees⁴) were extinct, or nearly so, within 10 years due to actions of the modern human species, which evolved only about 50,000 years ago.

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) Board Member, Dr. William Lord's article, "Chestnuts and Wildlife," from the *Journal of The American Chestnut Foundation, Volume 13 Issue 2*, states that because the chestnut tree flowers in late June and early July, safely beyond the last frost, as opposed to oaks that flower in May and early June, their nuts are a more reliable food for not only passenger pigeons but ruffed grouse, wild turkey, and other nut consuming birds. Furthermore, Dr. Lord writes: "But of equal importance to its dependability is the nutrition obtained from the chestnut compared to the acorn and beechnut. All are excellent sources of carbohydrate, but the chestnut is highest in digestible protein. Combine this with the amazing abundance of the nut crop, and you have a food source beyond compare....Biologists believe that the carrying capacity of the eastern deciduous forest would increase if the American chestnut were ever to recover."⁵

While it's unlikely we'll ever see a live passenger pigeon, we can save the American chestnut tree to feed other birds, possibly even the closely related mourning dove. But like the pigeon, it is also hunted. More mourning doves are shot than the combined sum of wild turkey and every species of duck and goose.⁶

What other non-native diseases or insects can kill North American trees that birds and other wildlife depend on? The emerald ash borer was unwillingly introduced from overseas, most likely in packing crates. While this beetle has killed tens of millions of ash trees since its arrival in the 1980s, it may well kill up to eight billion, wiping out the entire species.⁷ And then there's the Bradford pear tree, a cultivar that reverts back to China's Callery pear tree, which grows explosively to out-compete forests of native trees. Will a disease borne by a Kousa dogwood (known as Japanese dogwood) kill Florida dogwoods, since Florida dogwoods are susceptible to air and soil borne fungi that Kousa are not? Why chance it at all? All I can say is: **Plant Only Natives!**

What else can you do? Keep an eye out for chestnut trees on well-drained wooded slopes in parks or at/near your home. If you discover one, go to The American Chestnut Foundation in partnership with SUNY-ESF, at <https://acf.org/resources/identification/> Once approved, modified American chestnut seedlings will be distributed to breed in locations where live chestnut trees already exist.

A must read: Susan Freinkel describes the beguiling era of *Castanea dentata* in her epic book, *American Chestnut: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree*.

Scan the QR Code with your Camera App for access to the references/resources used in this article:



The large, narrow, hairless, coarse-toothed leaves resemble chinquapin and chestnut oaks, but are edged with barbed hooked teeth.

Meet the New Monarchs: Victoria and Albert

By Sonia Garrido

A few years ago, through our HOBAS native plant sale, I purchased my first native plants. We had just moved to our house and our backyard did not have any natives, just the ornamental annuals. I am not much of a gardener, so when I found out that in addition to being extremely beneficial to wildlife, natives are perennial that don't need to be planted every year and are not fussy, I was sold! Fast forward to 2021, and through the partnership with ReWild Long Island, HOBAS hosted another native plant sale where I purchased Butterfly Weed, Common Milkweed and a couple of other beautiful native plants.

This spring, just like everyone else on the island, we had a new patio installed, which gave us the chance to rethink the garden. The new natives that we had purchased found their new home around the new patio. The plants kept growing this summer and they finally flowered and many small and large insects buzzed their way to the plants.

We were surprised when some days ago, we discovered a bright green "cocoon" with golden dots hanging on the vinyl siding. Who would have thought, it was a Monarch butterfly chrysalis! Tori, (short for Victoria, a "monarch", get it?) had made residence on the side of our house. Hopefully in a few days she will emerge as a beautiful butterfly. And, because there is no Victoria without the prince consort, I am proud to introduce to you, Albert. He is the largest of the set of caterpillars that now live in the Butterfly Weed and Common Milkweed. Judging by his size and voracious appetite, it looks like Albert is almost ready to pupate, so maybe soon we'll have two monarchs flying around!



Albert the caterpillar enjoying some delicious Butterfly Weed.

