

SOFO naturalist



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

Saving *an* Endangered Orchid

by Julie Sakellariadis

In early 2015, the Garden Club of East Hampton joined forces with the South Fork Natural History Museum to initiate an effort to save New York State's last known population of the yellow-fringed orchid, *Platanthera ciliaris*.

The population, located in Amagansett, had withered from about 125 blooming specimens 30 years ago to one blooming plant in 2015, and it is a high priority for the New York Natural Heritage Program for rare and endangered plants. We are pleased to report success three years later—enough to justify continuing our efforts enthusiastically.



Platanthera ciliaris, close-up of cluster of small yellow blossoms

Credit: Dr. Thomas G. Barnes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service /University of Kentucky

Officially funded and sponsored by the Garden Club of America's Partners For Plants program, which seeks to empower GCA volunteers to work with community partners on conservation projects, Leslie Clarke and I of GCEH initially reached out to Jim Ash and Frank Quevedo of SoFo in the winter of 2015. A self-trained and excellent botanist, Jim is among the preeminent "plant hunters" on Long Island and had last documented the status of the South Fork's orchids in 1997. At that time, Jim was only able to locate 24 of the original 37 orchids known to be native to the area. He and Leslie—and sometimes I—undertook weekly field trips to locate and document the plants on Jim's 1997 list.



Jim Ash and Leslie Clarke locating and documenting plants

After this initial summer, we understood how terribly endangered native orchids are today. Almost all of the 24 documented in Jim's 1997 survey are in serious de-

cline, and some we couldn't locate at all. In fact, in recent decades, populations of native orchids across the state have dropped by 70% and others are locally extinct. Causes include herbivory from a burgeoning deer population, natural succession of open marshes and grasslands into shrub lands, roadside mowing and winter salting, human ignorance (i.e., digging up orchids in the wild—they never survive the transplant process, by the way), habitat change caused by invasive plants like phragmites that lower the water table, and, of course, human development.

But our fieldwork also was heartening. Highlights were seeing lady's slippers in bloom in late May/early June, finding the last blooming yellow-fringed orchid in the state of NY, exploring a healthy population of 400-500 pale fringed orchids, hiking into a wetland to discover the green club spur orchid, visiting a small population of dainty ladies' tresses, and corresponding from the field with Dr. Matthew Pace of the New York Botanical Garden to clarify the identification of an orchid that local experts had argued about—*Spiranthes cernua*, blooming on the Montauk Highway in September. By the way, Jim was right!

The summer's fieldwork inspired us to take action to save the single yellow-fringed orchid we'd found, the last of its species in the entire state. Although there was only one blooming plant on the site, we located about 20 sterile leaves—*P. ciliaris* plants waiting to accumulate the energy to bloom. Jim also reminded us that seeds can survive in a dormant state in the soil for up to forty years (in what is called the soil seed bank) waiting for the right conditions to germinate. For these reasons, and because terrestrial orchids rely on symbiotic relationships with soil fungi that are unique to any given location, we decided our efforts needed to be conducted in situ.

The yellow-fringed orchid typically grows on roadsides, and we hoped to push it back a bit where it could grow more safely, less susceptible to winter salting, roadside mowing, and vehicles using the shoulder to park or turn around. (There are many more homes in this area compared to 30 years ago, and salting roads in winter began roughly in the last decade.) Our first step was to find a surveyor who could identify the relevant property owners. Then we recruited the various property owners the surveyor had identified: the Town of



Steve Young, Chief Botanist New York Natural Heritage Program, and Leslie Clarke locating *P. ciliaris* leaves in order to place protective enclosures around the plants.

East Hampton (road right-of-way), a local property owners association (a ten-foot strip of land parallel to the road), and The Nature Conservancy (the nature preserve behind this strip). We knew we would need expertise in orchid restoration, so we asked Dr. Eric Lamont, author of the

Continued on next page



Orchids of New England and New York, to be our advisor. And we assembled a team of volunteer workers to help clear brush in order to bring more sunlight to the forest floor.

Three years later, in the summer of 2017, with care and vigilance, the site hosted five blooming plants, two of which produced seeds, as well as 25 sterile leaves.

We are very optimistic about the upcoming summer. This past winter, with Crystal Possehl Oakes' help, about 15 vol-

P. ciliaris in full bloom. August 3, 2017

unteers again cleared brush to ensure adequate sunlight to the forest floor. The snow and rain this past winter portends a bountiful water table, so needed during the hot summer months. In early summer, we'll return to start protecting the emerging plants from hungry deer. And with time, we hope to return this population to its original strength and offer passersby a welcome and beautiful view.



Protected *P. ciliaris*. Post bloom with developing seed capsules, September 9, 2017

Julie Sakellariadis is a member of the Board of Trustees of the New York Botanical Garden, where she serves as Co-Chair of the Botanical Science Committee and Vice Chairman for Strategic Planning. She also is First Vice President and Chair of Community Gardens for the Garden Club of East Hampton. She and her husband live in Amagansett and New York City.

