

SOFOnaturalist



Each quarter SoFo features eco-links, written by a member or friend of the Museum. If you wish to submit an article please contact us.

eco links

Citizen Science

by Mary Ellen Hannibal



Mary Ellen Hannibal, author of *Citizen Scientist, Searching for Heroes and Hope in an Age of Extinction*

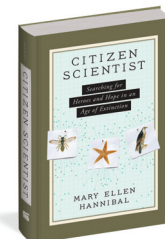
Citizen science is the grand tradition of the amateur, and in general means regular people contributing to science. It's a very old and ongoing practice, in which you can rub historical elbows with the likes of Aristotle and Thomas Jefferson. Beyond Western European traditions, indigenous cultures have observed nature to create "traditional ecological knowledge" for millennia. Today, citizen science is turbo-charged by smartphone technology and vast computing power, and made imperative by our accelerating biodiversity crisis. Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, who famously deduced the theory of evolution by way of natural selection, were both citizen scientists. They did not have advanced degrees and worked for themselves. Especially Wallace is considered the "father" of biogeography – the history of where we find what plants and animals, how they got there, and where they are going. These concepts are the basis for how citizen science can save nature today.

Here's how I became a citizen scientist. While researching my 2009 book *Evidence of Evolution*, I interviewed scores of PhD scientists, virtually all of whom said, "I'll help you understand how new life forms originate. But let me first tell you how life forms are prematurely terminating." Extinction is a regular part of evolution. Without it, there would be no room for new branches on the tree of life. But today, plants and animals are disappearing at a rate and magnitude equaling that which took out the dinosaurs. Upwards of 23,000 species today are threatened with extinction. In just the past 40 years, wild species populations have shrunk in alarming numbers: 39% of marine wildlife and 76% of freshwater wildlife are gone. In 1970, a billion more birds flew over the Earth than do so today. The main culprit is habitat loss, as human development displaces the wild.

It's hard to put your mind (and your heart) around these numbers. Most of us think of endangered species as exotic, like tigers in India. But the reduction of common species is arguably much worse than the admittedly tragic loss of historic, charismatic animals. Life on Earth is made habitable for *Homo sapiens* by the biotic interactions of species. These create clean water, clean air, a temperate climate; and they also furnish us with food. We take all this for granted and hardly ever question whether human impacts are actually destroying the very substance of our survival (but they are).

The good news is citizen science. One of the biggest impediments

to saving nature is that we have incomplete information about where species are, in what amounts, and where it is moving, at any given time. Here's an example of a citizen science victory, well before smartphone technology made efforts like this one easier and faster. My 2012 book, *The Spine of the Continent*, includes the story of the Path of the Pronghorn. A single herd of pronghorn antelope every year fulfill an ancient migration in Wyoming. Scientists studying the herd noticed an uptick in their mortality – the pronghorn were getting hit by cars and trucks as big industry moved in to facilitate fracking in the southern part of the state. The scientists joined with nonprofit activists, government officials, and regular citizens to document exactly where the pronghorn travel every year, and when. Putting this line on a map, they were able to get regulatory protection for it, limiting human impacts therein. The Path of the Pronghorn is the only protected wildlife movement in the United States. The combination of data collection and collaboration among different kinds of people – mob sourcing information about where and when the pronghorn run—makes this a citizen science victory. When I saw the potential for this kind of collaboration, I investigated further in my new book: *Citizen Scientist: Searching for Heroes and Hope in an Age of Extinction*.



As we are losing so many birds, butterflies, bees, and native plants, it behooves us to understand where this is happening. There are not nearly enough biologists to document this without help. It's everybody into the pool. One of my favorite citizen science platforms is iNaturalist. You can download this free app on your phone. When you take a photo of a species with iNat, the app assigns the image a date, a time, a latitude and a longitude (Wallace and Darwin would LOVE it!). A Facebook like feed of observations runs constantly and experts from around the world mobsource confirmation of species designation, which then ranks the observation "research grade." With this sort of data, we can pinpoint where animals are in what amounts at a much faster and perhaps even denser level than was possible when scientists went door to door to ask people if and when they had seen a pronghorn on their doorstep.

