

# The Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Newsletter

Winter 2016-2017  
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## The State of the Birds 2016

Brendan Fogarty

This year a team of researchers carefully assessed the conservation status of all the native bird species from the high **Canadian Arctic to tropical Mexico**. They called their compilation the State of the Birds, and it is an important lens through which to see the importance of conservation work.

Only 14% of the 1,154 species surveyed met the threshold for low conservation priority. 37% of the surveyed birds, a total of **432 species**, are in need of urgent protection, or they risk extinction in the coming decades. These species define the Watch List. The remaining 49% fall in the middle of spectrum, threatened and in need of eventual protection.

The birds in most danger are not random species; there are observable trends that show that certain communities face greater risk than others. The generalist species, which can thrive in multiple habitats, are being rewarded for their evolutionary strategy, with only 1% of species in critical danger. Canada's wetlands, tundra, and boreal forest harbor mostly moderate concern species, but 20% are on the Watch List. Aridlands and grasslands have nearly a third of their species on the Watch List and very few low concern species. These open spaces are readily and recklessly converted into homes and farms, and must be conserved fast. Policy has promoted a peaceful coexistence between farmers and bird habitat.

**State of the Birds shows us that the greatest concern lies where it is wet.** 37% of the 164 species in coastal areas, 56% of the 478 tropical forest species, and 57% of 54 oceanic species are on the Watch List. Equally concerning is that no oceanic species qualified for low-concern status. Seabirds are beset by human fishing competition and edible-seeming trash while at sea, and introduced predators when they return to their localized and vulnerable island homes. Tropical forests suffer from endless fragmentation as people find personal uses for land, even in the most remote and mountainous areas...*(continued on back page)*

### Don't Miss Out!

Beginning with our Summer 2017 issue we will no longer send a hard copy of our newsletter unless requested.

We are making the switch to an electronic newsletter to cut down on costs and put your membership and donor dollars to better use in order to make a more direct conservation impact.

If you would still like to receive a hardcopy of the newsletter, please call us at **516-695-0763**.

If we do not have your current email address, please either sign up on our website or send your full name and email address to **[hobaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:hobaudubon@gmail.com)**

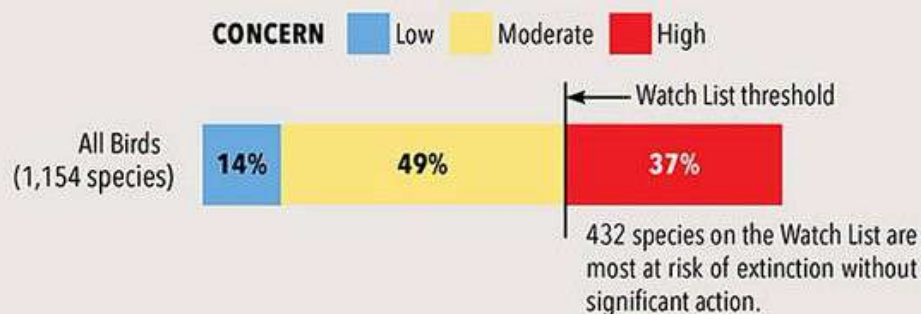
Thank you for understanding the need to put funds where they will have the most impact as it pertains to our mission of protecting wildlife and preserving habitat!

### About our cover bird:

The cheerful black-capped chickadee is one of the most familiar backyard birds and universally loved for its curious nature and, we'll just come out with it, cuteness.

These social birds live in flocks, often associating with woodpeckers, nuthatches, warblers, vireos, and other small woodland species. Attract them to your feeder with sunflower seeds and shelled peanuts.

## ONE-THIRD OF ALL NORTH AMERICAN BIRD SPECIES NEED URGENT CONSERVATION ACTION



## Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society, Inc.

