



THE KINGFISHER

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Volume XXX IV Number 3

Summer 2015

“The Turtle with the Clown Lips” A Natural and Cultural History of the Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*)

*Date: Friday, July 10
7:30 p.m.*

*Location: Peconic Lane Community Center
1170 Peconic Lane, Peconic*

Diamondback terrapins inhabit the salt marshes of Long Island. Named for the diamond pattern on their carapace, these turtles face many obstacles from loss of habitat to over-hunting, to being caught in crab pots. This lecture will cover terrapin biology, cultural history and efforts being made to protect and conserve the species.

Presenter John Turner is a co-founder of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society and is currently employed by Seatuck as a Conservation Policy Advocate. He has extensive credentials in both the public and private sector.

Nocturnal Avian Migration

*Date: Friday, August 14
7:00 p.m. (Note early start time)*

*Location: Custer Institute
11156 Main Bayview Road, Southold*

National Audubon Society Conservation Data Manager, Tom Auer, will talk about nocturnal avian migration, from the biology behind why birds fly at night, to the methods that scientists use to study birds during this migration, along with the many ways birders can enjoy and experience birds flying overhead in the night sky.

Tom focuses on data management, tracking, analyses, mapping and other activities involved in identifying, understanding and conserving the Important Bird Areas network.

Program co-hosted by the Custer Institute.

Avian Vagrancy at Fire Island: Insights into the Composition and Conservation of Avian Communities

*Date: Friday, September 11
7:30 p.m.*

*Location: Peconic Lane Community Center
1170 Peconic Lane, Peconic*

Vagrant birds - individuals occurring far beyond the expected geographical limits of their taxa - have fascinated people for centuries. Available in great detail via citizen science, records of rare birds are yielding insights into the causes and consequences of long-distance dispersal, biological properties of local sites, demographic population trends, forces shaping community composition and a more rational approach to conservation.

Presenter Shai Mitra has studied birds in the northeastern United States and around the world for over 35 years. He is an Assistant Professor of Biology at the College of Staten Island, editor of *The Kingbird*, and involved in several Christmas Bird Counts.

Emergency Contacts for Injured Wildlife

NFAS often receives calls with questions regarding injured wildlife. Rest assured that there are resources out there for rehabilitation of an injured animal. These are the numbers we share when you call:

The **North Fork Animal Hospital** in Southold can be contacted 24/7 at **631-765-2400**.

The **Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center** in Hampton Bays has a corps of volunteers all over the North Fork to assist with wildlife rescue. Their number is **631-728-9453**.

For marine mammals and sea turtles contact the **Riverhead Foundation for Marine Preservation** at **631-369-9840**.

President's Message

We've heard quite a bit recently about the effects of certain pesticides on bees and other pollinators. Bee populations are decreasing dramatically and pesticides may certainly be contributing to their decline. It's important to understand that commonly used pesticides can be lethal to birds as well. Neonicotinoids were first used in the 1990's and are now the most widely used pesticides in the world. When you see the word "imidacloprid" as an ingredient in lawn and garden treatments think "neonicotinoid."

According to a report issued by the American Bird Conservancy, "A single corn kernel coated with a neonicotinoid can kill a songbird. Even a tiny grain of wheat or canola treated with the oldest neonicotinoid, imidacloprid, can poison a bird. As little as 1/10th of a corn seed per day during egg-laying season is all that is needed to affect reproduction with any of the neonicotinoids registered to date. In addition, "Small non-lethal doses are likely to cause partial paralysis and other sub-lethal effects in birds."

As you consider treatments for your lawn and garden, please keep in mind the impacts pesticides can have on the birds we love. Using least toxic and non-toxic products will minimize risks. Read labels and make informed choices.

Here's a recipe for Homemade Weed "killer"

1 gallon white vinegar

1 cup Epsom salts

1/4 cup Dawn dish detergent (blue, original)

Mix all of the above. Spray onto weeds in the morning, after the dew is gone, and let the sun work its magic.