Another big issue for nature, of course, is climate change. As temperature and precipitation patterns change, flowers are blooming earlier, but pollinators are still adhering to time schedules for visiting them that developed over millions of years. The bees and the butterflies are missing the flowers. Isn't it a part of nature for species to recalibrate their activities as change occurs? Yes. But the changes brought on by human impacts today are happening too fast for species to adapt. Citizen science platforms like Budburst and Nature's Notebook are assembling a database of climate change impacts on plant life, which is ground zero for understanding the biotic response to climate change. These track "phenology," or the timing of nature's events, including migration, hibernation, and pollination. Pheno means "to show" in Greek, and this is what the citizen scientist documents: when flowers bloom, when leaves fall, when birds

come and when they go. With this information, we can make management decisions to support nature and help it adapt. Today, the citizen scientist is an everyday hero. Our mission is to save biodiversity, so let's get cracking.

Mary Ellen Hannibal is an award-winning journalist and author. Her recent book, Citizen Scientist, is partly a memoir of growing up in East Hampton. Join us at SoFo on Saturday, June 24 at 3 pm, when the author will read excerpts from Citizen Scientist followed by a Q & A. A reception for the author will follow the reading; light refreshments will be served. This program is cosponsored by the Peconic Land Trust.

Footnotes on Nature

In Their Own Words

South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo) Nature Educators
Photos by: Xylia Serafy and Ashley Federici

They greet you when you arrive at the Museum, help you learn about nature on the South Fork, urge you to dip your hands into our marine touch tank, conduct weekly nature programs, and teach groups of school children, scouts, and community groups about the environment—but how much do you really know about our superb staff of nature educators and what else they do? One aspect of their work, which you might not be aware of, is animal husbandry. Husbandry, in our case, means the care, feeding, and tank cleaning for spiders, frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles, terrapins, snakes, and salt and fresh water creatures.

We thought it was about time to introduce you to our nature educators ... in their own words.



Crystal Oakes

I grew up in a very supportive family that respected nature. They recognized early on that I had an affinity for learning, understanding, and teaching about animals and biology. I was encouraged by grandparents who created a fascinating bird-friendly backyard, an aunt and uncle that lived on a wooded mountainside in northwest New Jersey, and by my involvement in Holland Acres, the greenhouse business my family once owned on property that bordered a spring-fed stream. All of this afforded me a natural education that was unavailable to many in my hometown of Paramus, NJ, which is known for its shopping malls and suburban living. I remember the many times nature surprised me when I played near the spring-fed stream. I watched as the grass-covered edges of the stream walked away after I stepped on them, because a Common Snapping Turtle was hiding there. I remember watching Red-winged Blackbirds and Muskrat families go about their day while I quietly picked violets on the stream bank. In my teens, my father introduced me to SCUBA diving in the northeast, which expanded my wonder for the short and long-term processes of the natural world, a wonder which never ceases to teach me something new. With the support of my family, I attended Long Island University's Southampton College, where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Marine Vertebrate Biology. Summer internships at Mount Desert Oceanarium in Maine and at SoFo helped refine my ability to communicate my fascination with nature to the public. In addition to my position as a nature educator at SoFo, a job that allows me to continue to learn and share the natural world, I serve as SoFo's Membership and Development Associate and as the buyer and manager for SoFo's Gift Shop.



Melanie Meade

As a child growing up in rural upstate New York, I spent a lot of time exploring nature, and that interest developed into a dedication to learning and teaching about our Earth and science. I received a B.S. in Marine Sciences from Southampton College of Long Island University (LIU), a M.S. in Marine Sciences from Stony Brook University and a M.S. in Elementary Education from LIU-Riverhead. While working in marine science and education, I earned teaching certifications for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle School levels. I have held numerous positions as an educator, and my goal has always been to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and educators and to continue experiencing the beauty and serenity of the outdoors while kayaking, hiking, and bicycling. At SoFo, along with providing nature education to those who visit the museum, I design, coordinate, and supervise school and community visits and am part of the team that leads the summer Marine Science Program.