All photos, unless otherwise credited, by Julie Sakellariadis.

Footnotes on Nature

Say No to Plastics!

by Eleni Nikolopoulos, SoFo Environmental Educator

During the past six months, SoFo has established its "SoFo Cleans the Beach" initiative, carried out by SoFo staff, members, and participants from various environmental groups around the East End. We have been meeting at different beach locations on the second Saturday of every month and removing the trash found there. Over these past few months we have realized a pattern in the trash collected. There are mass amounts of plastic! Micro-plastic is the worst (tiny pieces of broken-down plastics), as well as whole bottles, and lots of mylar balloons.



SoFo's Clean the Beach display, made out of trash collected from South Fork beaches between October 2017 and April 2018. Display constructed and photo by former SoFo Environmental Educator Ashley Federici. A special thank you to Ashley Federici for inspiring this article and pushing the SoFo staff to use less plastic during her time here!

While we were "cleaning," our first thought was how terrible it is that all these horrible people are littering the beach. We kept saying to ourselves "Don't they know they are harming the environment?" But the more research we did about beach trash and where it comes from, the more we realized it's not put there by horrible people... but left there from all of us.

Yes, even you, even all of us, SoFo members and people who care deeply about the natural world, we contribute to the plastics washing up on the beach, the plastics that are killing sea life and are creating an inhospitable environment for our native plants and animals—it is our wrong-doing. Even if we don't directly litter the beaches with trash, we litter it indirectly; every time we purchase single-use plastics, we contribute to the problem. Most litter that winds up on our beaches is blown there from landfills, or recycling centers, or out of our own trash bins. So yes, even if you always recycle, it is still a problem.

The solution, however, is simple. Just making a conscious effort every day to reduce your consumption of single-use plastics would make a huge impact in helping the environment. You can help in many ways—by choosing to bring your own carry-out containers when ordering take-out food, or bringing your own metal mug for coffee, as well as carrying a metal straw and your own reusable utensils when purchasing food or drink on the go. Another helpful way to cut down on plastic consumption is to bring your own reusable produce bags to the grocery store. The more aware you are of the amount of single-use plastics you are using, the more you will realize that you can make a genuine difference in protecting our beaches.

Plastic straws are one of the worst offenders. We find them on the beach all the time, and they do serious harm to marine life. Just by simply asking for 'no straw' in your drink, you will be helping save marine life. The Surfrider Foundation has launched their "Strawless Summer" campaign. You can read more about it below. Help us rid the oceans of plastic straws! Any questions, comments, or concerns about how to reduce our plastic waste, please feel free to contact me at enikolopoulos@sofo.org.

Please join us at our upcoming beach cleanups on Tuesday, July 17 at 6 pm, Saturday, August 11 at 8 am, and Saturday, September 8 at 8 am. Call SoFo at 631-537-9735 for meeting locations. We will con-

377 Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike

P.O. Box 455

Bridgehampton, NY 11932-0455

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

Find us on Facebook  Twitter  Instagram 



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

www.sof.org/calendar

July, & August, September

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 and under free

Museum Admission and Program – Adults \$15, Children \$10 (Ages 3-12),
Ages 2 and 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.



SoFo's Young Birder's Club

(for ages 8 through 18) will meet monthly in July, August, & September.
The specific dates & times TBD. For relevant information, please contact
the Birding Club Advisor, Frank Quevedo, South Fork Natural History
Museum (SoFo) Executive Director, at 631.537.9735
or by email at fquevedo@sofo.org.



Drawing by Susan Rubin, SoFo workshop student

Look. See. Draw.... See even more!

by Muriel Appelbaum, Drawing Instructor

Drawing is another way of tuning into the natural world around us. When we look closely at a landscape or a seascape, we notice more about it. The same thing happens when we look closely at a leaf or at an animal. Notice how very different the shape of a box turtle's shell is from the shell of a water turtle. Right! I guess that's why it's called a box turtle. Once I observed the difference in the shape of the two turtle shells, I could draw the outlines of the two shells. And the more I looked at the turtles, the more I saw. Observing differences is a good way to start tuning in to nature.

If I had a dark-blue colored pencil, and one with a lighter blue lead, I could easily show myself the difference between the two colors on a piece of paper. Then I could look at the blue sky and notice it's a different color near the horizon, compared to straight up. Now I could use the two blue colors in my drawing to show the difference.

Shapes, colors, shadows—they tell us more about the natural world. I will be leading a drawing workshop at SoFo on most Wednesdays in July and August and on most weekends starting in September. Join us when you can. We'll be using our observational skills to draw the natural world around us.

Sunday, July 1: 10:30am • Wednesday, July 18: 10:30am

Wednesday, July 25: 10:30am • Wednesday, August 1: 10:30am

Wednesday, August 8: 10:30am • Wednesday, August 15: 10:30am

Wednesday, August 22: 10:30am • Wednesday, August 29: 10:30am

Saturday, September 15: 10:30am • Sunday, September 23: 10:30am

Saturday, September 29: 10:30am

Calendar At A Glance

Key: A-Adults T-Teens C-Children F-Family AA-All Ages

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.