Debbie O'Kane



Tuesdays With Tom

July 21 - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

"J-Bay" is one of the best birding spots in all of New York. This will be an all-day event with dinner in Howard Beach to end the day. Bring sun block, water and binoculars.

Meet at the Red House at Inlet Pond County Park at 8:00 a.m. We will car pool from there. Please register by calling Tom Damiani at 631-275-3202 or email tdamiani3@optimum.net. Rain cancels.

August 18 - Cedar Beach County Park

There is no better place to see shorebirds on the North Fork than Cedar Beach. Willet, whimbrel and waders will be there.

We will meet at the Red House at Inlet Pond County Park at 8:00 a.m. We will carpool from there. To register for this walk, call Tom at 631-275-3202 or email tdamiani3@optimum.net. Rain cancels.

September 15 - "Where the Birds Are"

That's the point, right? You never know where a migration hot spot may be. So, we'll go where the birds are that day and hopefully see some good birds.

We will meet at the Red House at Inlet Pond County Park at 8:00 a.m. We will carpool from there. To register for this walk, call Tom at 631-275-3202 or email tdamiani3@optimum.net. Rain cancels.

NFAS Trip to Mashomack - Bluebird Presentation Saturday, June 13, 2015

By Linda Kedenburg

Those of us fortunate enough to gather from various points on Shelter Island or who ventured across the bay spent a magical morning with Bill Zitek at Mashomack Preserve. Bill gave us the rare privilege of peeking into the private lives of Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and House Wrens as he demonstrated his nest box program for these species.

Bill wowed us with his knowledge and experience with nesting protocol and the intricacies of helping the birds find safe homes on the preserve. We peeked into nest boxes (after giving a polite tap on the side of the box to allow the inhabitants to escape prying eyes). We learned that Bluebirds build woven grass nests, often lined with soft grasses, and that their eggs are smaller and closer to sky blue than Robin's eggs. Tree swallow nests come complete with tell-tale white feathers as accouterments and the eggs are white, sometimes with pale tan speckling. Wrens build tall stick nests, almost filling the box.

The nest boxes are often placed back-to-back to give the Bluebirds a chance to nest in one if Tree Swallows haven't taken over the other. However, Tree Swallows are learning to tolerate closer proximity of their own kind. One crafty Bluebird pair built their nest right on top of an interlocking Tree Swallow and laid its eggs on the top layer.

Bill demonstrated his use of a motion-activated camera mounted near a nest box. After finding evidence of predation, even with the predator baffle installed, the camera caught a Red-tailed hawk reaching in and grabbing out the hapless nestlings. A roof with an exaggerated front overhang solved this problem.

Our final treat was a peek into a Purple Martin condo, raised high on a pole with a pulley mecha-

nism that allows it to be lowered for inspection and banding of the nestlings.

We also gained knowledge of the history of the development of Shelter Island and examined the botanical species, both native and introduced, some necessary for wildlife, some useful, and others, downright detrimental.

Time to return to the parking entrance. Those of us lucky enough to ride in the back of the pickup bounced along enjoying the view from folding chairs while Rick happily called out IDs of Yellow Blue-winged, Prairie and Common Yellowthroat warblers plus Towhees, Baltimore Oriole and Redstarts whose songs emerged from the surrounding landscape. At different points we had Kingfisher, Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed Hawks, Ospreys, Great Egret and an immature Bald Eagle overhead from our open air view. Thanks to Bill Zitek and Peggy Lauber who coordinated the trip. Bill's meticulous scientific research and enthusiasm were impressive and contagious. Bill, the birds are lucky to have you on their side.



Mashomack Preserve.

Update: North Fork Pollinator Projects

By Diana Van Buren

I'm very pleased to share that significant progress has been made on Pollinator Projects this spring at both Peconic Landing and the Red House. I'll start with that because I just got home from doing some more planting there!

