

The Kingfisher

S U M M E R / F A L 2 0 2 2

A Publication of North Fork Audubon Society, Inc.

www.northforkaudubon.org

North For Audubon Society Nature Camp

By Cassie Kanz and Tyler Armstrong

Connecting people to nature is not just our mission statement, but our passion. Connecting kids, Earth's new stewards, to nature is imperative for our future. From the perils of climate change and habitat loss on the North Fork, our home is suffering. Fill a child with wonder and excitement about the natural world and they will advocate for its protection. At North Fork Audubon we have strived to foster this love of nature in children for decades. From Dragonfly Day and fairy house walks, to Young Birders Club, Nature School and beyond, we are committed to getting kids outside. And this summer is no different.

Buoyed by the success of last summer's nature camp led by Jen Murray, we ventured on our own to start a summer nature camp led by Tyler Armstrong. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, this summer we were able to work with CAST to send children to our camp on scholarship. They not only got a great camp experience, but got to explore the wonders of nature.



Camp Counselor Tyler Armstrong

Notes from camp:

We just wrapped up our first two-week session of North Fork Audubon Society's summer nature camp, and it's off to a great start! We have a diverse group of eager nature explorers, varying in age from six to twelve years old, learning about the many aspects of nature on our beautiful North Fork.

On our first day we learned about local birds, how to find them, and how to use binoculars. We went on a birdwatching hike and saw Gray Catbirds, robins, Cardinals, swans, an Osprey, and a Great Blue Heron that flew right in front of us at Inlet Pond! Our second day focused on other animals, such as reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. We saw a turtle and some frogs at Prentice Pond, then watched frogs at Prentice Pond,

then watched frogs closely in our small teaching pond and even got to see one catch a cricket.

The next week we learned about rocks, beaches, and glaciers. I shared my own rock collection and explained how different types of rocks are made. Then we hiked to Inlet Pond beach so the kids could start their own rock collections. We did a little show-and-tell so everyone got to talk about his or her favorite rocks, then we safely cracked some open to see what they looked like inside.

Finally, we took a day to focus on small things, such as insects, arachnids, and all the tiny creatures at the beach. We compared types of bugs using lifelike toy models, and toured the native plant gardens to find all the important insects that use those plants. We used our own handheld magnifiers and saw lots of butterflies, bees, flies, and beetles. After lunch we learned about animals that call the beach and salt water their home, from large ones like sharks and dolphins, down to tiny grass shrimp, scallops, and clams. On a walk around Inlet Pond we explored the wrack line

President's Message



Ellen Birenbaum, Rick Kedenburg and Peggy Lauber

Our fiftieth anniversary celebration in June was the culmination of many months of planning and communication with current and former members of the North Fork Audubon community. In retrospect, it truly immersed me in the heart and soul of our organization. So many new volunteers and supporters joined us this past year, inspired by and helping to continue a fifty-year history of connecting people with nature, through programs for adults and children that brought us where we are today.

As one example, our Berries for Birds initiative, spearheaded by board member Ellen Birenbaum, is an exciting and innovative project, with the goal of educating our community about the value of planting berrying shrubs most beneficial for the birds who live and breed on,

or migrate through the North Fork. To help achieve this goal, former board member and twenty-plus-year NFAS volunteer Rick Kedenburg has joined forces with Ellen as a benefactor and supporter. I'm excited to announce that a new garden, which will be located just to the east of the Roy Latham Nature Center and dedicated to berrying shrubs is in the planning stages. In Rick's honor, we are naming it Rick's Towhee Garden. It is the continuation of a Kedenburg family legacy--the lovely bench facing our thriving Rain Garden is dedicated to Rick's late wife, Linda.

Our summer Nature Camp, led this year by naturalist Tyler Armstrong, introduces children to the wonders of nature to be found literally in our backyard at Inlet Pond County Park. Thanks to the Moore Charitable Foundation, we received funding for binoculars for all the children. One of the areas where the children can enjoy connecting with nature is our Butterfly Pond, recently "re-discovered," cleared and replanted by one of our new Landscape Committee members, Jeffrey Brothers. As it turns out, this pond was a center of children's activity twenty-five years ago, when Board member Sarah Williams held an annual Polliwog Tea Party, complete with a garlic-mustard picking contest!



Newly restored Butterfly Pond

Ben Bolduc, one of a new generation of birding enthusiasts, has led a handful of our Friday morning Birds of a Feather walks this past year as a guest birder, along with many other legendary local birders such as Jody Levin, John Wittenberg and of course Rick. But where would North Fork Audubon be without Tuesdays with Tom, led by veteran birder and former board member Tom Damiani for over twenty-five years? You can read about the fascinating outing Tom led at Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island in this newsletter.

So, our legacy continues--and I have no doubt that twenty-five years from now, North Fork Audubon will be infused with energy from a new generation of volunteers inspired by what has come before.

Peggy Lauber
August 2022



Tyler leading campers to Inlet Pond and the Long Island Sound

Continued from Page 1

to see what washed up, and found driftwood, clam and mussel shells, sand fleas, spiders, and a huge horseshoe crab shell!

We've been having a lot of fun so far, but there's plenty more to learn about. In our next three sessions we will cover weather, the sky and outer space, our own senses, and explore pond life and the lives of mammals in the forest, while recapping some of the best stuff we've done so far for any nature explorers who are new to the group.

As Summer nears its end, so does our nature camp. Thanks to Tyler for heading up the program, and all the assistant counselors and volunteers for helping out!

NFAS 50th Anniversary Benefit Celebration

by Mimi Fahs

With the background of bird-song, the flashing beauty Baltimore Orioles, and the gobbling of wild turkeys curious to see what was going on (one landing on the roof to get a better view), 200 guests celebrated North Fork Audubon Society's fiftieth anniversary outdoors under tents and trees. It was lovely mid-June evening that ended with a rainbow. Members of the planning committee, Peggy Lauber, Gwynn Schroeder, Debbie O'Kane, Theresa Dilworth, Helen Hooke, Colleen McDonough, and I had concocted an original signature cocktail, called the North Fork Fifty, (a rhubarb simple syrup infused with fresh mint mixed with vodka, Prosecco, and a bit of strawberry "muddle.") These creations, along with other refreshing drinks, were served to guests as they arrived at five o'clock. The Mudflats, a twin-fiddle fusion string band, played in the background, welcoming guests as they arrived and setting a festive mood.

The benefit was a success in many ways, bringing people together who shared interests in preserving the beautiful North Fork environment, introducing many new people to NFAS, and financially as well, since a generous benefit committee had covered all costs, so ticket purchases went fully to the NFAS. Generous producers and distributors contributed all the spirits and wine including Macari Vineyards, Montauk Daisy Wines, Comtesse Thérèse, Lamberti Prosecco, Snow Queen Organic Vodka, and Greenport Harbor Brewing Co. Assorted hors d'oeuvres were served by Creative Courses Catering, and oysters on the half-shell, shucked on the premises were donated by Oysterponds Shellfish Company.

