



# The Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society Newsletter

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

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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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## Newsletter

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## A Letter from the Editor

By Alexandra Martinez

It's spring and summer is almost here! I've had conversations with multiple friends and coworkers who have told me they see the "light at the end of the tunnel" now that the birds are singing, the flowers are growing, and the sun is shining! In this pseudo-pandemic lifestyle that we are currently still leading, it's a great time to get outside and enjoy the glorious sun that *feels like years since it's been here!*



April 26th is National Audubon Day! And did you know that we have Long Islander Betty Allen to thank our very own Audubon, the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society! Betty Allen (1914-1986), nicknamed "the Bird Lady of Centerport," was an environmental and community activist who donated her time to many charitable causes. Betty Allen was both a founder and a charter member of the Huntington Audubon Society (now known as HOBAS) which aims to protect wildlife and preserve natural habitats. Both a bird lover and a local civic crusader, upon her death in 1986, Twin Ponds South (owned by the Town of Huntington) was donated in her honor as the Betty Allen Nature Preserve. As a naturalist, birder, and hiker, she is said to have walked regularly in this area which was near her Centerport home. If you have never been to the Betty Allen Nature Preserve, or even if you have, I encourage you to visit the nature park. You'll find family's fishing, couples strolling, and photographers taking in the beautiful scenery. This time of year, it's beautiful to watch the changeover to Spring and Summer in this natural setting.



## Hoo-Dunnit? Officer Hoo-ghuis Did!

By Alexandra Martinez

As a police officer, you just have to accept that each day the community needs will be different and that you never really know what your work day will bring. Well, that was definitely true for my friend, Suffolk County Police Officer, PO Hooghuis, who is owl-ways ready for the job! When a homeowner called the precinct about an injured baby owl, PO Hooghuis swooped in to save the great horned owlet. He was able to contain the owl and rehome it to the comfort of its mother who was watching intently over the scene the entire time. Animal rescue, including wildlife rehabilitators from the Sweet Briar Nature Center, arrived on scene to assist in evaluating the bird.



Photos are credit of the Suffolk County Police Department Twitter page.

The baby owl fell from its nest, but a makeshift nest was made and put as high up in the tree near the original nest as possible, and the family continued nesting finally. If Officer Hooghuis and the team of animal rescue volunteers didn't step in, the owl may not have been saved but rather might have been eaten by another animal. PO Hooghuis later informed me that the very next day he received another call about an owl that was found in Dix Hills; this one was about two weeks younger than the first! Remember, if you encounter local wildlife in need please contact a NYS DEC licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Wildlife rehabilitators give of their own resources and volunteer to assist in the proper care of injured and orphaned wildlife. Here are several great resources:

- NYS Wildlife Rehabilitation Council [nyswrc.org/wildlife-resources/](http://nyswrc.org/wildlife-resources/)
- Volunteers For Wildlife [info@volunteersforwildlife.org](mailto:info@volunteersforwildlife.org) 516-674-0982
- Sweet Briar Nature Center, 631-979-6344

## What are Native Plants?

By Julie Sullivan, Conservation Chair

Our native plants are specific to the north shore of Long Island. These plants, along with our birds, insects, reptiles and mammals, evolved in this habitat from the end of the last ice age thousands of years ago. Lifeforms gradually adapted to each other and continue to slowly evolve. What we see today is a moment in time driven by evolution. Unfortunately, what remains over the next 50 years will be the consequence of anthropomorphic impact.



The photographer is "Northeastatives on Flickr" who took this photo at Carpenter Farm Park. **Red Chokeberry, *Aronia arbutifolia***: Cove for wildlife – nest sites – pollen, nectar and berry producer – food for over-wintering and fall migrant birds, plus 29 species of caterpillars (food required for nestlings) – spring flowers – fall foliage color. Source: *The Living Landscape*, Doug Tallamy and Rick Darke.

Introduced, non-native plants upset the balance of nature, often causing massive extinctions of existing native plants. The ripple effect can be devastating to the birds, insects, reptiles, mammals and humans as well. We identify many of these plants as invasive, most of which are on New York State's Do Not Sell List. So while you won't see many invasive plants for sale in our local garden centers, they may still be available online, and they are spreading now even without our help.