*The mission of Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon is to protect wildlife and preserve habitat through conservation action, advocacy and education.*

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## President's Message



It's been awhile since you have heard from us, and that is because we have been undergoing some exciting changes. First, we are updating the look and content of our newsletter. It is still in transition, and we hope you like the changes. Speaking of the newsletter, after much discussion it has been determined that the amount of money we spend on publishing hard copies could be better spent on direct conservation work as a way to better leverage our donors' dollars. With that in mind, in mid 2017 we will be transitioning to an all digital newsletter although you will still be able to receive a hard copy by special request.

In this issue you will learn a bit about National Audubon's Strategic Plan. Since I became Chapter President in 2007, my focus has always been conservation initiatives, which makes our alignment with National Audubon's Strategic Goals a very easy adjustment for us. You will also hear the latest about our efforts at Underhill Preserve as well as a summary of the 2016 State of the Birds.

I would also like to give a huge thank you to Henry Schein, Inc., Target and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Each year Target sends volunteers to our Target Rock National Wildlife Refuge Beach Clean up; Henry Schein coordinates an annual Corporate Volunteer Day at Stillwell Woods and the missionaries...well, for three years straight they have attended every single volunteer event we have hosted...over fifty! We could not do what we do without the assistance of all our wonderful volunteers! THANK YOU!



**Membership is just \$20 per year. Please join or renew today to support our conservation, advocacy and educational programs and projects.** Your membership allows us to count your voice as we advocate for wildlife and habitat, including issues on a local, regional, national and global level. **We truly appreciate it and extend our heartfelt thanks!**

Membership \$20 \_\_\_\_\_

To further my conservation impact, I wish to make an additional donation of \_\_\_\_\_

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Would you like to receive alerts and notices? email \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out this form and mail with your check to:  
**Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon, PO Box 735, Huntington, New York 11743**

## **New York State Audubon Council Meeting** **Brendan Fogarty**

Over Halloween weekend, Audubon leaders from all over New York State met in our own backyard - Plainview- for the Fall 2016 New York State Audubon Council Meeting. New York State Audubon chapters meet twice yearly for these Council Meetings, which are held in Saratoga Springs each spring and various state locations in the fall. These meetings are a vital means to connect New York staff and chapter leaders in order to share ideas and resources, be educated on important issues and facilitate our work so that it aligns with National Audubon's strategic goals. I was fortunate enough for my first chance as a new board member to attend the lectures and workshops. With so many issues to cover, it is hardly surprising that every minute of the weekend was put to use. Between Friday night and Sunday morning I spent nearly 20 hours networking, brainstorming, and even birding with some conservation champions.

In the evenings we had presentations that showed the best of Long Island to the upstate contingent from two of our most influential naturalists: John Turner and Don Riepe. On Friday night, Don spoke about Jamaica Bay and the challenges faced after Hurricane Sandy while John illustrated the natural beauty of the flora and fauna of Long Island on Saturday night. Additionally, our own Stella Miller spoke about her efforts to preserve Plum Island off Orient Point as a co-founder of the Preserve Plum Island Coalition with John Turner and HOBAS. The takeaway from the various presentations was that Long Island has an incredible amount of natural integrity despite suburban sprawl and that slow but sure progress can be seen in projects such as the Jamaica Bay restoration and the legal battle over Plum Island.

By chances, two of the topics were especially meaningful to me. The first was Audubon's efforts in preserving our beach-nesting birds, such as Piping Plovers. Many of my baby photos were taken at the beach and I worked for the hard-working beach stewards on the Town of Hempstead beaches for two summers. I was given the chance to pitch and evaluate ideas of how to step-up Audubon's rising Be a Good Egg Program (which now has brochures in Spanish - sea un huevo bueno!).

The second topic was renewable energy, which was the focus of my Master's project last year. Wind turbines produce energy without a direct carbon dioxide byproduct, but the kinetic energy they extract from the air is the same that guides airborne birds.