In my small corner of Huntington, trees and wildlife habitats do not abound. By making my yard a bit more wildlife-friendly, its presence has increased exponentially, giving us so many joys this summer. From the birds coming to my feeders and bird bath--including a Baltimore Oriole sighting-- to feisty chipmunks frolicking around and beautiful Monarch butterflies visiting the flowers, watching wildlife has been a welcome reprieve from the stressors of work and pandemic life. I am sure many of you can relate to this experience and can agree that there is nothing better than the natural world.

Successful Summer Scholarships 2021!

By Simone DaRos

Thank you to all those members who generously contributed towards the successful summer scholarship appeal this year. With the past Covid-19 restrictions being somewhat loosened, youngsters this summer were able to attend week-long, in-person summer camp sessions. With **your** support, HOBAS provided four summer scholarships to students in-need. These scholarship recipients attended environmental-based, hands-on summer camp at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center (TRSAC) and the Sea Explorers Marine Camp at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

At TRSAC, campers at the Summer Sanctuary Adventures (SSA) program were guided through interactive explorations at the nation's first National Audubon Society's songbird sanctuary. Instructors led students through woodland trails, along ponds, and in native plant gardens. Campers were engaged in activities exploring plant and animal biodiversity and habitats while having fun engaging with experiential environmental learning. The campers also enjoyed building friendships amongst their peers and with the SSA staff and volunteers. At the Sea Explorers Marine Camp, instructors guided students through interactive-learning to discover aspects of the marine environment. Campers examined animals up close and personal inside touch tanks, participated in beach activities and games, and created related crafts.

The gift of giving enriching summer learning experiences to youngsters in-need is a powerful way of making a lasting difference in students' lives. HOBAS looks forward to continuing our outreach in awarding summer scholarships to deserving youngsters. Scholarship donations in any amount are deeply appreciated and may be sent to HOBAS P.O. Box 735, Huntington, NY 11743.



Elijah Hayes on the Yankee III Marine Biology Voyage and Tarenschi Remy (2nd from left) building Sand Sculptures, both with the Sports Fishing Education Center at the Cedar Beach Marina.

Summer Scholarship Fund			
Suggested Donations			
___ \$25.00	___ \$50.00	___ \$100.00	___ Other Amount
<i>Summer scholarship donations may be mailed to Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society</i>			
<i>P.O. Box 735, Huntington, N.Y. 11743.</i>			



Annual BIRD SEED FUNDRAISER

October 30th, 2021 10am-4pm

Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon

Early Bird pick up: Wednesday Oct 27th- Friday Oct 29th 10am-6pm

Wild Birds Unlimited, 625 Jericho Turnpike, Syosset 11791 (516)-226-1780

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

e-mail _____

Qty	Description	Price Per Unit	Total Price
	20 lb No Mess Blend	46.00	
	20 lb Deluxe Blend	30.00	
	20 lb Black Oil Sunflower	30.00	
	40 lb Black Oil Sunflower	56.00	
	20 lb Whole Sunflower Kernels	50.00	
	20 lb Safflower Seed	36.00	
	20 lb Nyjer (thistle) seed	45.00	
	10 lb Nyjer (thistle) seed	27.00	
	20 lb Finch Blend	45.00	
	10 lb Finch Blend	27.00	
	20 lb Shelled Peanut Splits	45.00	
	10 lb Shelled Peanut Splits	27.00	
	Case (12) of 11.75oz Naturally Nuts Suet	30.00	
	Case (12) of 11.75oz Nuts/ Berries Suet Cakes	36.00	
	Subtotal		
	<i>Seniors 10% discount</i>		
	<i>Additional contribution</i>		
	Grand Total		



To download additional order forms and for more information about our events and programs, visit us at www.hobaudubon.org

Thank you for supporting us!

Proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon's conservation and education initiatives.