When looking for native plants for birds, ask for the real thing. The common term used is "straight" plants. If they are not straight they might be "cultivars" or "hybrids." Cultivar is an abbreviation of "cultivated variety." Although some cultivars can occur in nature as plant mutations, most are hybrids developed by plant breeders for look, smell, taste, and yield that appeal to humans. And while we're deep in the weeds - there's the term "variety." A variety (Var. notation) or variant is beneath a subspecies, which is a naturally occurring sub-group within a species. A native species on the North Shore may be slightly different from the subspecies on the south shore. (We're all familiar with the term "variant" as in the coronavirus variant.) A cultivar grown for perhaps larger fruit, fast maturity, shelf life or crop yield is a subgroup within a species that occurs in cultivation, such as 'Brandywine' and 'Big Boy' tomato cultivars. Notice the single quote marks around beguiling words. The marks mean "not straight." Why care? The flowers or fruit of a hybrid are often not as suitable or desirable for native birds as are those of straight plants. So when buying plants for birds, steer clear of the single quote marks.

<https://www.betterseed.org/wp-content/uploads/Common-Practices-of-Plant-Breeders-Formatted.docx-2.pdf>

Plants for birds means planting not only native berry producers that native birds eat, but also include plants eaten by soft insects, which birds feed to their chicks. HOBAS printed the following four years ago and it holds true today... "Did you know that it takes up to 9000 caterpillars per season to feed just one clutch of chickadees? Yup, that is what I said...9,000 for ONE little family. Now... think about how many other birds are in your yard... bigger ones... that's a lot of caterpillars! How do you attract caterpillars to your yard? How do you help pollinators such as monarch butterflies? Go native." Need I say more? Yes, more...Native trees such as white oaks and shrubs, including pussy-willows, are the absolute best for caterpillars.

Plants for birds means planting natives for their insects, berries, seeds, shelter and nesting sites for birds; pollen and nectar for pollinators; and nuts for mammals. So first, pick the right plants for your area. On the homepage of my blog are informative links for finding native plants on Long Island: [www.GoNativeLI.com](http://www.GoNativeLI.com).

Native perennial plants grow under all conditions:

Sun & Average Soil	Sun & Wet Soil	Sun & Dry Soil	Part Sun & Average Soil	Shade & Average Soil
Showy Goldenrod	NE Aster	Butterfly Milkweed	Wild Sarsaparilla	Wild Ginger
Showy Aster	Blue Flag Iris	Virginia Bluebells	Mayapple	Woodland Phlox
NE Blazing Star	White Turtlehead	New Jersey Tea	Wild Columbine	Ostrich Fern
Mountain Mint	Blue Vervain	Prairie Smoke	White Wood Aster	Foamflower
Beardtongue	Common Boneset	Solomon's Seal	Bee Balm	Black Cohosh

[https://www.garviespointmuseum.com/imgs/GPM\\_NSAS\\_Plant-descriptions\\_Order-form\\_2021.pdf](https://www.garviespointmuseum.com/imgs/GPM_NSAS_Plant-descriptions_Order-form_2021.pdf)

## The Fate of Single-Use Plastic Containers: Part I

By Julie Sullivan, Conservation Chair

Recently, I visited several beaches in Huntington, where in one hour I filled a 2-gallon pail with beer bottles, plastic balloon ribbons, plastic bags, plus lots of small bits of light blue Styrofoam (expanded polystyrene foam or EPS) at each location. Then I discovered the likely source of the blue EPS: disintegrating and crumbling buoys, possibly old oyster markers. I assume my discovery is not isolated.

I also found many dead and partly eaten Atlantic menhaden. They are the filter feeders of the east coast that would likely ingest microplastics along with plankton. Since menhaden are the forage fish of Long Island's ospreys and eagles, it occurred to me that the micro-plastics could bio-accumulate in the birds through the food chain.

Fortunately, a recent NYS law now bans carry-out plastic bags. However, we must prevent the release of balloons with their plastic ribbons, and work on preventing casually discarded bottles, both plastic and glass. And now we should search for EPS buoys and other flotation devices, which break down to micro-plastics.

When China stopped importing our plastic waste in January 2018, U.S. recycling operations were left without markets. Then, Indonesia, Turkey, India, Malaysia, and Vietnam cut back on their imports. Consequently, over the coming decade as many as 111 million tons of plastic waste worldwide will be generated without any viable means for recycling unless significant changes happen.

According to the Yale School of the Environment, before China's ban, with more than a quarter of the world's waste, only 9% of discarded plastics were recycled while 12% were burned. The rest were buried in landfills or simply dumped and left to wash into rivers and oceans. Plastic debris is now found on the farthest shores of the Earth's oceans, including in the high Arctic, in Antarctica, and at great ocean depths. The discovery of small plastic particles or microplastics, known as nurdles, in the food chain and in drinking water have added to the rising concern.