Despite the obvious benefits, the new interest in wind farms offshore of Long Island comes with a significant risk to birdlife. As such, Audubon needs to be involved with planning these projects as much as it can. Several speakers shared their experiences with past wind projects and shared strategies for staying in the planning loop.

The content of the council meeting was great, but so were the people. Every chapter tackles their own local issues, but there is much common ground that springs great conversations. It doesn't hurt to be ahead of the pack either - our chapter received numerous shout outs for our accomplishments throughout the weekend. Perhaps the easiest to see was our youth involvement... I was the youngest of all attendees! I felt lucky to attend the meeting, but luckier to be part of such an active and respected chapter.

## **Goats for Birds at Underhill Preserve**

**Stella Miller**



In late 2013-early 2014 Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society was the recipient of a \$39K grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to begin a habitat restoration project, in partnership with the New York

State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), at Underhill Preserve, located in Jericho.

It took awhile to move things along, but we are thrilled to announce that from August through late October of this year we hosted a herd of 14 goats in the state owned upper grassland parcel. The goats did a phenomenal job, munching their way through a six-acre grassland area, demolishing multiflora rose, autumn olive and cherry trees.

As you may know, we began lobbying for a management plan in the preserve several years ago and are thrilled that action is being taken. Invasive species such as autumn olive, multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, mile-a-minute, porcelain berry, garlic mustard and others have invaded the fields, woods, and trails. The funds from the grant are designated for the grassland and shrubland areas of the preserve, which are owned by the DEC, in order to restore and create viable habitat for birds and pollinators.

...continued on page 5

## Programs and Field Trips-Winter 2016-2017

Nature programs, field trips and activities are open to members and nonmembers alike. Programs, unless otherwise specified, are held at the Cold Spring Harbor Library. Refreshments begin at 7:00 and the speaker starts at 7:30, unless otherwise noted. Registration is not required.

We invite you to join us on a field trip! Newcomers are welcome. 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. Call the leader if in doubt about the weather. Don't forget to bring binoculars and proper clothing and shoes! For the comfort and safety of all participants, please refrain from wearing perfume or smoking on field trips.

### DECEMBER

#### Sunday, December 4, 9 AM Jones Beach

Who says beach going is a summertime activity? There is no better place to be birding than the barrier beaches in late fall. We'll look for flashy ducks, rare gulls, roosting owls, surprise migrant songbirds, Snow Buntings, longspurs, and seals. **Leaders:** Brendan Fogarty and Stella Miller

**Registration:** 516-782-0293

**Directions:** take the Meadowbrook south and take exit for the West End, heading west. Continue past the little toll-booth (no charge!) for a half mile and make a right toward the Coast Guard Station. Shortly make another right and park by the restrooms.

Registration is a must as group size is limited to 15.

#### Wednesday, December 14, Nature Program Falconry, an Ancient But Not Forgotten Sport

Falconry is the sport of hunting with the use of a trained bird of prey. This ancient sport dates back nearly 4,000 years ago. Greatly popular in Europe during medieval times, falconry was a favorite past time and a status symbol of the upper classes, and the practice maintained its popularity until somewhere around the French Revolution. Some famous falconers in history include Empress Catherine of Russian, Mary, Queen of Scots (proving that falconry was just as much a ladies sport as a man's!), King Henry VIII, Pope Leo X and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen.

Nature photographer and falconer Chris Paparo will discuss the history, techniques, types of birds used and other topics as well as the process to become a falconer. At the end of the talk, attendees will meet Chris' red-tailed hawk, Emmy.

### JANUARY

#### Monday, January 2 8AM Montauk State Park

January 2 is a federal holiday and most folks will have the day off! Join us today as we search for wintering waterfowl, and get a head start on our year lists with whatever other birds we can find! **Leaders:** Brent Bomkamp and Stella Miller

**Registration:** 516-695-0763 or hobaudbon@gmail.com

**Directions:** LIE to exit 70, Manorville. Go south on Route 111 to Route 27. Take Route 27 east all the way to Montauk Point Lighthouse. There may be a parking fee. Meet by the restaurant opposite the parking lot.

