



The Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society Newsletter

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

Volume 13, Issue 1
January - April 2025

Letter from the Editor

By Alexandra Martinez

The mission of the Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society is to protect wildlife and preserve habitat through conservation action, advocacy, and education. This chapter territory serves both Huntington and Oyster Bay townships with its all-volunteer chapter 501c3 non-profit established in 1961.

Board of Directors Officers

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Co-Vice Presidents

Greg Richter & Christine Suter

Recording Secretary:

Christine Suter

christineHOBAS@gmail.com

Treasurer

Michael Frank

Directors

Tess Copia, Education

tesscopia@yahoo.com

Michael Frank,

Fundraising & Membership

vonfranz77@gmail.com

Coby Klein,

Conservation/Field Trips

cklein@gc.cuny.edu

Julie Sullivan,

Conservation

jstlvn768@gmail.com

Roxana Saravia,

Programs Coordinator

roxiasaravia@gmail.com

Greg Richter,

Outreach

Alexandra Martinez

Newsletter Editor

ms.alexandra.martinez@gmail.com

www.hobaudubon.org

Happy New Year! May 2025 be filled with long nature walks, sightings of spectacular species, and slow mornings to take it all in!

As I reflect on 2024, I am so grateful for all of the amazing animal lovers we have here on Long Island. If you're online and on Facebook, groups like the Bald Eagles of Centerport and Long Island Lost & Found Pets are two groups that stand out to me. At any given moment on either of those pages, if there is an injured animal, an animal in need, or something that looks slightly off with regards to one of our furry or feathered friends in nature, people post on these groups asking for help. And the help often comes in droves. It is truly a beautiful community we live in and what a wonderfully supportive online community that has been fostered.

As humans, we have been given the gift of complex language and expression. We have advanced social cognition and with that the ability to be sincerely empathetic. We have culture, creativity, and self-awareness. All of these gifts make our human brains uniquely distinct from animal brains and with gifts as great as these comes immense responsibility.

As humans, we must take care of nature - we are the only ones with the ability to do so (and almost ironically, we are the ones with the ability and the creativity and the willpower to destroy it with our own inventions and advancements). Because our brain has combined powers of adaptability, complexity, and sophistication, it is our job to preserve nature, protect wetlands, clean up beaches, promote awareness of environmental issues, and brainstorm ways to clean the earth - for ourselves and all of its inhabitants.

Humans are the reasons for habitat destruction and fragmentation. We contribute to pollution. Climate change, overhunting, invasive species and disease spread - all fingers point at us. The birds, the mammals, the reptiles, the fish - all we do impacts them. Let's make 2025 the year we make our New Year's resolutions all about environmental health and a clean earth for all who roam it. And a special thank you to all of the local organizations who make the environment a priority every year, like Friends of the Bay, Save the Sound, the Centerport Harbor Civic Association, and so many more! To 2025!

Newest Member to Flock to HOBAS

Roxana Saravia recently joined HOBAS as Program's Coordinator. Her prior work experience includes an array of environmental education and field work. Roxana has worked with a variety of species, such as shorebirds, horseshoe crabs, sea turtles, and marine mammals. She previously worked at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay and is excited to be continuing working with the Audubon flock and engaging her local community.

It's a (w)Rap on 2024 Raptor Day!

By Alexandra Martinez



One of the most inspiring community events of the year that I had the honor to attend had to be Raptor Day hosted by the Vanderbilt Museum along with the Bald Eagles of Centerport on November 2, 2024. The annual event aims to benefit WINORR, Wildlife in Need of Rescue and Rehabilitation, a local non-profit which provides professional care to sick, injured, and in need wildlife, including birds! The event featured a live presentation and exhibit with real rescued raptor birds thanks to WINORR, as well as the chance to explore the grounds of the Vanderbilt and stop by the many booths by the various vendors and sponsors coming together to support this place and this program! The Huntington Oyster Bay Audubon Society was proud to be a sponsor of the event this year - for the first time - and was glad to join many other local community organizations coming together to make a nature-filled day both enjoyable and empowering. Some of these sponsors include, but are not limited to: the Centerport Harbor Civic Association, US Brews, Eric Smith (Master Falconer), the Department of Environmental Conservation, New York Life, Northwell Health, the Vanderbilt Museum, Wildlife in Need of Rescue and Rehabilitation (WINORR), the Bald Eagles of Centerport, Gregg the Wood Carver, Fogo de Chao, Pawfect Pet Den, Huntington Bay Dental, Soundview Photography by Chris Carrion, Westfield Farm and Gardens, Cascio Designs, Chris Wings, Shawn McAvoy, Del Vino Vineyards, PSEG Long Island, the U.S. American Legion, the North Fork Country Kids Rescue, and the Huntington Crescent Club. Many of the amazing Long Island artists and photographers who have risen to local fame on the Facebook page "Bald Eagles of Centerport" donated their framed photography and artwork towards the array of raffle prizes. There was an arts and crafts table for kids, as well as a very real face painting artist whose work was absolutely stunning, as well as education opportunities and museum experiences throughout the entire day. There was even a special film area set up to watch a local film by Mike Dukarm about our eagle season. HOBAS was happy to have a table at the event where we were able to sell some old books, framed art and decor, and give away some free pamphlets and informationals on our mission, as well as native plants and plants for birds. So many people seemed to be at Raptor Day - from young children to elder birding enthusiasts to museum lovers to Doug Geed of News 12 - that it was the place to be on that relatively warm November day. If you haven't been able to attend in years past, stay tuned to information from the Bald Eagles of Centerport and the Vanderbilt Museum for Raptor Day 2025!



