



# The Kingfisher

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[www.northforkaudubon.org](http://www.northforkaudubon.org)

## Upcoming NFAS Programs

### **THE BEGINNER BIRDER**

Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>

7:30 PM

Peconic Lane Community Center  
1170 Peconic Lane  
Peconic, NY

Have you ever wanted to identify the birds you see in your yard every spring? Or maybe you have heard that same bird call along your favorite woodland path each May and wondered what it was? If you have ever thought about moving past being a casual bird observer to being a birder, then this program is for you. Pat Hanly will present common birds and songs to help you identify spring songbirds. He'll start with the characteristics of songbird families and move to many of the species you regularly see and hear. He'll discuss the tools (binoculars, field guides, phone apps) that will help you in your journey.



Photo by Rick Kedenburg

This program is not for the advanced birder. It is for you, the *Beginner Birder*.

Pat Hanly, the presenter, is a local North Fork birder, hawk-watcher and nature enthusiast. Pat is the new compiler of the Orient Audubon Christmas Bird Count, one of the oldest continuing Audubon counts in the country.

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### **NORTH FORK VINES & THE NYS BIRD - THE BLUEBIRD**

#### ***The Perfect Pairing?***

By Nancy Conradi

As we look ahead to crafting our future we must always strive to understand the past. The North Fork has for many years grown wonderful grapes; it might well be the grape and butternut Vinland of the Vikings. But many species which did thrive here have been extirpated to our loss. Those of us living here now are fortunate to witness the return of species we never thought possible: osprey, bald eagle, wild turkey. Perhaps with continued vigilance, general support and persistent effort we will see the same for the piping plover, purple martin, red-headed woodpecker, northern bobwhite, and Eastern Bluebird, the New York State bird.

The gentle, beautiful bluebird used to be the delightful harbinger of spring until its precipitous decline brought about by the ill-conceived introduction of the House Sparrow and Starling in the 1800's which resulted in the usurpation of nesting sites for this obligate cavity nester. When Dr. Lawrence Zeleny of the Pawtuxent Research Station in MD realized what was happening, he started the effort to set up nest boxes specifically for bluebirds that would exclude starlings by the hole size. House sparrows remain the most aggressive and persistent enemies of bluebirds still.

The Eastern Bluebird is starting to show the signs of a tenuous recovery. Many New Yorkers have no idea that the Bluebird is that is the New York State Bird and even fewer have ever seen one, but here on Eastern Long Island it is slowly becoming more and more likely they will be able to do so.

A new effort is underway to involve members of the Sustainable Winegrowing Organization in cooperation with NFAS to set up Bluebird houses in the vineyards. Dr Bill Zitek and Tom Damiani have managed a successful trail of boxes at Mashomack Preserve for the past 20 years,

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## President's Message

Spring is here and it's time to start tending to our beloved lawns and gardens. Making your landscape bird and wild-life-friendly should be a top priority. Threats to birds, bees and other pollinators are ever-increasing and creating a haven so that wildlife can thrive is a worthwhile goal. By eliminating toxins (i.e., synthetic insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, weed and feed products) from your lawn and garden-care practices you give birds a fighting chance for survival. Toxic chemicals not only kill pests, they poison indiscriminately, and birds and their offspring can be victims of your desire to kill off those dandelions or grubs in your lawn. The Perfect Earth Project's website offers comprehensive, user-friendly information on completely toxin-free care.

Incorporating native plants into your landscape is another beneficial way to help birds get a leg up as they search for food and shelter. Join us on May 27 and 28<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 2 pm at the Red House for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Native Plant Sale. We'll have lots of useful information as well as plants ready for your garden--grown by Glover Perennials! Audubon.org is also a wonderful source for all kinds of useful information in the "Plants for Birds" section of the website.

We hope that the NFAS demonstration rain garden featuring native plantings will be completely installed at the Red House by Memorial Day weekend. Many thanks to volunteers from Cornell Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener program for making this dream of ours become reality!

### Winter, Spring

by Jim Harrison

Winter is black and beige down here  
from drought. Suddenly in March  
there's a good rain and in a couple  
of weeks we are enveloped in green.  
Green everywhere in the mesquites, oaks,  
cottonwoods, the bowers of thick  
willow bushes the warblers love  
for reasons of food or the branches,  
the tiny aphids they eat with relish.

Each year it is a surprise  
that the world can turn green again.  
It is the grandest surprise in life,  
the birds coming back from the south to my open  
arms, which they fly past, aiming at the feeders.

*Upcoming NFAS Programs continued from page 1*

## ***A VIRTUAL NORTH FORK BEACH WALK***

with John Holzapfel

Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

7:30 PM

Peconic Lane Community Center  
1170 Peconic Lane  
Peconic, NY

This pictorial PowerPoint presentation will include the natural history, the local North Fork history and the environmental interactions involving several different species such as scallops, oysters, gulls and horseshoe crabs, whose traces and impressions can be found on the shores of any of our North Fork beaches.