#### Wednesday, January 11, Documentary Night

Documentary night is turning into one of our most popular programs! Tonight we will enjoy the documentary, "Magic of the Snowy Owl" as filmmakers take us deep into the snowy owl's tundra home on the North Slope of Alaska to observe the daily struggles involved in raising a family of helpless owlets until they are able to fly.

#### Sunday, January 15, 9am Capri Lake and Captree State Park

An assortment of winter waterfowl and maybe even some monk parakeets should be found at this little known hot spot in West Islip. Later, a short drive to Captree to see what winter visitors await in the State Park. **Leader:** Blair Broughton.

**Registration:** 631-885-1881 or aveblue@gmail.com

**Directions:** Take either Robert Moses Parkway or 231 south to Montauk Highway. Capri Lake is about a mile west of Robert Moses or a mile east of 231. We will meet in a small office parking lot on the northwest corner of Montauk Highway and Barberry Road

#### Saturday, January 21, 8am Pelham Bay Park Owl Prowl - Joint Trip with Hudson River Audubon

More than three times the size of Manhattan's Central Park, Pelham Bay Park is the City's largest park property. Visitors to the park enjoy miles of bridle paths and hiking trails, Orchard Beach, the Bartow-Pell Mansion, and a breathtaking 13-mile saltwater shoreline that hugs Long Island Sound. Today we will join up with our friends at Hudson River Audubon to look for resident and visiting wintering owls, as well as waterfowl and late migrants. **Leaders:** Stella Miller, Brendan Fogarty and Michael Bochnik. **Registration:** 516-695-0763 or hobaudbon@gmail.com

**Directions:** Hutchinson River Parkway to the Pelham Bay Park/City Island/Orchard Beach exit. Continue east farther into the park past the traffic circle then veering left to the parking area on Hunters Island. Meet the group there.

### FEBRUARY

#### Wednesday, February 8, Nature Program Woodpeckers, Head Bangers of the Avian World

How many times have you looked out your window at a woodpecker and wondered to yourself, "How the heck do they do that without giving themselves a concussion?" Tonight, that question and others will be answered as lifelong birder and HOBAS board member Brendan Fogarty discusses the natural history of this beautiful family of birds.

### MARCH

#### Wednesday, March 8, Nature Program Plant it and They Will Come-Landscaping for Birds

Attracting birds to your landscape requires an ecological approach. Learn the best landscaping techniques and native plants that provide the food, shelter and nesting sites, which these birds depend upon. The bonus is a beautiful landscape with a vastly improved ecosystem that benefits many living creatures. Kim Eierman is the Founder of EcoBeneficial!, a horticulture consulting and communications company, dedicated to improving our environment by promoting ecological landscaping and the use of native plants.



**CONSERVATION**

At the heart of Audubon’s work are programs that drive full-lifecycle conservation for birds throughout the Americas. This is organized around five highly scalable core strategic priorities:

**Climate Change:** Our work focuses on actions that reduce the impact of climate change on birds and protect the habitats they will need to survive in a changing climate.

**Seas and Shores:** Audubon works across the coasts of the Americas to ensure healthy habitats for sea- and shorebirds on beaches and islands, estuaries and salt marshes, coastal waters, and marine ecosystems.

**Working Lands:** Audubon works with policy leaders and landowners and managers to influence land management to support a sustainable future for birds while maintaining the economic productivity of the land.

**Water:** Audubon is bringing its historic focus on fresh water together under a single strategy built on unique regional needs. Key target areas include the Colorado River and Delta, the Salton Sea, the Everglades, the Mississippi, and the Great Lakes.

**Bird-Friendly Communities:** This is the local face of the Audubon network’s conservation work, connecting supporters with community, state, flyway, and national opportunities to enjoy birds and to take meaningful conservation action to protect them.