Peggy Lauber, NFAS President, opened the formal part of the benefit with a welcoming address, pointing out that birds are the "canaries in the coal mine" of our environment. She briefly described NFAS programs and activities, many of which were new to guests, and invited all to visit the fall Berries for Birds plant sale in September. More detailed descriptions were available to all through beautiful hand-crafted posters created by Barb Pfanz lining the lawn and gardens and documenting the history and current activities of NFAS. To illustrate the impact of one of the programs, twelve-year-old Phoebe Faint spoke about how important the Young Birders Club has been to her. During Covid, the club offered one of the few chances to get together with others and participate in outdoor activities she loved. Peggy then introduced our four honorees,



Ira Haspel, Peggy Lauber, Assemblyman Fred Thiele, Louise Harrison, Fred Lee

Continued on Page 4

community leaders, and heroes in environmental policy, advocacy and organic farming, who have devoted a lifetime of commitment to sustainable land use and preservation of our natural resources.

New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele represented environmental policy, Louise Harrison of Save the Sound represented environmental advocacy, and Free Lee of Sang Ray Lee Farms, and Ira Haskell of KK's The Farm represented organic farming. Each honoree gave brief and inspiring remarks. Assemblyman Thiele, member of the NYS Legislature Environmental Committee, has had an enormous impact working with coalitions and partnerships--such as the Nature Conservancy, and the Group for the East End--to develop the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund. This initiative has raised over \$1.8 billion and preserved over 10,000 acres of sustainable land, including the Ruth Oliva and Paul Stoutenburgh Preserves.

At the end of his remarks, Representative Thiele presented a proclamation honoring the Fiftieth Anniversary of NFAS. Louise Harrison then took the stage, asking if the guests had detected a theme—a theme of communities and coalitions--and remarked that she really felt among friends at this gathering. She went on to say she'd been asked to talk about voting. But turned the tables then to talk about nonvoters--children, plants and animals--also part of our coalitions and communities, including communities of trees. She reminded guests to learn how to look, how to see, and how to listen. And ended with words from her mother, "Make yourself useful."

Ira Haspel spoke about how a passion for great food can be encouraged without harmful practices. All life is sacred. His farm continues to be at peace with the earth with the recognition that biodiversity and living soil contribute to a healthy environment. Fred Lee spoke of his life commitment to do the right thing, and that everything we do affects the animal species. The most important thing we have is our health. He ended with a parting thought, to consider exercising not just more tolerance and understanding, but kindness, to the environment and to each other. Our world depends on it. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

The celebration continued until 7:00 p.m., with more music, dancing, conversation, and community building. We thank our generous benefit committee members, sponsors, and all guests for supporting NFAS. It was a wonderful celebration.



Above: Cassie Kanz, Theresa Dilworth, Deb Friel and Kathleen Becker
Right: The Mudflats and dancers .

Shorebird Monitoring Update (7/26/2022)

By Jennifer Murray, NFAS Shorebird Steward

As of this writing, all plovers have fledged (only five at Mattituck Inlet--not actually independent of their parents yet), except for the two-week-old pair of chicks at the point in Orient.

Some fledge numbers are good and some are poor, but overall, the approximate fledge rate is about 1.75 overall. As a reminder, a 1.0 fledge rate means a population is unsustainable, 1.50 means a population is sustainable - staying at the same population, 2.0 means a population will increase. So, 1.75 is not bad overall. But for Town of Southold contracted sites, the fledge rate is absolutely amazing at 2.1!



Least Tern Chick

The efforts have been tremendous and it truly takes a village. From the public outreach, the cooperation and support of the beach communities, to the support from Southold Town Police, the super efforts displayed by Mattituck Park District, and all the help in between by folks who cleaned beaches, installed fences, and improved the signs.

The true heroes are the valiant monitors on the frontlines--displaying care, patience, eagerness to build their skills, and a willingness to talk to the public. This truly successful season would not have been possible without them. Improved management year after year will help these endangered shorebirds even more.

It is worth noting that Mattituck Inlet impressively homes about half of our Town of Southold plover pairs. It is the most challenging place for a Least Tern or Piping Plover to raise young, yet it is a prolific site--and also difficult to physically and psychologically monitor, as the human disturbances are over-

whelming. Breakwater monitor Scott Rosen stated it best last season--shorebird monitoring at this site as "soul crushing."

Please note that despite the continual ATV's, beach bicycle riders, unleashed dogs, fishermen leaving trash the beach and jetty, people going through fencing, the gulls, the fox, the crows, this site produced thirteen chicks, one more than last year. Had the one unsuccessful pair renested and raised at least one chick, the fledge rate would be 2.0 at this site instead of 1.85.

How did the fledge rate get so high in the town of Southold? Many plover pairs fledged three chicks, helping to balance out the sites that only fledged one or none. I hope readers are impressed by North Fork Audubon's dedicated volunteer base, and by the plovers themselves, as they have proved to be a hardier, more adaptable species than many people believed.



Piping Plover chicks with parent. The rocks provide the young birds with some protection as camouflage.

My First Year of Shorebird Monitoring at Breakwater Beach, Mattituck

By Theresa Dilworth

The season began on chilly, windy days in late March and early April, with three NFAS training sessions conducted by Shorebird Stewardship Manager Jennifer Murray. We learned about Piping Plover courtship, incubating, feeding and other behavior; how to install symbolic string fencing and signage; how to spot and approach an incubating bird; filling out the DEC Daily Site Visit Reports, and other matters. This was followed by a few weeks spent installing fencing and signage in mid-April. Jennifer and I had a pre-season meeting with Chip Hamilton of the DEC to go over expectations. I and a few others also attended a joint US Fish & Wildlife/ NY DEC sponsored Zoom webinar.

Seventeen people signed up as volunteer shorebird monitors to help Jennifer monitor thirteen North Fork sites, and several others helped drill holes in signs and install fences. NFAS receives a grant from Southold Town to cover costs.

I was assigned, along with Scott Rosen and Jennifer, to Breakwater Beach (BW) in Mattituck, close to my home. Since it is a large site, three people were assigned, each visiting once a week. My time commitment was every Saturday morning, usually around seven o'clock, for about two hours.

Starting early April, the Piping Plovers (PIPL) and Least Terns (LETE), both threatened species, began arriving from their winter homes in Florida, the Caribbean, Mexico and South America. PIPLs were sighted at BW on April 2nd. There were six PIPL nests to monitor. The hardest part as a beginner was locating the six nests for the first time (even with Jennifer's help) and remembering exactly where to look the second and third and subsequent times when I was alone. During the month of May, the main task was to confirm, via binoculars, that a PIPL parent was sitting on its nest. Once the location was certain, it was pretty easy since the birds were always just sitting in one spot versus moving around. Roughly fifty-to-sixty LETE began nesting along the jetty area south of the BW pavilion, and around twenty pairs further west. The LETE nests were numerous and easy to see.