Xylia Serafy

As the daughter of two biologists, I spent most of my childhood outdoors, studying and identifying the native species of plants and animals on the South Fork. One day, while observing carnivorous plants and the wonders nature produces, I decided to turn my enthusiasm for nature into a career. I graduated from Ursinus College with a dual Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Environmental Studies, and I received Departmental Honors in Environmental Studies through the completion of my thesis, "Conservation of the Antillean Manatee in Mexico." For two years, when I was in college, I was a summer intern at SoFo. Following my graduation, I became a full-time member of the SoFo staff. As an educator, my goal is to emphasize to others the interconnectedness of all parts of the natural world and its ecosystems, both physically and emotionally. In addition to my role as a nature educator, I am responsible for program related e-mails, updates to the SoFo website, our Twitter account, plus SoFo's three gardens—the Native Butterfly Garden, Native Wildflower Garden, and Native Carnivorous Plant and Bog Garden. You can frequently find me taking photographs of the natural world (another interest of mine) when you visit SoFo.



Eleni Nikolopoulos

From a young age, I have had an interest in the natural world. Growing up in Montauk, I was exposed to some of the most beautiful forests and beaches on Long Island and explored them on a daily basis. As I grew older, I developed a serious interest in the impacts of climate change and what we can do to alleviate these effects on the natural world. I am dedicated to educating the public on the effects of climate change and how Long Island's native animals are being affected. As for education, I received my B.A. degree in Environmental Studies at Stony Brook University and a M.S. degree in Environmental Science/Conservation Biology from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. While studying in Australia, I interned at 350.org, a global grassroots non-profit direct-action group that focuses on climate change awareness. After returning to the U.S., I worked for one season as a coastal steward for the Town of Southampton's Threatened and Endangered Species Program. In addition to nature education at SoFo, I had the pleasure of working on the Panthera Big Cats exhibit, where I did a great deal of the research for this fascinating exhibit, which will remain at SoFo and open to the public until 2019. During my off-hours, I am a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician with the Montauk Fire Department.




South Fork Natural History Museum (SoFo) Calendar At A Glance Spring 2017

377 Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike

P.O. Box 455

Bridgehampton, NY 11932-0455

www.sofa.org email: sofo@hamptons.com

Find us on Facebook  Twitter  Instagram 



A full description of each program is listed on the SoFo website:

www.sofa.org/calendar

April, & May, June

Museum Admission & Program Information

SoFo Members

Admission to the Museum is free. Programs are free unless otherwise specified.

Advance reservations are required for all programs.

Non-Members

Museum Admission Only – Adults \$10, Children \$7.50 (Ages 3-12),

Ages 2 & under free

Museum Admission & Program – Adults \$15, Children \$10 (Ages 3-12),

Ages 2 & under free

Advance reservations are required for all programs.

To make reservations and find out about meeting places, please call SoFo at 631.537.9735

or email to sofo@hamptons.com.



Young Birders Club Takes-Off

Birding is a great way to make new friends, learn about the environment, and get outside!

The South Fork Natural History Museum is delighted to host its first Young Birders Club. The club, with monthly meetings, is open to anyone, ages 8–18, who is interested in learning about birds. We'll focus on birding in local areas, since Long Island has many great habitats that are home to a wide variety of species.

The first meeting of the club will take place at SoFo on Saturday, April 15, 2017 at 10:30 am and run until noon. There will be a short orientation, an opportunity to get to know Hannah Miranda, the Club leader and an experienced birder, who attends East Hampton High School, and the other club members. You will also meet the two Club advisors, both avid birders; Frank Quevedo, the South Fork Natural History (SoFo) Executive Director, and Barbara Blaisdell, a member of the SoFo Board of Directors. After the orientation, we'll go out into the field and start birding.

If you have them, please bring binoculars (we have a few pairs to lend) and a field guide to birds of the eastern United States. If you don't have a field guide, we'll have one here for you to use.

We hope to see you on April 15th—and let's go birding!

Calendar At A Glance

Key: A—Adults T—Teens C—Children F—Family

A full description of each program and time frame is listed on the SoFo website at www.sofo.org/calendar

Advance reservations are required for all programs.