John has an undergraduate degree in chemistry and a master's degree in Marine Science. He taught high school science for 37 years and junior college science for 15 years. He twice served as a Southold Town Trustee and was also a member of Cornell Cooperative's marine advisory board. When he retired from teaching he began a shellfish company, retiring from the shellfish business after ten years. Over the past three years John has been giving monthly talks on nature at Peconic Landing in Greenport.

## ***TUESDAYS WITH TOM***

**Dam Pond AKA Ruth Oliva Preserve  
June 20**

June is breeding time for most birds. We'll check out wood, field, and pond for breeding birds. Be sure to have on your listening ears as all trees and shrubs will be fully-leafed out and bird song may be the only clue to what species are around. Meet at the Red House at Inlet Pond County Park at 8 AM.

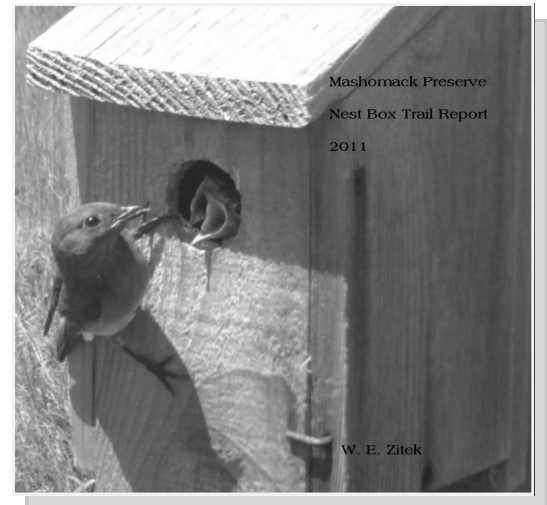
**This is "Maygration"!**

**May 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30**

There are many great parks and preserves on the North Fork to view migration birds. Join Tom for the "spot du jour" each Tuesday in May to see spectacular warblers, tanagers, and flycatchers. Meet at the Red House at Inlet Pond County Park, 8 AM.

Please register for Tuesdays with Tom by calling Tom at 631 275-3202 or email at [tdamiani3@optimum.net](mailto:tdamiani3@optimum.net).

and Joe Guinta has had good success recently with a similar project on the South Fork. Several years ago thinking the vineyards might offer good habitat and the birds might offer some insect control, I approached Dave Thompson of Bedell Cellars and he graciously and enthusiastically pitched in. Croteau Vineyards also let me put up boxes and we have fledged bluebirds there. When Peggy Lauber discovered that Spring Mountain Vineyards in Napa, CA had set up a Western Bluebird nest box trail to help control insect pests, she — with the help of Dr. Zitek — put up a nest box trail at Wolffer Vineyard in Sagaponack and had success. She and Dr. Zitek then gave a presentation to a Long Island vineyard manager's group, following up this spring. As a result, two more vineyards are now on board — Jim Thompson of Martha Clara Vineyards and Steve Mudd of Mudd Vineyards. With our help, both have already sited boxes.



We need funds for further boxes and predator guards and are trying to develop a team to assist in monitoring the boxes if the vineyard staff prefer not to do it themselves. Anyone who would like to help with that please contact Peg or me.

It's a bit difficult listening for bluebirds right now with the screaming of my weekend neighbor's Indian Peafowl aka Peacock. We humans are instinctively drawn to the colors and vibrancy of birds. Only a DNA miracle will restore to us the multicolored Carolina Parakeet, the Passenger Pigeon or the Heath Hen, but we can work now to restore that which once, before the Robin was all that was left to take its place, was everyone's spring blessing.

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## *A Bird's Eye View of Climate Change*

by Gwynn Schroeder

It was a packed house at the Peconic Community Center last month when National Audubon Society's former Director of Climate and Strategic Initiatives, Lynsy Smithson-Stanley, gave a presentation on the organization's continued work on the effects climate change on various species of birds, how best to educate others on the topic and how we all can help change the course of events.

When conducting the study, National Audubon looked at three scenarios which were based on projections of varying degrees of global surface warming, from best-case to worst-case. The study concluded that because of shifting and contracting ranges for different species of birds, the following is likely to occur:

- 314 of 588 species modeled (53%) lose more than half of their current geographic range in all three modeled scenarios
- For 126 species, loss occurs without accompanying range expansion
- For 188 species, loss is coupled with the potential to colonize new areas

One important factor is when ranges shift the underlying habitat may not be suitable for the species of bird in question. For instance, a grassland species may not be able to adapt to survive in a boreal forest. In some instances and for certain species, ranges will expand.

Depending on specific findings, species were classified as climate stable (274 species), climate threatened (188 species) or climate endangered (126 species). The beloved Common Loon and the Chestnut-collared Longspur are examples of species considered to be climate threatened.

This may sound somewhat bleak, but there is still hope that we can realize the best-case scenario and this was the focus of the second portion of Lynsy's talk.

The goal of National Audubon is to ensure stable bird populations and protect habitats. To accomplish this important objective, there must be a national policy on climate change and our elected officials need to know this must be a top priority. This means funding for land preservation, funding for habitat restoration and the continued investment in and the support of the development of clean, renewable energy and storage technologies. All of this is possible; we just need the political will and public participation.