Theresa and Shorebird Steward Jennifer Murray conducting outreach.

27, by Jennifer and I, Shorebird Stewards, Lynne Normandia and Lucy Cutler, and numerous other volunteers and friends. Jennifer had advised Mattituck Parks Commissioner Nick Deegan on the location.

Dogs are not allowed at BW, whether on or off leash. The only sign indicating this was a small one saying "No Domestic Animals," lost in a sea of other signs at the entrance to the boardwalk. After several incidents of people letting their dogs run off-leash and even into the PIPL and LETE fenced nesting areas, which are protected under federal and NY state law, we requested Mattituck Parks District to put up a *No Dogs* sign at the entrance kiosk when people first drive in. We also asked the kiosk attendants to provide a list of nearby dog-friendly alternative beaches. Needless to say this dramatically decreased the dog presence.

Early morning May 28, the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, the first PIPL chicks hatched at BW, also the first hatch of the North Fork. Chicks hatched later the same day at Goldsmith's Inlet in Peconic.

On May 28, Jennifer and I set up a community outreach table under the pavilion to inform the public about the nesting plovers and terns. We guided beachgoers to view and photograph the just-hatched chicks foraging a few feet away from the blue boardwalk. We gave a free hard-boiled egg to people who took the "Be a Good Egg" pledge (share the shore, stay out of fenced areas, take out trash--which attracts predators--and keep dogs leashed), and set up spotting scopes to view the LETE nests. Visible from the pavilion was the Osprey nest platform erected the evening before, on May



NFAS volunteers erecting Osprey nest and cleaning the beach

Around mid-June, there were a series of parties at night on the beach, with people pitching tents, setting up barbecue grills, lighting driftwood bonfires just feet away from the fences, and walking within the fenced areas. In some cases the police were called. The park closes at nine o'clock. Overnight camping is not allowed.

After one such party, most of the LETEs abandoned the jetty nesting site, in mid-incubation. Only about 10 pairs returned the next day. In the next few days, crows could be seen foraging on the abandoned eggs.

Also, after what appeared to be a particularly high tide, the fifteen or so pairs of LETEs on the far west side of the beach abandoned their nests as well.

Where did about forty-to-fifty LETEs go? Some may have made their way east to Kenney's and McCabe's Beaches to make a second nest attempt, as it was reported that a large number, about twenty-to-thirty, arrived in mid-season.

Meanwhile the PIPLs were doing fine. Some days I'd see several adults and several chicks sitting, walking, flying or running at various locations, some days I would see none or almost none. Whatever I saw, I wrote down in the daily report and texted to Jennifer afterward. Scott, Jennifer and I also occasionally texted and emailed each other along with Lucy Cutler who was monitoring nearby Bailie Beach.

The first four of the six Breakwater Beach pairs hatched four chicks each or a total of sixteen, of which eight survived. That's a survival rate of fifty percent, or two chicks per pair. Two chicks is considered a high survival rate. 1.6 would be considered average and 1.3 would be considered low.

The other two of the six pairs lost all their eggs and had to start over again. One of those late pairs hatched chicks on July 1. As of today, July 11, three chicks from that clutch appear to have survived. The other pair appears to still be conducting courtship behavior.

On Friday July 1, the day that the three-chick late clutch mentioned above was due to hatch, the owner/tenant of the beach house arrived for the summer and announced he was, as previously communicated, using his beach as of July 1. (Some of the BW nests are in the Mattituck Park District and some are on private property.) He took a fence post down, raked the beach of the wrack that the plovers like to feed on, and sat his beach chair down ten feet from the nest. The DEC were informed, since it is a NY state crime to remove fencing from a plover nesting area. Luckily the plover chicks did hatch that afternoon of July 1. Immediately upon hatching, the chicks can walk and leave their nest, so the gentleman was able to have his beach back.

The next morning, Saturday July 2 was my usual monitoring day and all seemed to be fine except for the one fence post still down. The only other incident that day was my car got stuck in the soft sand at the side entrance to the park. Jennifer and one of the beach house owners helped push me out. ☹☹☹



Least Tern on nest.



*Save the Dates for North Fork Audubon Society's
Fall Native Plant Sale
Saturday, September 10 & Sunday, September 11
9am -1pm
Roy Latham Nature Center
at Inlet Pond County Park
64795 County Rd 48, Greenport, NY*

Mashomack Preserve Outing

by Robin Simmen and Peggy Lauber

Bird walks, like the ones Tom Damiani has led for NFAS for over twenty-five years, may be purpose driven, but they also have a timeless quality revealed as you discover the mysteries of nature wherever you go. Arriving outdoors somewhere early in the morning, you start with an agenda and perhaps some expectations about bird species you hope to see. Then the walk begins, and nature takes over and reminds you that life is unpredictable--and you're off on a magical adventure, fortunate to be in the company of an expert like Tom, who also has a deep connection to our Tuesdays with Tom destination in June, Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island.

One of the first denizens of Mashomack to greet us as the trail dipped into a deeply-shaded glade was a huge bull frog, placidly eying the pool below from a lichen-covered rock. Bullfrogs spend one to three years as tadpoles before becoming the largest frogs in North America, surviving winter by burrowing into mud. Their loud, distinctive call, “jug-o-rum, jug-o-rum,” is



Tom gathering bird watchers at Mashomack trailhead

unmistakable, even if rarely heard these days as reptiles are increasingly threatened by extinction.

Moving out of the woodlands, the trail stretches across miles of open fields, once pasture and now ideal habitat for the Eastern Bluebird. When Tom worked at Mashomack, he began to put up Eastern Bluebird nest boxes throughout the preserve--and sure enough, thanks to this ongoing effort we were treated to the sight of this beautiful bird. We were also enthralled by the whimsical song of [Field Sparrows](#) resonating throughout the fields.

Tom pointed out several species of native sumac growing here that are bird habitat. Smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) is a mainstay of this grassland, and its bright red fruits, ripening in summer, are a favorite food for bluebirds. Smooth sumac



Bull frog at Mashomack

leaves turn brilliant red in autumn, helping birds locate its nutritious drying berries. These persist on branches well into winter, feeding Northern Mockingbirds, woodpeckers, Red-eyed Vireos, Hermit Thrush, goldfinches, and robins.

Consider planting smooth sumac at your home if you have a large, sunny, dry area to landscape. This show-stopping native shrub is easy to grow if somewhat invasive, and provides a year-round visual feast for birds as well as people.