April

- 1 • Who Lives Under a Rock? C3-6 • 10:30am
- 1 • The Benefits of Planting Native—It Matters! A • 2pm
- 8 • Book Club—New Members Welcome! *The Moth Snowstorm: Nature & Joy*: A • 10am
- 8 • The Ins & Outs of Stingrays—Stingray Dissection: A/C 8+ • 10:30am
- 8 • Sofo Tour: Quogue Wildlife Refuge & Nature Center—Habitats & Live Animals: F • 10:30am-Noon
- 9 • Bursting Buds—Let's Look Inside: C3-5 • 10:30am
- 10-14 • Spring School Recess—Outdoor Programs • 10:30am-11:30am
- 10 • Monday: Scents of Spring
- 11 • Tuesday: Sign of Spring
- 12 • Wednesday: Great Bird Migration Challenge
- 13 • Thursday: Nature Scavenger Hunt
- 14 • Friday: Bird Songs for Spring
- 11 • Full Pink Moon Hike One Hour A/C • 8:30pm
- 15 • An Invasive Species Game—Invader Crabs: F/C8+ • 10:30am
- 15 • Young Birders Club—Orientation & Birding in SoFo Field: Ages 8-18 • 10:30am
- 15 • American Woodcock—A Snipe Search: A/T • 7pm
- 22 • SoFo Earth Day Celebration & Open House • 10am-4pm
- See detailed schedule of activities on SoFo website
- Shinnecock Indian Nation Visits SoFo: All Ages (Free) • 10am-1pm
- Animal Face Painting: C (Free) • 10am-Noon
- Snapping Turtle Challenge Game: C5+ (Free) • 10am-Noon
- Jungle Bob's Live-Animal Extravaganza F • 2-3pm
- See SoFo Website sofo.org/calendar for fees
- 23 • Birding for Adults with Joe Giunta—Early Spring Migration • 8am
- 23 • Nature & Bird-Watching Cruise—Birding with Frank A/C10+ • 9:45am-1pm
- 26 & 28 • Birding with Benefits for Seniors—2 Part Program A • 4/26: 1pm, 4/28: 8am
- 29 • Seed Scientists: Story & Hands-on Activity: C3-5 • 10:30am
- 29 • Meet SoFo's Diamonds—The Diamondback Terrapins: C6+ • 2pm
- 30 • Learning to Draw SoFo's Live Plants & Animals: A/T • 10am
- 30 • *The City Dark*: Documentary; Physical & Psychological Effects of Light Pollution: A/T • 3-4pm

May

- Young Birders Club—May Date & Time TBD: Ages 8-18
- 6 • Peconic Family Fun Day: Free Children's Nature Carnival at CMEE • 10am-Noon
- 6 • East Hampton Shellfish Enhancement & Education Directive Lecture: History of the Oyster in N.Y.: A/T • 5pm
- 7 • Learning to Draw SoFo's Live Plants & Animals: A/T • 10am
- 10 • Full Flower Moon Hike—One Hour: A/T • 8:30pm
- 10 • Citizen Science—Take Part in the Horseshoe Crab Survey A/T • 9:30pm
- 10 & 11 • Birding at Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, Brigantine Division: A
- See Details on SoFo Website
- 13 • Book Club—New Members Welcome! *H is for Hawk*: A • 10am
- 13 • What Shell is This? A Family Beach Exploration • 10:30am
- 13 • Printing Native Botanicals—Making Monoprints: A/C12+ • 1pm
- 20 • Second Annual Sag Harbor Cultural Heritage Day

May

John Jermain Library & Throughout the Town: F • 10am

- 21 • Birding with Frank—Spring Migration, Long Pond Greenbelt Nature Center: A/T • 9am
- 21 • Beach-Rock Bingo—Beach Exploration: C3-5 • 10:30am
- 27 • Salamander Seining & Some Frogs Too: F • 10am
- 27 • Who Is on that Tree? Beginner Family Birding: F/C6+ • 2pm
- 28 • Sea Glass Search & Creative Story-Telling: F • 10:30am
- 28 • Reception and Fundraiser for the East Hampton Shellfish Education & Enhancement Directive • 4pm