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by Rick Kedenburg

Recently, I spent an early afternoon walking around the PLT's Peconic Bluffs Preserve. Right away I had a Coopers Hawk flying overhead making its cak, cak, cak call. I watched as it landed in the tall pines and as I approached Autumn Pond it flew off. I used the Audubon App to make the same call of the Coop. I watched as it flew off to another area. I have been convinced there has been a Coop around here causing a decline of starlings and blackbirds at my feeders. As I approached Autumn Pond it flew off.

While observing the Hooded Mergansers and one female Pintail in Autumn Pond I heard the cak noise again real loud. I turned around and the Coop was in the tree behind me about 10 yards away. We looked at each other and I guess the Coop realized I was not a rival and just flew off. They may be breeding around here so I will not be using the smart phone again during mating season. **The birds need all the strength they can get this time of year so using a smart phone to call them in for you to see is not ethical birding. Wait for high summer for those smart phone bird-calls.**

Seen overhead and seen landing deep in the woods where I could not - would not - go, were the pair of Red-tailed Hawks. They were the pair I saw in courtship display a few days earlier over Autumn Pond. I am sure they are setting up a nest around here.

While at Autumn Pond I saw my first of this season Osprey pass over and check out Goldsmith's Inlet. Also seen were our two Belted Kingfishers going back and forth from Autumn Pond to Goldsmith's Inlet. Their unique electric-like chattering is a marvel to hear in the natural world around us. It must be spring!



Photo by Rick Kedenburg

Walking back home I heard the emphatic calls of our local woodpeckers claiming territory for the nesting season. The unique courtship call of the Northern Flicker was quite noticeable. The Red-bellies, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are all so lovely as well.

All our over-wintering birds are now taking advantage of their winter hardship and pairing up, claiming breeding territory and tree cavities for many. This is a great advantage to many species that do not migrate. They get the jump on the spring migrants.

For me the exceptions are the birds we feed in the winter but go north in the summer, such as the White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Glad to give them fuel for their journey north. Love them all.

What's really cool is to travel in northern New England in Summer and hear the unique song of the Dark-eyed Junco in its breeding territory. Then wondering, 'hey that might be the bird I fed last winter'.

I still have Red-breasted Nuthatches coming around. Some are now coming close to the house and after the entire winter they have now discovered my suet feeders so now I get close up looks of them from indoors.

That is all good as I enjoy hearing their the sound of their little toy horn. Not much different from that of the White-breasted, but you instantly notice it.

Happy Spring to all! And thank you to the Peconic Land Trust for preserving these woods!

Locally this includes continued support for Land Preservation funding initiatives, like last year's approval by voters to extend the Community Preservation Fund. It also includes continued funding for Peconic Estuary Program and the Long Island Sound Study. Across Long Island, there is a debate occurring about the placement of solar and off-shore wind projects. Although these technologies are critically important in fighting global climate change, it also crucial that the placement of these types of projects is done properly and in an environmentally-sensitive manner-- We don't want to trade "green for green." For example, the placement of solar panels on roof tops and carports is preferable to clearing acres of trees for a utility scale solar project.

Although it may be a difficult subject to raise, we encourage our members to talk about the impact of climate change on birds with family, friends and neighbors. Lynsy made the point that many people who don't necessarily believe in anthropogenic (man-made) climate change love birds! This may be the place to start the conversation.

There is cause to be optimistic that the love of birds can be a factor in one's beliefs as it relates to climate change, regardless of political affiliation. A poll of self-identified conservatives, who were also members of Audubon in either North Carolina or Ohio, revealed that 88% believed climate change is real and 75% believed it was related to human behavior. They cited "state pride and moral duty" and "being good stewards of the earth" as motivating factors for taking action.

As we move forward, local Audubon members are vitally important in this effort if we are to succeed, whether it is by participating in citizen science projects like the Christmas Bird Count, by educating others or by working on policy initiatives locally. We all need to be engaged and involved in the issue of climate change --the future of birds, and many other species, depends on it! North Fork Audubon Society had been active on the climate change front for several years and we invite you to join us in this critical mission to protect birds, the planet and ourselves.

To read more about the report and to find links to the full report, please visit: <http://climate.audubon.org/article/audubon-report-glance>

*Lynsy Smithson-Stanley has moved on from National Audubon but she will continue to work on education people on climate change. We wish her the best of luck in all her future endeavors.*



The Osprey, the Piping Plover and the American Bald Eagle are defined as Climate Endangered in National Audubon's Climate Report.

Become a member or renew your North Fork Audubon Society membership by visiting:

<https://northforkaudubon.org/about/become-a-member/>

or by mailing your donation to:

North Fork Audubon Society

P.O. Box 973

Mattituck, NY 11935

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Native Plant Sale

at the Red House

Memorial Day Weekend

Saturday, May 27 & Sunday, May 28

9 am to 2 pm



**SUFFOLK  
COUNTY  
PARKS**

Programs held at Red House or Inlet Pond Suffolk County Park are  
co-sponsored by County Executive Steve Bellone and Suffolk County Parks.



P.O. Box 973  
Mattituck, NY 11952