Another beauty peeking through the tall grass at Mashomack is the Carolina rose (*Rosa carolina*). The nectar in its broad pink flowers attracts many insects, which in turn attract insect-eating birds, such as warblers, Baltimore Orioles, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. In autumn birds love their crimson-colored fruits, called rose hips, which are highly nutritious and a coveted source of Vitamin C for people, too.



Smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) in June



Open grasslands across Mashomack



Smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) in June

In all, we saw forty-two species of birds that day, including Prairie Warblers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, an Indigo Bunting, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Purple Martins (they nest in a gourd tower at the preserve), American Redstarts and Cedar Waxwings--an abundance of bird species, no doubt due to the rich and varied habitat to be found there.

As we neared the end of our six-mile walk, Tom stopped us and asked us to look up at a tree. “Who knows what this is?” he asked. “Not something you see every day.” We were all stumped (pun intended). Turns out an American chestnut tree has survived into maturity at Mashomack! These are rarely seen anymore due to the chestnut blight, an Asian fungus accidentally introduced into the United States on imported plant material in 1904. By 1950, the American chestnut tree, once a keystone species across 180 million acres of eastern forests, had all but disappeared.

Experiments to develop disease-resistant chestnut varieties are ongoing, including here on Long Island. Restoring chestnut forests would reintroduce valuable food for wildlife and humans, and help to sequester carbon in mitigating climate change. Countless species of birds, insects, and mammals once depended on the American chestnut for food and habitat, including fifty-six species of moths alone! Learn more about efforts to save the American chestnut and how you can help at <https://acf.org>. Meanwhile, look for the youngish chestnut tree still in good health at Mashomack the next time you’re there.



Young mature American chestnut tree (*Castanea dentata*) at Mashomack



The deeply-toothed leaves explain the chestnut’s species name: *dentata*

A Major Cause of Bird Deaths Can Be Prevented

By Gwynn Schroeder

It is estimated that the population of birds in the United States and Canada has plummeted by thirty percent since the 1970's. The causes for the decline are many and some are not easily solved, and include habitat and biodiversity loss, climate change, and predation by feral and domestic cats (a world-wide problem estimated to cause billions of bird deaths per year).

One of the leading causes of preventable bird deaths is bird collisions into buildings. Last spring, North Fork Audubon was pleased to host noted naturalist, advocate and author, John Turner, for a lecture on this subject, titled "Reflections on a Transparent Problem: Window Bird Strikes." John outlined the causes of bird strikes, but also offered hopeful solutions. This article includes some of the highlights. To view John's talk in its entirety, please click [here](#).



Imprint of bird on a window after a striking a window
Image credit: Portland Audubon

In 2014, the awareness of building strikes and the impact on bird mortality rates was heightened by an [article](#) published by the American Ornithological Society titled "Bird-collisions in the United States: Estimates of Annual Mortality and Species Vulnerability." According to John, this was the first substantive effort to quantify the extent of the problem.

In the United States, it is estimated up to 599 million bird deaths are caused by building strikes annually. John pointed out that when numbers for our state are extrapolated, the daily number of bird strike deaths in New York ranges from 50 -135 thousand – a staggering number!

The most affected species are generally migratory songbirds, like warblers and thrushes. Resident birds, like Blue Jays and Carolina Wrens, have learned to avoid the hazards that migratory birds haven't had the time to adapt.

Over 200 species of birds have been identified as building collision victims, including the American Woodcock—a night time migrator, which for this particular bird is somewhat of a mystery, but can occur in conjunction with weather events.

White-throated Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, Ovenbirds, Dark-eyed Juncos are reported to be the top four of the dozen or so species most affected, but the species level implications are not clearly understood. John pointed out that certain warblers are susceptible, but others don't seem to be. For example, he never heard of a Prothonotary Warbler flying into a window.

Not all bird strikes result in immediate death, some may be compromised or predated, or die later. Death is usually caused by a brain hemorrhage. Some birds do survive, and John observed this when he came across a Common Yellowthroat stunned by a window strike at Stony Brook University. He covered the bird with a cardboard box to protect it, and returned sometime later to find it awake and alert, eventually flying away.

One might think the major culprit would be skyscrapers or high-rise buildings, but actually, more bird strikes occur at low-rise buildings, like homes, or at three-to-five story buildings, which are ubiquitous on Long Island.

Why do birds fly into buildings? The first reason is glass can be highly reflective, and all the bird sees are trees and shrubs that may be reflected, not the glass. The second factor is transparency. For example, when there is glass on two sides of a building, or in other structures like a bus shelter, the bird sees through to the other side, again, not seeing the glass itself.

What can you do to prevent bird strikes? For your home, there are a number of products that you can apply to the exterior of windows and sliding glass doors. The goal is to create a visual disturbance to break up reflectivity and transparency.

The American Bird Conservancy plays an important role in testing and rating the efficacy of products. [Feather Friendly](#) is one company offering such products, but there are many vendors online. It is recommended that when considering these products, choose one that creates a visual disturbance by using a grid pattern with each space no larger than

two inches tall and four inches wide, because little birds fit through little spaces.

Birds are also attracted to light, so keep outside lights off when not needed, and always have lights directed down, rather than up. Visit [North Fork Dark Skies Coalition](#) to learn about best practices for protecting birds and other creatures.

What doesn't work: hawk silhouettes, single decals, decals too far apart, or on the interior of the glass. Things that may work only temporarily are noise deterrents and plastic owls.

There also have been advances in building design such as the use of frosted or fritted glass, which is glass with strategically placed protuberances. Some adhesive products mimic this pattern. Because some species of birds can see ultraviolet colors, incorporating ultraviolet waves into glass can prevent some bird collisions. An example where this type of UV glass has been used at the [Jones Beach Nature and Energy Center](#).

There is good news on the legislative front: Many municipalities are adopting bird friendly design requirements for new buildings, including New York City. There is also pending NYS legislation, and many older structures are using adaptive measures to prevent bird strikes. For instance, *The New York Times* hung closely spaced ceramic rods on the exterior of their building, making it more bird friendly.

Along with Four Harbors Audubon, John has been working with Stony Brook to make their South Campus more bird friendly, applying thousands of decals to windows to help prevent bird strikes.

We can help in our community as well. John challenged North Fork Audubon Society to "Adopt a Building" in our service area that might be contributing bird collisions. If you know of such a building, perhaps a health care facility, school or commercial building, please contact programs@northforkaudubon.org. We can work together with building managers and all stakeholders to help protect our feathered friends from preventable deaths.



Avian Flu Update

By Gwynn Schroeder

The Avian flu outbreak that erupted early last spring didn't spare the North Fork: Three Great Horned Owls, one adult and two owlets found dead in Peconic tested positive for Avian Flu. Luckily, it rarely infects humans.