Breaking News!

A new Beginner Birder Borrow Bag is available at the Bayville Public Library amongst their "Library of Things." Check it out (and literally check it out of the Library) today! Don't forget the Greenlawn-Centerport Historical Association office within the Harborfields Public Library also has a Birder Borrow Bag available for your next birding adventure!

Bird Watching and Bench Hopping in Winter

Written by Barbara Suter on December 1, 2024

Yay. It's winter! There are probably not a lot of people who share that sentiment, but I'm betting birders do. After all, it's a new season for bird watching... actually duck watching.

Having learned about winter ducks many years ago from an Audubon guide, I look forward to getting out on the first cold days to welcome the new arrivals. This year I am fortunate to already have had two winter duck watching outings.

The first was with my daughter who spent the day before Thanksgiving helping out with Thanksgiving preparations. I got her interested in winter ducks about a decade ago and she has now become much more talented than me at finding and identifying new species. Due to my ongoing mobility issues, we are limited to where I don't have to walk too much. There is a new practice in my life; it's called bench-hopping. Heckscher Park in Huntington Village is an ideal place for me to walk because it has many comfortable benches throughout the park.

We settled into what we call "our bench" and began to talk. Our first sighting was of a ring-necked duck. These ducks were not always winter visitors to this pond, but about five years ago the first one appeared. Every year since their numbers have increased. Now we have approximately six or eight of them. When they first arrived years ago, they were very timid and felt "out of place," so they stuck to an area near an island unreachable by humans on foot. Now when people show up they join the rest of the mob for what they hope will be an easy meal. This year there are signs posted throughout the park advising people not to feed them. But it makes me smile to see them in the midst of all the commotion even though there is no longer a reward. I guess you could say they've become acclimated to this area.

We moved on to the next bench, not too far from the one we were sitting on. This year we've had four swans in the pond which is highly unusual because in the past years we've had only a pair at most with their babies. Those babies have now grown very huge and haven't fully molted, so I am enjoying their muted coloring. I pointed out "the big guy" to my daughter who has become my favorite of the swans. Perhaps the demise or removal of several giant snapping turtles has enabled the swan couple to reproduce and raise their babies. I am waiting to see how long it will be before the older swan kicks them out of the pond!



We continued our walk and several benches later we reached our last stop. My daughter with her sharp eyes was able to identify a pair of hooded mergansers far across the pond. We both love the crests on their heads and how they seem red-chested in the sun. We sat for a long while and talked and talked. Slow bird watching has become my thing and I am grateful to the Town of Huntington for the many benches that allow me to do so with comfort and ease.

In loving memory of Barbara Suter (1946-2025), a retired ESL teacher and enthusiastic bird watcher from Huntington, NY. She raised her children, Christine and Matthew Suter, walking on the trails of the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center and instilled her love of nature in everyone who knew her.

Top Photo: Barbara (right) is pictured here with her daughter and HOBAS Board Member, Christine Suter (left).

Bottom Photo: Barbara, Christine and Matthew Suter at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary circa 1987.

2024 Bird Seed Sale

By Michael Frank

Thank you to all of our loyal members who joined us for 2024's Annual Bird Seed Sale fundraising event which was held this past October. This annual fundraising was once again very successful with hundreds of bags of bird seed being purchased for our fine feathered friends and we would like to extend our gratitude to all who made that possible. A very special thank you to Andy and the entire staff at the Wild Birds Unlimited store on Jericho Turnpike in Syosset. As in previous years, we could not have done this without their help, support and generosity. Thank you to all! If you enjoy getting your bird seed through Andy and his team at Wild Birds Unlimited Syosset consider becoming a Daily Savings Club Member this year to save throughout 2025!

Daily Savings Club Member Benefits

EVERY DAY YOU GET **15% OFF**

\$10 BIRD BUCK

5% OFF

AND YOU GET A **FREE GIFT**

Join Now!

The Regular Price of All Our Exclusive, Fresh, High-Quality Bird Food.

For Every \$209 You Spend on Any Merchandise in the Store.

The Sale Price of All Our High-Quality Bird Food During Our Bird Food Sales.

For Joining the Only Club that Saves You Money on the Best Bird Food All Year.

See us in our store at Wild Birds Unlimited, 1000 Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, NY 11791

Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon
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CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY
"Celebrate Spring"

Wednesday March 19th 2025
(Rain date Thursday March 20th)
4:30pm - 6:00pm

Cold Spring Harbor Library
95 Harbor Road
Cold Spring Harbor, NY

Celebrate the Spring Equinox with us in this after school program. Come learn about what our local birds and other native animals do in Springtime. We will make a craft and also go outside for a walk in the woods, weather permitting.

For ages 5-10, accompanied by a caregiver.

Registration is a must. To register, please call or text Tess: 631-896-2872.