Please circle day you plan to pick up your order:

Wednesday, October 27th

Thursday, October 28th

Friday, October 29th

Saturday, October 30th

Orders must be received by Saturday, Oct 16, 2019

RETAIN FOR YOUR RECORDS - PLEASE RECORD ORDER ON BACK OF THIS SLIP

Please pick up your birdseed order in Wild Birds Unlimited of Syosset. Your birdseed will be transferred to your vehicle by our staff and volunteers. **Seed not picked up by 4pm Oct 30th will be donated.** Extra seed, as well as gift items and bird feeding supplies can be found in store. **If using GPS, enter 625 Jericho Turnpike, Syosset for directions.** Please make check payment by Oct 16th, 2021 payable to Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society. Mail to:

HOBAS Bird Seed Sale

PO Box 735

Huntington, NY 11743

Please contact Michael Frank, HOBAS Treasurer, at (631) 252-1082 should you have any questions.

Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon - Annual Bird Seed Fundraiser

Seed Descriptions:

- **No Mess Blend**– A high-quality, no-waste mix without shells. Contains 65% medium sunflower chips, 15% diced/chopped/small peanut pieces, 10% hulled white millet. Will attract most winter feeder birds including nuthatches, woodpeckers, cardinals, juncos, white throat sparrows and titmice.
- **Deluxe Blend** – A combination of high-oil content seeds with shells. 63% black oil sunflower, 25% white millet, 10% safflower, 2% striped sunflower. attracts a large variety of birds.
- **Black Oil Sunflower** – A favorite of almost all seed-eating birds, your feathered friends will happily fill up on this high fat seed.
- **Shelled Sunflower** – Whole sunflower seed kernels. No shells, **no waste**. An excellent feed. Everyone loves this.
- **Safflower Seed** – The cardinal’s choice! Glossy white seeds are the **favorite food of cardinals**. Also eaten by chickadees, finches, and doves. Ignored by squirrels, starlings, and blackbirds. An excellent seed for year-round feeding.
- **Nyjer (Thistle) Seed** – Tiny black seeds for goldfinches and pine siskins. Nyjer must be placed in a special feeder with tiny holes. Nyjer is ignored by squirrels and starlings. Use your Nyjer feeder year-round.
- **Finch Blend:** A 50/50 mix of Nyjer and fine sunflower chips, which helps attract even more birds to your finch feeder such as chickadees and downy woodpeckers.
- **Shelled Peanut Splits** – Peanuts are the best single source of protein and fat for birds and a great addition to the choices you offer in your yard. Woodpeckers, nuthatches, blue jays, tufted titmice and chickadees love this!
- **Suet Cakes** – Each 11.75oz cake fits in a wire suet cage. High protein and fat content with no waste, no fillers and real fruit! Woodpeckers love suet and so do other birds!

Reminder - All orders due by Saturday, October 16th, 2021. Thank you for your continued support!

Note About Unidentified Songbird Illness:

This summer, an unknown illness began affecting young songbirds in states to the south and west of New York. Per NY’s Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), to date there is no evidence of bird mortality in New York due to this illness and has not officially recommended removing bird feeders and baths. As the disease begins to decline elsewhere, the DEC anticipates it will not become a factor affecting birds in the state.

It is always a good idea to keep feeders clean by following these steps:

1. Clean feeders and bird baths with soap and water at least once a week, then disinfect with a 10% bleach solution to prevent potential infectious disease spread between birds and other wildlife.
2. After cleaning, rinse well with water and allow to air-dry.
3. When handling bird feeders and baths be sure to wear disposable gloves and wash your hands when finished.
4. Keep pets away from sick or dead birds as a standard precaution.
5. To dispose of dead birds, place them in a sealable plastic bag and discard with household trash. This will prevent disease transmission to other birds and wildlife.

Source: NY Audubon

For Customer Use: Record your order here.

Qty	Description	Total
	20 lb No Mess LM Blend	
	20 lb Deluxe Blend	
	20 lb Black Oil Sunflower	
	40 lb Black Oil Sunflower	
	20 lb Shelled Sunflower	
	20 lb Safflower Seed	
	20 lb Nyjer (thistle) Seed	
	10 lb Nyjer (thistle) Seed	

	10 lb Peanut Splits	
	Case (12) Naturally Nuts Suet	
	Case (12) Nuts & Berries Suet	

Customer Reminder

Please circle the day you plan to pick up your order

Wednesday, October 27 th	Thursday, October 28 th
Friday, October 29 th	Saturday, October 30 th