Some organizations and educational institutions recommended taking down backyard birdfeeders to prevent the spread, including Audubon NY (although they did not issue official guidance) and Audubon CT. NFAS posted on our social media pages and sent an email to our subscribers, letting them know it was a good idea to take feeders down while there were active cases in our area.



Three Red-tailed Hawks succumbed to the Avian Flu in Suffolk County

The good news is Audubon CT lifted their guidance, and there hasn't been a reported case of Avian flu in wild birds in Suffolk County for over two months, the last being an unidentified species of gull on June 2nd. According to the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, there were thirteen confirmed cases of Avian Flu in wild birds in Suffolk County: Bald Eagle (1), Fish Crow (1), Great Horned Owl (3), gull -unidentified species (1), Herring Gull (1), pheasant--unidentified species (3), Red-tailed Hawk (1), Sanderling (2).

As you put your bird feeder back up, or if you maintained feeding birds this summer, please remember to clean your feeder regularly. It is recommended this be done every two weeks with solution of nine parts water and one part bleach. Make sure your feeder is completely dry before refilling. Find out more from National Audubon [here](#).



PLEASE HELP US SAVE MATTITUCK INLET

By Save Mattituck Inlet Co-chairs: Anne Sherwood Pundyk, Stephen Boscola, Mary Guyton

Thank you to North Fork Audubon Society for hosting our presentation in June and allowing us to share an update on a massive development project that is threatening the delicate ecosystems of Mattituck Inlet. We are an all-volunteer community grass-roots organization called Save Mattituck Inlet formed in 2020. Together, we find a larger purpose by ensuring the community's voice is active in the oversight of development of and around the Inlet. Mattituck Inlet is the physical and emotional center of our community.

As we discussed in our presentation, the project—a huge expansion of Strong's Marina—threatens coastal fish, birds and other wildlife as well as a thirty-three-acre wooded lot on the Inlet adjacent to a twenty-five-acre publicly owned woodlands preserve called the Mill Road Preserve. All of this is in order to build two big box yacht-storage buildings that will each be forty-five feet tall and the size of two football fields; they will be 100,000 square feet combined. There are no structures even remotely close to this size on the Inlet or in the vicinity of the project.

The Southold Town Planning Board is currently undertaking an important environmental review of the proposed project. This multi-step process started in August 2020 and is still underway. Input from the community and anyone concerned about the project is welcome by the Planning Board at different points in this process. We are working to support the Planning Board's review process, which actively invites the community's participation.

The most recent milestone where comments from the community on the quality of the developer's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) would have been possible was postponed. Significantly, the Planning Board determined on May 10th of this year that the developer's DEIS was inadequate for review. This means that sections of the DEIS did not meet the required criteria for completeness and accuracy. The developer may resubmit the DEIS after addressing these deficiencies. The timing for next steps including accepting comments on the substance of the DEIS from the public will be determined once this resubmission is made. We hope you will join us in voicing your objections at this future time, both in writing and in person during hearings held by the Planning Board. Join our mailing list to stay up to date. (Just send an email to savemattituckinlet@gmail.com.)

In the meantime, please review the DEIS yourself. (The files may be accessed through our website here: <https://savemattituckinlet.com/files>.) Many sections and appendices—water quality, air quality, noise, vibration, flooding and climate change, and community character—are relevant to the bird populations in our area. We invite you to look specifically at page 121 of the core DEIS as a place to start. Approximately ninety-one bird species were observed or expected to be observed on the site of the proposed development. An estimated sixty percent of these birds may utilize the site for breeding. The North Fork is losing native forests, which host our bird populations, at a rapid rate. The developer's proposed mitigation for the loss of forest for this project is inadequate. Comments on the project and the DEIS may be sent to the Planning Department: brian.cummings@town.southold.ny.us & mark.terry@town.southold.ny.us.



*Red line is an indication, not exact

www.SaveMattituckInlet.com

oper may resubmit the DEIS after addressing these deficiencies. The timing for next steps including accepting comments on the substance of the DEIS from the public will be determined once this resubmission is made. We hope you will join us in voicing your objections at this future time, both in writing and in person during hearings held by the Planning Board. Join our mailing list to stay up to date. (Just send an email to savemattituckinlet@gmail.com.)

In the meantime, please review the DEIS yourself. (The files may be accessed through our website here: <https://savemattituckinlet.com/files>.) Many sections and appendices—water quality, air quality, noise, vibration, flooding and climate change, and community character—are relevant to the bird populations in our area. We invite you to look specifically at page 121 of the core DEIS as a place to start. Approximately ninety-one bird species were observed or expected to be observed on the site of the proposed development. An estimated sixty percent of these birds may utilize the site for breeding. The North Fork is losing native forests, which host our bird populations, at a rapid rate. The developer's proposed mitigation for the loss of forest for this project is inadequate. Comments on the project and the DEIS may be sent to the Planning Department: brian.cummings@town.southold.ny.us & mark.terry@town.southold.ny.us.

How can you help now?

You can show your support by joining the over 3,000 others who have signed our petition either in person, or online at <http://savemattituckinlet.com>, and by signing up for our regular updates which will include instructions on

to submit your responses to the Southold Town Planning Board. As mentioned above, please send an email to savemattituckinlet@gmail.com. You can also follow us on Instagram and Facebook (links are on our website.)

If you didn't get a chance to see our presentation to the North Fork Audubon Society, here is a link to view it: <https://youtu.be/WXCV4qkvP4A>

As further background on the proposed project here are more details on the proposal and the many potentially irreversible negative impacts caused by this project including the loss of over 600 trees, the excavation of an entire hillside of sand, damage to the ecology of the publicly-owned Mill Road Preserve adjacent to the site, impacts to water and air quality, and the creation of dangerous traffic conditions and fire hazards, among many others.

STRONG'S MARINA IS PROPOSING:

- Building two over-sized boat storage buildings, 52,500 sq ft and 49,000 sq ft, that will each be forty-five feet tall (set on a ten-foot elevation) standing eighteen feet higher than any other building on the Strong's Yacht Center property.
- The project as planned will impact a thirty-three-acre wooded lot on Mattituck Inlet adjacent to Mill Road Preserve, a twenty-five-acre public woodlands.