June

Young Birders Club—June Date & Time TBD: Ages 8-18

- 3 • Birding with Eric Salzman—Birds of the Meadow & Woods: A/T • 8:30am
- 3 • Secrets of the Forest & Pond—A Family Exploration • 10am
- 3 • SoFo's 3rd Annual Climate Change Symposium • 4-6pm
"A Discussion on the State of our Oceans & Marine Ecosystems"
- 9 • Full Strawberry Moon Hike One Hour: A/C • 9pm
- 9 • Citizen Science—Another Horseshoe Crab Survey: A/T • 9:45pm
- 10 • Book Club—New Members Welcome! A • 10am
Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature
- 10 • Piping Plover—An Onsite Look at a L.I. Endangered Species: A/T • 9:30am
- 11 • "Signs" of Summer—Learn Words in American Sign Language: F/C3+ • 10:30am
- 14 • Birding for Adults with Joe Giunta—Breeding Warblers • 8am
- 17 • Ecosystem Engineers! Create Your Own Mini Ecosystem: F/C 8+ • 10:30am
- 17 • The Ultimate Shark Experience! Boat Trip: F/C12+ • 9am-Noon
- 17 • The Secret Life of Snakes—A Meet & Greet: F/C6+ • 2pm
- 24 • Birding with Frank—Woodland Species: A/T • 9am
- 24 • Nature Paddle in Northwest Creek with Mike Bottini • 9am
- 24 • Family Salt Marsh Exploration at Munn Point • 2pm
- 24 • *Citizen Scientist* by Mary Ellen Hannibal—Author Reading & Reception • 3pm
- 24 • Observing Ospreys—A Watch & A Walk: A/C10+ • 6:30pm
- 25 • Create Your Own Special Beach Story & A Memory Jar: C3-5 • 10:30am
- 25 • Shifting Sands—How Tides & Waves Change Our Shores: A • 6pm

A full description of each program and time frame is listed on
the SoFo website at www.sofa.org/calendar

Advance reservations are required for all programs.





South Fork Natural History Museum & Nature Center

377 Bridgehampton Sag Harbor Turnpike

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☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

☐ Gift Membership

☐ Donation

Membership Categories

☐ \$60 Individual

☐ \$100 Family

☐ \$200 Friend

☐ \$350 Supporter

☐ \$500 Patron

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☐ \$5,000 Founder

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Business Circle Categories

☐ \$100 Library

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☐ \$2,500 Supporter

☐ \$5,000 Patron

To learn about member categories with benefits, and to join, please go to <http://sofo.org/membership>.

To learn about business circle categories and to join online, please go to <http://sofo.org/membership>

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Please send me:

E-mails about nature walks and programs: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Digital Newsletter/Calendar (need e-mail address): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please make your check payable to SoFo.

Please charge my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Amer. Express ☐ Discover

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____ Billing Zip Code _____

(last 3 numbers on back of card or 4 on front of AmEx)

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The South Fork Natural History Museum & Nature Center (SoFo) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, environmental education organization chartered by the New York State Department of Education. Your membership/donation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



Ashley Federici

My fascination with the natural world stemmed from childhood. At a young age, I learned about pond life, and after that I was immediately enamored—obsessed even—with frogs. I spent many days playing in the woods and acquainting myself with what lies under the leaf litter. As I grew and learned about different parts of the environment, I decided that marine biology was my true passion because I found the vast ocean and what lies beneath it to be so intriguing. I graduated from Stony Brook University with a B.A. in Environmental Studies and a concentration in Marine Science. My particular interest lies in ecotourism because I want to inspire others to not only care about the natural world but to take action to insure its wellbeing. I firmly believe that we should live in harmony with the plants and animals around us. Working at SoFo, I am able to share this philosophy as well as what I've learned about the natural world. This desire has been at the forefront of my working life—in the position of educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension; as an interpretive aide at the National Aquarium in Baltimore; and as a stranding technician and educator at the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation. At SoFo, I have focused in much of my educational programming—for children and adults—on issues of sustainability. One of my favorites has been a program Ashley Oliver and I developed that focuses on local farms and cheese producers and is designed to emphasize the importance of the “farm-to-table” movement and reduction of our carbon footprint. In addition to my other responsibilities at SoFo, I compile the statistical records for a variety of the museum's projects.