As Back2Tap presented in their facts regarding bottled water, a significant drawback for recycling is contamination from mixed resins, labels, and dangerous components of plastic. Identified by the chasing arrows imprinted on the bottle or single-use food package:

- #1 PET may be recycled repeatedly, but it is not safe for reuse because of bacteria buildup and contaminants, including the flame retardant antimony trioxide, a possible carcinogen.
- #2 HDPE is suitable for reuse and recycling but can leach nonylphenol, an endocrine disruptor when exposed to sunlight. #3 PVC is one of the least recyclable plastics due to leaching additives, including phthalates, lead, DEHA, ethylene dichloride, vinyl chloride, and dioxins when burned.
- #4 LDPE is not usually recycled, but is suitable for reuse.
- #5 PP is not easily recycled, but is suitable for reuse.
- #6 PS is not economically viable to recycle and can leach harmful styrene.
- #7 Other mixed resins often include polycarbonates that leach BPA, an endocrine disruptor.

[See the Smart Plastics Guide or the "Recycle Numbers on Bottom of Plastics" articles by scanning the QR code with your smartphone camera to get more detailed information on these numbers and their implications for recycling, plus other articles! →](#)



When these plastics enter the ocean environment, their physical and chemical components have a devastating effect on all life forms - especially filter feeders from small krill to whales - and every species in the food web, including humans. This should be a wake-up call to the world to sharply cut down on single-use plastics.

Even if single-use plastic packaging magically ended today, the plastics that already pollute our oceans must still be addressed. This is where consumers can play their part by volunteering with beach cleanups for the sake of shore birds, water birds, fish, and other wildlife.

To better understand the issues, you will want to watch *Plastic Wars*, a PBS FrontLine film on YouTube. Also watch *Bag It* on Curiosity Stream, and *The Story of Plastic* available through Amazon Prime Smile. Then, reserve the book *Plastic Ocean* by Charles Moore to read (eBOOK) or listen (eAUDIO) and other recommended books on Overdrive through your library. Check out these and other stories at Audubon: "Albatrosses feed their chicks with small, floating plastic items in effect, killing 98% of them." and then read about nurdles, "A New Plastic Wave Is Coming To Our Shores." Or, watch the 20 minute CliffNotes version by John Oliver instead (**Warning!** It's not funny!).



The lower disintegrating blue Styrofoam buoy, and foam crumbles or microplastics ingested by fish and birds directly or through the food web. The upper yellow one is a recent Styrofoam buoy with bamboo pole covered in barnacles.

Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon  
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Huntington, NY 11743

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For \$20 a year, you can be a member of the all-volunteer Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society. Your membership directly supports HOBAS' mission to advocate for wildlife and habitat through conservation efforts, educational opportunities, and youth programs. Please join or renew today; HOBAS appreciates your support!

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Including:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 annual chapter only membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Additional Donation

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

## Amazon Smile

*By Michael Frank*

Thank you to all of our members who have started to use Amazon Smile as an easy way to support the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society! Amazon Smile is a simple and cost-free way to show your support for your favorite charity and we appreciate all who have done so already. Instead of logging into amazon.com, please log into smile.amazon.com and choose the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society as your supported charity. You will get the same exact low prices and great selection you normally would from Amazon, but with Amazon Smile for every dollar that you spend on eligible purchases Amazon will donate .5% to us. It is a great, easy way to support the good work at HOBAS!

## Outdoor Field Trips

- **Sterling Forest State Park**, Tuxedo, NY, May 23, 8AM  
WARBLERS, WARBLERS, WARBLERS! Sterling Forest is a magical place, known for its nesting Golden-winged Warblers but there's so much more. Meet at the end of Ironwood Drive in the park. You won't regret it.
- **Makamah Nature Preserve**, Fort Salonga, NY, June 6, 8AM  
Let's take a walk in the woods. Meet at the parking lot along Fort Salonga Rd/25A, just west of Makamah Road.
- **Caumsett State Historic Park**, Lloyd Harbor, NY, July 4, 8AM  
What better way to celebrate our nation's birth than by seeing some of the rarest and most beautiful insects in the area? Caumsett is home to the only known breeding population of Baltimore checkerspot butterflies on Long Island and we'll be looking for them, as well as dozens of other bugs, birds, etc. Meet in the parking lot.
- **Blydenburgh County Park**, Smithtown, NY, August 15, 8AM  
Explore 627 acres of forested hills and valleys at the headwaters of the Nissequogue River. It is one of the least developed and most picturesque spots on Long Island. Our walk will focus on migrating songbirds. Northern Parkway east and merge onto Route 347/454 E (Veterans' Memorial Highway). Park at the boat ramp.