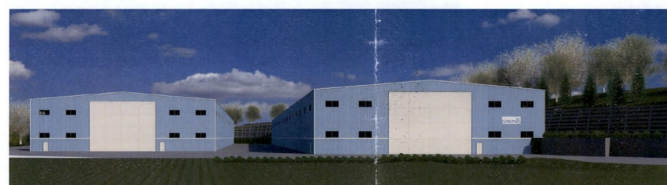
As planned, the Strong's Marine project will:

- Cut down over **630** mature trees
- Haul away a hill of sand (**134,000 cubic yards**) over narrow local roads, exacerbating an already unsafe residential traffic issue
- Replace nearly four acres of a native forest with warehouses for yacht storage
- Remove a natural feature that protects against the effects of climate change
- Impact a significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat.
- Potential impacts of strip-mining the hillside and destroying the forest areas
- Cause surface water pollution
- Cause disruption of water, flooding, run-off, erosion
- Destroy plant and animal ecosystems
- Diminishment of the aesthetic character of the community
- Threaten pedestrian safety during the months-long excavation and construction
- Damage local roads by many oversized trucks



Photo Credit: Stephen Boscola

Warehouses – not “potato barns”



www.SaveMattituckInlet.com



Have You Contacted President Biden to Urge Him Preserve Plum Island?

NFAS is a proud member of the Preserve Plum Island Coalition (PPIC), and we urge you to visit www.preserveplumisland.org and click on the link to send a letter to President Biden to ask him use his powers under the Antiquities Act to declare Plum Island a National Monument. Please act today!

Native vs. Non-Native Berries to Sustain Migrating and Wintering Birds

By Ellen Birenbaum

Annual migrations between wintering and breeding grounds are vulnerable periods in the life cycle of songbirds. The success of annual migrations is greatly affected by habitat quality at stopover sites, where birds must consume large quantities of highly nutritious food to quickly refuel and continue migration. Fruits (also known as berries) are the major food resource for many songbirds during fall migrations along the Atlantic Flyway, and loss of suitable habitat is one of many factors in the declining population of migrating songbirds.

Invasive, non-native plants have high growth rates compared to native plants and can compete with the native plants that provide important food sources for migrating birds. Although both native and invasive fruit-bearing shrubs produce berries during the fall, bird fruit preferences determine the success of seed dispersion and hence shrub propagation. Research has helped elucidate many aspects of songbird preference as well as nutritional composition of native and non-native fruits. This article will review some of the concepts regarding fruit preference by frugivorous (fruit-eating) birds and will describe in more detail fruit consumption by migrating songbirds in the fall and by overwintering songbirds in the winter months.

John W. Baird's 1980 article, 'The Selection and Use of Fruit by Birds in an Eastern Forest,' published in *The Wilson Bulletin* was the first to quantify the differential use of fruits eaten by birds at the time of the southbound migration and during winter. He studied the feeding habits of birds in approximately 1500 acres of land in a mixed deciduous forest in Mercer County, New Jersey in the fall and winter of 1975-76. There were twenty-three species of fruit-bearing plants in the woods and along its margins. Native plants such as mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), false Solomon's seal (*Smilacina racemose*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), vine poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*), greenbrier (*Smilax glauca*) and 4 types of grapes (*Vitis* spp.) all produced fruit that ripened in the late summer or early fall and became available just before the main southbound migration of many fruit-eating birds. Other non-native abundant fruits eaten by birds growing in the woodland edge were Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrum orbiculatus*) and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*).

All fruits were counted at the onset of the study in late September until almost all fruits had been eaten or had dropped from the plants. The fraction of the original crop remaining was estimated by visual inspection and by comparison of photographs of the same patches taken on different days. Dry weight of the fruits was determined. Feeding observations were recorded one-to-two times weekly from September 25 until March 28, 1975.

The greatest fruit production occurred in the most open parts of the forest. Twelve out of the 13 commonest migratory species and eleven of the nineteen resident species of birds were observed eating fruit, and many of these species were almost wholly frugivorous during this period. Dogwood was the largest and most widely used crop. Fruit production was greatest in the woodland edge. Migratory American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) and Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) fed on the dogwood; ten other species of birds ate the berries from the ground once they dropped. By mid-October, most of the berries along the woodland margins had been eaten and the flocks moved into the forest, congregating in small patches, eating all available dogwood berries. The depletion of dogwood berries in late October coincided with the departure of most of the migratory birds. Grapes were eaten extensively by eight species and was the primary food of Cardinals during the fall. Poison ivy berries were eaten by ten bird species. Poison ivy grows in clusters, is slow to fall and, per the author, is the most fully used of any of the fruits in the forest. Bittersweet was the last fruit to ripen and lasted until late March. Cardinals switched to bittersweet fruits as the supply of grapes was depleted. Bittersweet berries from the



Flowering Dogwood
Credit: Flickr.com



Poison Ivy Berries

vine, and dropped berries were eaten by all frugivorous winter residents. The persistent fruits of Japanese honeysuckle, lasting until late February, and greenbrier were late winter and early spring foods for Cardinals and White-throated Sparrows.

Although different species of birds ate the same foods during fall and winter, competition for food was minimized by differences in macrohabitat choices. For example, in early fall, flocks of American Robins fed on dogwood berries in the margins and clearings, while Hermit and Wood Thrushes fed deeper in the woods. White-throated Sparrows and juncos arrived later in the fall, eating dogwood fruit on the edges of the woods. As this dogwood fruit was used up and robins moved deeper into the forest to

eat dogwood, the sparrows and juncos switched to other foods. Different species of birds use different feeding stations: Robins and grackles ate dogwood berries from perches on the larger branches of trees and from the ground, while sparrows fed on smaller branches and thin vines.

Mixed flocks of chickadees, titmice, Downy Woodpeckers and Golden-crowned Kinglets formed during the winter, and interspecies flocking of White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Cardinals often foraged in groups on the ground and in low shrubbery. Mixed flocking of wintering birds is thought to enhance feeding efficiency and aid in predator avoidance. Individuals in flocks spend more time searching for food and less time in surveillance than individual birds.



Bittersweet berries
Credit: thespruce.com

individual birds.

The author concludes that the most abundant fruits were also the most heavily used. Preferred species such as dogwood, grapes and poison ivy are avidly consumed by a wide variety of migrant and resident birds. Bittersweet, greenbrier, and honeysuckle are persistent and provide a major resource for wintering populations. Diets of resident species change through the season. As preferred foods are exhausted, fruits that had previously been ignored are added to the diet.

‘The Selection of Native and Invasive Plants by Frugivore Birds in Maine’ by Brie A. Drummond, published in 2005 *Northeastern Naturalist*, compares fruit removal and fruit choice by birds of two aggressive invasive plant species, Tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and two native plant species, Silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) and American cranberry bush (*Viburnum opulus* var. *americanum*). The energy content, or total calorie content per gram of dried fruit, was determined. Fruit choice experiments were conducted.

The fruit removal study was conducted in Kennebec County Maine, where all four plants species occur together in mixed deciduous and coniferous forests. The rate of fruit removal was estimated by recording the number of fruits on one netted and one unnetted randomly selected branch on each plant weekly from September 19, 2002, to February 24, 2003. Removal rates were also estimated by photos taken twice daily of two randomly chosen plants of each species. Fruit choice experiments were performed by placement of equal amounts of fruits on feeder platforms erected one meter off the ground. The number of species of frugivores choosing each fruit was recorded. Birds did not visit the platform feeders until February, when only fruit from multiflora rose (non-native) and American cranberry bush (native) were available.