Ashley Oliver (part-time)

Growing up, I spent every weekend with my family on the water. For the first few years of my life, we would go camping at the ocean at the Shinnecock Inlet and, as I got older, we spent every weekend on our boat in the Peconic Bay. Since I grew up in the North Sea area of Southampton, in a neighborhood on the bay, I always had the water right at my doorstep. When I entered high school, I became interested in both land and sea habitats. I was lucky enough to be able to take intensive marine science courses in oceanography, aquaculture, and hatchery design and management, at Southampton High School. In 2012, I was the recipient of the SoFo Award and Scholarship as a result of my coursework and grades at Southampton High. I attended Suffolk County Community College and earned my associate degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences: General Studies. Currently, I am attending Long Island University and will be graduating in May 2017 with a degree in Sustainability and a concentration in Earth Science/Geology. I plan to continue my education by enrolling in a Master's program in September. My association with SoFo continued after high school when I was chosen to intern at the museum during the summers of 2015 and 2016, as nature educator and a member of the summer Marine Science Program staff. I am currently employed here as a part-time nature educator, which leaves time for my college classes. In the future, I hope to work in the aquaculture field and continue educating my community about the importance of the environment in the hope that future generations will be aware of the importance of preserving the natural beauty and health of our planet.

SOFO ANNOUNCES NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL

SoFo is very pleased to announce our new South Fork Natural History Museum Advisory Council, comprised of dedicated friends of the museum who are leaders in their fields. We are very grateful for their involvement. Please join us in welcoming our new Advisory Council members:

Peter Boyd
Amy Butte
April Gornik
Alex Guarnaschelli
Debra Halpert
Kerry Heffernan

Greg Lippmann
Nick Martin
Ada Samuelsson
Samrita Seltzer
Irene Tully

SOFO ANNOUNCES NEW AFTER SCHOOL NATURE ENRICHMENT BILINGUAL PROGRAM

SoFo is very pleased to announce its new After School Nature Enrichment Bilingual program, made possible by a grant from the Long Island Community Foundation, and an anonymous foundation, offered to ensure that all Latino and Hispanic families in our community are able to experience all that the museum has to offer while learning about the fragile ecosystems of Long Island. This nature program enables SoFo to have bilingual high school students work in conjunction with our nature educators to guide visiting children and their parents through the museum's scientifically accurate natural habitat interactive exhibits; the terrariums, aquariums and acclaimed touch tank, home to over 23 examples of marine animals; to experience guided nature walks; and to study the wildlife, marine life, and rich natural heritage of the area.

Bilingual instructors will be at the museum every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00–5:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 1:00–4:00 pm. Admission to this program will be free for participating families.

Each year, SoFo offers over 250 educational and environmental programs for children and adults. By reaching new audiences who have not yet been served by SoFo, we hope to further engender an ongoing connection to the natural world through direct observation and discovery, providing the tools everyone needs to become engaged and responsible stewards of our planet now and for generations to come.

“We are extremely grateful to the Long Island Community Foundation for enabling SoFo to offer this important program,” says Frank Quevedo, SoFo's Executive Director. “We are delighted to work with the Latino and Hispanic communities in our area as we continue to strive to inspire and educate everyone to be responsible stewards of our planet.” Adds Minerva Perez, Executive Director of OLA of Eastern Long Island: “OLA is so pleased to see that Latino families will be connected to the important work that SoFo is doing.”

SAVE THE DATE SOFO'S 3rd ANNUAL CLIMATE CHANGE SYMPOSIUM

June 3, 2017 • 4-6pm

“A Discussion on the State of our Oceans & Marine Ecosystems”

Free and Open to the Public
Wine & Light refreshments will be served



Young Birders Club Takes-Off

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We hope to see you on April 15th—and let's go birding!

South Fork
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Xylia Serafy
Eleni Nikolopoulos
Ashley Federici
Ashley Oliver

Newsletter and Calendar: Carol Crasson



South Fork
Natural History
Museum (SoFo)

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