**THE NETWORK**

We partner with the most effective conservation network in America to extend the reach and scale of our impact.

**SCIENCE**

We expand the body of bird knowledge to support the development of our programs and to inform and evaluate the work of Audubon and our partners.

**ENGAGEMENT**

We build durable public will to drive impact and accelerate the pace of change.

Before starting your garden next spring, check out Audubon’s new native plant database!  
[www.audubon.org/native-plants](http://www.audubon.org/native-plants)

**Goats for Birds, continued from page 3**

Over 100 bird, 200 insect and 300 plant species have been documented at Underhill, making the preserve a critical ecological resource and worthy of restoration. The goats were brought down from Rhinebeck, courtesy of Green Goats, and were not only hard working, they were quite adorable. I was lucky enough to wrangle the job of “goat herder” and visited them each day during their stay. Many, many thanks to a homeowner, who would like to stay anonymous, for granting us access through his property to check on the goats. He literally took a part of his fence down so that we didn’t have to bushwack our way through thorny walls of vegetation!

The goats were so successful in their endeavors that we have already booked their return in the spring to eat the regrowth that crops up. We are not naïve. We realize that the preserve stood untended for too many years and we just do not have the resources to restore it back to its original state. What we are hoping for is to give it back some of its dignity by restoring sections of it that will continue to provide viable habitat for birds and other wildlife. Stay tuned for more restoration news at Underhill!



**OTHER UPDATES:**

We are working with a real estate developer to incorporate more wildlife friendly features into a **proposed assisted living facility** which abuts Underhill Preserve. We wrote and submitted a proposal which outlined why it is important to develop bird friendly communities, the benefits to developers, with specifics to the project. Several discussions have ensued and as of this writing, the developers have pledged to install screened windows to prevent collisions, incorporate wildlife friendly lighting and have incorporated 29 (out of 34) native plants into the landscaping plan.

This year we observed 59 monarch caterpillars, a fledgling savannah sparrow, a flock of bobolinks, eastern meadowlarks and a common snipe at our **Stillwell Woods grassland restoration site**. In August, we hosted a group of almost 150 volunteers and in September hosted a Corporate Day with Henry Schein, Inc. Volunteers continue to pull mugwort, Asian bittersweet and porcelain berry. Little bluestem and various species of goldenrod seed were spread in the field this fall.



Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon  
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### Long Island Natural History Conference

We are a proud sponsor of the Long Island Natural History Conference. Join us on March 24-25, 2017. For information visit [longislandnature.org](http://longislandnature.org)

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### (STATE OF THE BIRDS *continued from page 1*)

The bottom line of the State of the Birds is not good news, but neither should it be shocking or hopeless. It is no secret that many species are in need of rapid conservation action. This is a founding tenet of the Audubon Society. However, with this closer look into the conservation needs of North America's birds, we are informed and can better prioritize our efforts. As Long Islanders, we are blessed with living near important coastal habitats and an important migratory flyway. We must be conscious consumers, proactive neighbors, and advocates for the conservation issues which all too often get put on the back burner behind other matters. The State of the Birds shows us that the one thing we do not have is the time to wait; we must act now. For more information visit [www.stateofthebirds.org/2016/](http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2016/)

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## Join Us For The Biggest Citizen Science Project in the World!

### Northern Nassau Christmas Bird Count

**December 17, 2016**



The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of citizen science involvement. It is conducted between December 14th and January 5th and is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the US, Canada and many countries in the Western Hemisphere, go out over a 24 hour period on one calendar day to count birds. If you can't spend the whole day, come for part of it. After a day in the field, a compilation supper will be held at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay. Come enjoy some good food, the camaraderie of your fellow birders, and hear the results of each group's count. There are always some interesting surprises.



If you are interested in joining a team, please call (516) 784 7332

*Pictured above, teams from years past*