The number of species of frugivores choosing each fruit was recorded. Birds did not visit the platform feeders until February, when only fruit from multiflora rose (non-native) and American cranberry bush (native) were available.

The results of this study show that the fruit energy content, or the number of calories per gram, was higher in the native plants. Rates of removal of the fruit of the native Silky dogwood and the invasive honeysuckle were similar in the early fall; the winter fruits of multiflora rose and American cranberry bush were not eaten until late winter and had similar rates of removal. Birds did not discriminate between the native and invasive fruits in the choice trials. The study concludes that the higher number of calories in native plants was not directly correlated with more rapid fruit removal or fruit preferences.

It is thought by many researchers that secondary characteristics of the native American cranberry bush make the fruit unpalatable. The fruits of the multiflora rose may persist until late winter because the low nutrient content of the fruit protects it against microbial damage. Some fruits may be more digestible and have other nutritional requirements that birds need, so that the energy content of the fruit may not be of the greatest importance. Carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins are also markers of fruit quality.

The author suggests that invasive species with persistent winter fruit are also likely to have a significant impact on native fruit-eating birds. American Robins and Cedar Waxwings are the only two bird species in central Maine that eat persistent winter fruit. Cedar Waxwings prefer the high-sugar fruit of the American cranberry bush, which depends solely on Waxwings for seed dispersal. Cedar Waxwings did not distinguish between the fruit of the multiflora rose and the American cranberry bush in the fruit choice portion of this study, and the removal pattern of the multiflora rose was equivalent to that of the American cranberry bush. The increased abundance of multiflora rose could disrupt the mutually dependent relationship between Cedar Waxwings and the American cranberry bush. This, in turn, could severely impact the winter diet of Waxwings and the dispersal success of the American cranberry bush.

‘The Value of Native and Invasive Fruit-Bearing Shrubs for Migrating Songbirds’ by Susan B. Smith, published in 2013 in *Northeastern Naturalist* further explores the topic of whether frugivores discriminate between native and non-native fruits based on nutritional composition of the fruits. The article’s objective is to assess both the consumption and value of native and non-native fruits for migrating birds: If invasive species provide a high-quality food resource for migrating birds, their removal could be counterproductive to songbirds by eliminating a food resource needed to replenish fat reserves. Conversely, if songbirds are consuming invasive fruits that cannot meet their daily energy requirements, then songbirds may suffer adverse physiological effects. In addition, if birds are attracted to and consume the fruit of invasive species rather than native fruits, this will increase the rate of avian seed dispersal of invasives and accelerate habitat changes.

The study was conducted in Rochester, New York and involved two sites with dominant native shrub species of gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), red Twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*) and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Invasives were common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), European cranberry bush (*Viburnum opulus*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.). Fruits of these shrubs were collected during peak fall migration in early October 2010 and were frozen, dried, and then homogenized with mortar and pestle. The water, lipid, energy density (calories) and sugar contents of the samples were determined and compared between native and invasive fruit. Fruit consumption was monitored by selecting three shrubs of each species at both sites. Two branches with similar amounts of ripe fruit of each shrub were chosen; one branch was enclosed with mesh netting and the other branch was left exposed. Branches were chosen which would not support the weight of small mammals. There was no evidence of deer browsing at the sites. The initial number of fruits on each branch was recorded, including ripe and unripe fruit, and the fruit was counted weekly for five weeks. Fruit loss was assumed to be from songbird consumption.



Silky Dogwood

Fruits of native shrubs had significantly higher energy density and percentage fat than that of invasive shrubs. Sugar content was not significantly different. Energy density was positively corrected with percent fat, whereas sugar content was not.

The proportion of fruit remaining on branches changed over time and differed among species. The silky dogwood lost its fruit faster than all other species at the first site, followed by the gray dogwood. Common buckthorn and multiflora rose lost less fruit over time than the dogwoods. Honeysuckle lost fruit faster than the European cranberry bush. At the second site, the gray dogwood's fruit was consumed at the greatest rate followed by silky dogwood. Honeysuckle was consumed at the lowest rate.

The conclusions of this study are that, during fall migration season, native fruit species are consumed at a faster rate than invasives and that native fruits had higher nutritional value with higher fat percent and energy density than invasives. Native dogwood fruit, consumed at the fastest rate, had the highest percent fat quality and energy density. The author states that nutritional quality influences selective consumption of different fruit species by birds during fall migration. Plant secondary compounds may also influence fruit selection: The tartness of European cranberry bush, and a purgative compound in bush honeysuckle may be why these fruits are avoided by birds.

The fact that certain native fruiting shrubs are of higher quality to songbirds during fall migration than invasive species suggests that it is of great importance to encourage growth of nutritionally valuable native shrubs

at stopover sites during fall migration. Because invasive fruits do not appear to be of greater nutritional value for migrating birds compared to native species, the removal of invasive species such as common buckthorn, European cranberry bush and honeysuckle would not negatively impact the population of migrating birds. However, other studies have documented the importance of invasive species such as bittersweet and Japanese honeysuckle as food for wintering birds due to the persistence of their fruit during the winter months when native fruits and insects are scarce. Birds are particularly efficient dispersers of invasive fruits because they are mobile and move between similar habits. The seeds are therefore likely to be deposited in favorable habitats. The consumption of these invasive winter fruits helps drive the successful invasion and range expansion by non-native plants.

Wherever invasive plants comprise an important part of the diet of native songbirds, there may be a conflict between control of the invasive plants and maintaining the population of native frugivores, especially when habitat destruction has already reduced populations of native fruit species. Efforts to promote native berry-producing plants that provide a prolonged nutritional source for both migrating and over-wintering birds should mitigate this conflict and is the mission of the North Fork Audubon Society's Berries for Birds initiative.



Gray Dogwood berries
Photo credit: ourhabitat.com

Join Ellen Birenbaum for a presentation on North Fork Audubon Society's Program on

Berries for Birds

Thursday, September 22, 2022

7pm via ZOOM (Register [here](#))

*To read about our Berries for Birds program, and our partnership with
Homegrown National Park®/Start a New Habitat click [here](#).*

Inlet Pond County Park Trails - Stewardship Update

Spring /Summer 2022

by Theresa Dilworth

From late November 2021 through April 2022, the newly formed IPCP Trail Stewardship Committee weeded out privets from the trails and disarmed invasive vines destroying mature trees in the fifty-five-acre park. In November and December, Dr. Andy Senesac of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County conducted a privet survey measuring the most severe privet infestations, while Chris Cole of Cole Environmental Services took aerial drone photos. The privet survey counted over 12,000 privets along the 1.6-mile trail, ranging in size from a few inches to thirty feet high.