Call Coby Klein at (585) 880-0915 to register in advance for these field trips.



### Summer Solstice Celebration

\*For ages 3-7, accompanied by a caregiver.

Join us as we celebrate the official arrival of summer! We will read a story, make a nature craft and take a walk around to see the signs of summer.

Hecksher Park, Huntington, Saturday, June 19, 2PM  
Rain date: Sunday, June 20, 2PM

### Exploring Nature at the Beach

\*For ages 3-7, accompanied by a parent or caregiver.

Join us for a fun scavenger hunt at the beach! We will explore the tide pools and learn about the animals that call the beach home.

Crab Meadow Beach, Northport, Sunday, July 25, 2PM  
Rain date: Monday, July 26, 2PM

\*Participants must have a Town of Huntington beach sticker on their vehicle in order to enter the parking area.

Call Tess at 631-896-2872 to register in advance for these kids' events.

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HOBAS will adhere to strict guidelines for the health and safety of all participants, including: pre-registration, with field-trip leader is required; group-size is limited to no more than 6 individuals; all participants must sign a waiver; social distancing and mask-wearing will be required; use of hand-sanitizer and hand-washing will be encouraged.*

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS



### May Program

## Planning for Bird-Friendly Cities

May 12, 2021, 7:00PM EST (U.S. and Canada)

From his new book, *The Bird-Friendly City*, Timothy Beatley, PhD, presents new ideas around how cities can reduce dangers to birds and design buildings and urban neighborhoods that make room for biodiversity. On this webinar, Timothy will teach us tangible steps that cities can take on behalf of birds; how urban bird conversation enhances quality of life in cities; how bird conservation fits into the global "Biophilic Cities" movement. In addition, five random attendees will win a free copy of Timothy's book "The Bird-Friendly City." Please help to add your email into the registration form to qualify.

Register in advance for this webinar:

<http://bit.ly/HOBASMay2021>



### June Program

## Birds and Plastic Don't Mix

June 16, 2021, 7:00PM EST (U.S. and Canada)

Erica Cirino has witnessed plastic pollution out in the middle of the oceans where it harms seabirds, whales, and other wildlife. But even when we look around on land, plastic abound - and wildlife is largely paying the costs, in injuries and lives lost. Learn why birds and plastic don't mix, and what you can do to help in this presentation featuring Erica's original photography and research.

Register in advance for this webinar:

<https://bit.ly/HOBASJune2021>



*All programs are virtual until further notice. Sign up for our listserv & view events online ([www.hobaudubon.org/meetings\\_events.asp](http://www.hobaudubon.org/meetings_events.asp)) & follow our social media for virtual programming updates.*



## Summer Youth Scholarships Fundraiser Appeal

By Simone DaRos

The Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society is committed to providing summer youth scholarships to deserving youngsters. Last summer, with the pandemic lockdowns in place, summer camp experiences were limited. More than ever before, HOBAS is eager to continue to provide summer youth scholarships to underserved students in our community. Due to circumstances beyond their control, many underserved children do not have opportunities to **connect with nature**. Offering scholarships to these youngsters allows them to discover a whole new world, one they may not have ever experienced if not given a chance such as this.



Photo Credit: Audubon New York

HOBAS will continue to provide youth scholarships for week-long environmental outdoor educational experiences at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sea Stars Marine Camp and the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center. There, experienced educators and counselors plan hands-on natural science experiences to engage children in learning about plants, animals, and the environment.

By providing opportunities for children to discover and explore the wonders of nature, we hope to foster the next generation of conservationists.



Photo Credit: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk

Young people who grow up spending time in nature are more likely to become strong advocates for the environment. This is critical to ensure the land, water, and wildlife legacy we have worked to conserve continues to benefit future generations. We are seeking **your** support in contributing to the summer 2021 scholarship fund. Consider contributing today to HOBAS' scholarship fund and in helping HOBAS continue its mission, complete the tear-off form below. Thank you in advance for your generosity and thoughtfulness. We are looking forward to awarding summer scholarships to our next generation of conservationists!

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Contact Email:

### Suggested Scholarship Donation Levels:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$350 FULL SCHOLARSHIP

Any amount will be greatly appreciated!

**Please make your generous scholarship donation by sending a check payable to the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society at P.O. Box 735, Huntington, N.Y. 11743.**