Last year Suffolk County did some improvements to the Red House and during that process some of the back lawn was removed and replaced with a sandy, rocky fill. For us this was a blessing in disguise as we preferred that type of soil composition for the native grasses and forbs we intended to plant in place of the traditional lawn that grew there previously.

This area is now planted with four different species of goldenrod (Gray, Showy, Seaside and Early), four different kinds of native grasses (Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Panic Grass and Indian Grass), and two different species of milkweed (Common and Butterflyweed). Other plants in the mix include Round-leaved Bush Clover, Hyssop-leaved Thoroughwort (the the Joe-Pye Weed family) and Lance-leaved Mountain Mint and native asters. I'm not particularly optimistic about the latter because deer love asters, but we'll see what happens.



Peconic Landing resident Louise Barry giving a Butterfly Milkweed to CEO Bob Syron.

At Peconic Landing, Louise Barry completed her mission of increasing the amount of Monarch Butterfly habitat by purchasing several hundred native perennial plants and seedlings and distributing them to the residents. The people who

received these plants signed up ahead of time, indicating what type of growing situation they had (sunny, shady, dry, moist or container). NFAS helped by sourcing and delivering several dozen mature Butterfly Milkweed plants (and others) from Glover Perennials, along with hundreds of native seedlings from The Long Island Native Plant Initiative.

On Thursday, June 4, Louise Barry and I completed her mission and delivered the last few plants to her Peconic Landing neighbors, including one final *Asclepias tuberosa* to CEO Bob Syron. While we were in his office, he shared that, as a teen, he raised Monarch Butterfly caterpillars for a school project, feeding the larvae milkweed leaves from plants he found along roadsides. (Which just happens to be our next frontier - more on that in a future update.)

A few days later, Southold teen Zachary Ellis finished installation of his Eagle Scout project, a Pollinator Plant Demonstration Garden. This planting is set on the east side of the uppermost pond on the property, between the two roads that lead to the main entrance. You will recognize it by the deer fencing that currently surrounds it, helping to give these plants a good start. Zach achieved his goal with guidance from Ag Conservation Specialist Allan Connell and Peconic Landing resident and Pollinator Meadow Committee Chairwoman, Alice Ayers. NFAS and Louise Barry donated milkweed and grasses to Peconic Landing for the purpose of adding them to Zach's project. Go check it out!



Zachary Ellis' Pollinator Demonstration at Garden at Peconic Landing.

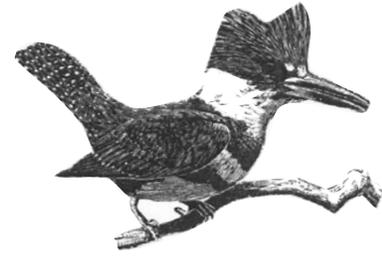


**The Red House
at Inlet Pond County Park**

65275 Route 48
Greenport, NY 11944
Ph.: 631-477-6456
E.: info@NorthForkAudubon.org

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Chapter Membership Application

One Year Individual	\$20
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Name:

Address:

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E-Mail:

Return this application and check to:
North Fork Audubon Society, PO Box 973,
Mattituck NY 11952 or join online at
www.northforkaudubon.org.

Check here if this is a renewal.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer 2015

Friday, July 10 7:30 p.m. - Diamondback Terrapin program, Peconic Lane Community Center, Peconic

Tuesday, July 21, 8:00 a.m. - Jamaica Bay bird walk, meet at Red House for carpooling

Friday, August 14, 7:00 p.m. - Nocturnal Avian Migration program, Custer Institute, Southold

Tuesday, August 18, 8:00 a.m. - Cedar Beach bird walk, meet at Red House for carpooling

Friday, September 11, 7:30 p.m. - Avian Vagrancy program, Peconic Lane Community Center, Peconic

Tuesday, September 15, 8:00 a.m. - bird walk, location TBA, meet at Red House for carpooling

All programs held at Inlet Pond County Park are presented by North Fork Audubon and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone



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