Donors contributed funds to purchase weed wrenches, chainsaw chains, and labor to remove large privet trees. Over a dozen volunteers contributed hundreds of hours of their time to lop, cut, wrench, chainsaw and drag the invasives out.

A heartfelt thanks to Carol Edwards, Chris Larkin, Maxine Phillips, David Dilworth Sr., Ellen Neff, Joe Rico, Joseph Rico Jr., Peggy Lauber, Paul Kreiling, Jeffrey Brothers, Aurelie Lang and her three children, with some help from landscape professional Oscar Membrano.

We also want to thank the Town of Southold for partnering with NFAS through its Community Pride Program, by hauling four tons of privet branches and waiving the tipping fee.

Over the winter, about seventy-five percent of the privets and tree-strangling Oriental bittersweet vines along the trails were removed. Due to ticks and thick thorny growth, volunteers are taking a break over the summer and plan to resume in the fall of 2022, potentially expanding to other invasives like Japanese honeysuckle, Morrow's honeysuckle, and Japanese multiflora rose.

With most of the privets gone, the trails are now warmer in temperature and receiving more sunlight. The main beneficiaries have been goldenrods, blackberries, and grapes.

Wrinkle-leaf goldenrods, also known as Rough-stemmed goldenrods



Goldenrod

goldenrods

(*Solidago rugosa*) are a native species and were common along the trails even before privet removal, but have increased exponentially. An aggressive fall-blooming perennial, it supports over 120 species of butterfly and moth caterpillars, which in turn are a food source for a variety of birds and animals. The nectar of goldenrod is food for pollinators, allowing them to sustain the winter months.

The common blackberry (*Rubus allegheniensis*) is another native species which has multiplied due to the brighter sunshine along the trails. Its nectar and pollen are attractive to Mining bees, Bumblebees, Carpenter bees, and Honeybees, and butterflies including Monarchs and Little Wood Satyrs which can be seen when walking the trails. The fruits are eaten by songbirds, game birds, foxes and raccoons.



Common Blackberry

The Wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*), whose vines are covered with reddish purple hairs, is also commonly found along the trails. A type of Asian raspberry, it was introduced to North America in 1890 for its potential in breeding hybrid raspberries. It escaped cultivation and is now found over much of the Northeast. Two kinds of native grape

intertwine along the trails. The Fox grape (*Vitis labrusca*) family, encompassing Concord, Catawba, Niagara and Delaware grapes, is believed to be the vine the Vikings saw covering the North American Atlantic seacoast, which they named Vinland, around the year 985. The Summer grape (*Vitis aestivalis*) or pigeon grape, which produces Norton grape wine, looks similar, and is a critical food source for eighty species of birds as they stoke up for their fall migrations. Birds most attracted to wild grapes include robins, orioles, waxwings, bluebirds, catbirds, cardinals, mockingbirds, woodpeckers, and vireos.

The June-blooming flowers of the common or American elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) are identifiable by the creamy white, flat-topped clusters, which attract insects. The elderberry's shrubby nature also makes it a suitable nesting location for some birds. The berries are attractive to warblers, orioles, tanagers, catbirds, waxwings, mockingbirds, finches, and thrashers.

The common serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) is another berry-producing Northeast native found in Inlet



Pond County Park. Other names are shadberry and Juneberry (the berries set in June). The name "serviceberry" apparently arose in Appalachia because the timing of the flower blooms meant that the muddy back roads in the "hollers" would again be passable for the traveling preachers, and communities would be able to have Sunday services.

Inlet Pond County Park is home to quite a few Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) trees, both mature and saplings. Native to the East Coast from Maine to Florida, it is easily identifiable by its three shapes of leaves, which look like either mittens, or footballs, or are three-lobed. The leaves were traditionally dried and crumbled to thicken and flavor Filé gumbo, a Creole stew, when okra wasn't available as a thickener. The roots were also used for making root beer. The New York fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*) is used by birds as a nesting material.



Finally, the Roundleaf greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*) grows prolifically throughout the trails especially in shadier spots. Its blue-black fruits are a late winter and early spring food for wintering birds such as northern cardinals and white-throated sparrows.

Native grapes, serviceberries, sassafras are among the berries that North Fork Audubon Society plans to encourage in home gardens and commercial and community landscapes, as part of the Berries for Birds initiative that is being launched later in 2022.



Common Serviceberry



Sassafras albidum



Roundleaf greenbrier

Volunteers Enthused About Cleaning Up Garbage at Inlet Pond

By Theresa Dilworth

Years of winds have pushed lots of garbage to the northeastern shore of Inlet Pond. On July 2, 2022, three Wellington-clad volunteers (Helen Horton, Chris Larkin and I) armed with pails and picker-uppers started removing trash from the pond shoreline north of the viewing platform.

In order to reach the rubbish, the trio flattened dried phragmite reeds along shore, unveiling groups of Marshmallow Hibiscus, also known as Crimson-eyed Rose Mallow or Swamp Rose Mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*). It's hoped that with exposure to sun now, they will spread along the pond shore and outcompete the invasive *Phragmites australis*.

Volunteer Helen Horton writes: "For anyone who enjoys the outdoors, consider participating in a beach clean up--a most rewarding feeling to contribute to the North Fork Audubon as a volunteer. Just the joy of being along the edge of the water and next to the woods makes anyone feel good. You have an endless beautiful view of the pond while you are picking up trash. You'll be given all the supplies needed. However do BYOB. Not booze! Boots."

Garbage cleanup continued on Sunday July 3, revealing another stand of Marshmallow Hibiscus on the north shore of the pond.

There's still more garbage out there. Anyone interested in helping, please email

tdiworth@northforkaudubon.org and/or keep your

eyes peeled on our newsletters and website for the next organized group pond trash cleanup.



Helen Horton cleaning Inlet Pond



HELP WANTED! Do you have a passion for the outdoors and nature? Are you concerned about our diminishing natural resources? Do you like to work collaboratively with others with the same passions and concerns? If you do, and have the time to help North Fork Audubon continue *Connecting People with Nature*, this (volunteer) job is for you - we have lots of rewarding opportunities! Please visit northforkaudubon.org/get-involved to find out how you can help.

Upcoming Programs:

- * September 2, 8:00 am: [Friday Morning Birders with John Turner](#)
Calverton Park
- * September 20, 8 am: [Tuesdays with Tom](#)- Smith Point County Park
- * Thursday, September 22, 7 pm: [Berries for Birds Program](#) via ZOOM
- * Thursday, September 29, 7 pm: [Celebrating the Life of Frederick Law Olmsted](#)
with Dr. Roxanne Zimmer via ZOOM.
- * **Save the Date - October 4, 2022: Tuesdays with Tom—Jamaica Bay**