July

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | • Make Your Own Fish Print T-Shirt & Learn About Local Fishes: F • | 10am |
| 1 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 1 | • Wildlife Rehabilitation Basics—How You Can Get Involved! A/C 8+ • | 2pm |
| 7 | • Surfrider's Blue Water Task Force—Salt Water Testing Workshop: AA • | 10am |
| 7 | • Plovers & Terns on Beaches, Oh My! AA • | 10:30am |
| 7 | • Beach Walk with Biologist Dr. Keith Serafy: AA • | 6pm |
| 14 | • On the Beach with Atlantic Marine Conservation Society—
Sea Turtles/ Marine Debris: A/C8+ • | 6pm |
| 14 | • SoFo Summer Gala: See SoFo website, www.sofo.org/summer-gala/ • | 6-10pm |
| 17 | • Surfrider Foundation & SoFo Beach Cleanup: AA • | 6pm |
| 18 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 20 | • Astronomy Night/Star Viwing with the Montauk Observatory: A/C8+ • | 8:30pm |
| 21 | • Birding with Frank—Shorebirds: A/C8+ • | 9am |
| 21 | • Lost Ladybug Search at Quail Hill Farm: AA • | 10am-12pm |
| 21 | • The Nature of Juggling: A/C8+ • | 10:30am |
| 21 | • Family Salt Marsh Exploration at Munn Point: F • | 6:15pm |
| 22 | • Dragonfly/Damselfly Walk & Identification: A/C 8+ • | 10am |
| 22 | • Wolves—Fact vs. Fiction & What You Need To Know: A/C8+ • | 2pm |
| 25 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 27 | • Full Buck Moon Hike: AA • | 9-10pm |
| 28 | • Secret Life of a Pond: A/C4+ • | 10:30am |
| 28 | • Oil Spill Simulation—Become a Member of the Cleanup Crew: C6-8 • | 2pm |
| 28 | • Can Plum Island Be Saved? Biological Linchpin of an Archipelago: A/T • | 6pm |
| 29 | • Seahorse Safari: C 3-5 • | 10:30am |

August

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | • Southampton Animal Shelter Dog & Cat Adoption Day at SoFo: AA • | 10am-1pm |
| 1 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 4 | • Plovers & Terns on the Beach, Oh My!: AA • | 10:30am |
| 4 | • Tour of Conscious Point Shellfish Hatchery: A/C 8+ • | 10am |
| 4 | • Whale Watching Cruise Aboard the <i>R.V. Paumanok</i> : A/C12+ • | 10am-2pm |
| 5 | • Special Visit to the Montauk Ocean Institute: AA • | 1-3pm |
| 8 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 10 | • Astronomy Night/Star Viwing with the Montauk Observatory: A/C8+ • | 8:30pm |
| 11 | • SoFo Cleans the Beach: AA • | 8am |
| 11 | • Surfrider's Blue Water Task Force—Salt Water Testing Workshop: AA • | 10am |
| 11 | • The Original Hamptons Nightlife—Nocturnal Insects: A/ C8+ • | 3pm |
| 11 | • Sea Glass Search & Treasure Hunt: F • | 6pm |
| 12 | • Virtual Shark Dissection: A/C 8+ • | 10:30am |
| 15 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 18 | • Marine Biology Boat Trip—Hands-On Trawling
with the Experts: A/C8+ • | 9:45am-1pm |
| 18 | • <i>Why Does Soil Get Treated Like Dirt?</i> Perfect Earth Project: C5-12 • | 10:30am |
| 18 | • <i>The Dirt on Soil Health</i> —Presented by the Perfect Earth Project: A/T • | 2pm |
| 19 | • Beach Memory Jars: C3-5 • | 9am |
| 21 | • Seahorse Survey at the Beach with Cornell Coop. Extension: AA • | 11am |
| 22 | • Come Draw with Us! A/T • | 10:30am |
| 25 | • Full Sturgeon Moon Hike: F • | 8:30-9:30pm |
| 26 | • Montauk Trail Hike at Shadmoor with CCOM: AA • | 8am |

Calendar At A Glance

Key: A-Adults T-Teens C-Children F-Family AA-All Ages

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.

<i>September</i>	1	• Snapping Turtles—Andy’s Prehistoric Monster Hunt: F •	10am
	6	• Birding with Frank to Celebrate World Shorebirds Day: A/C8+ •	10am
	7	• <i>Rescuing Ladybugs: Inspirational Moments with Animals that Changed the World</i> —Jennifer Skiff, Author Reading & Discussion: A/C8+ •	7pm
	7	• Astronomy Night/Star Viwing with the Montauk Observatory: A/C8+ •	8:30pm
	8	• SoFo Cleans the Beach: AA	8am
	8	• Surfrider’s Blue Water Task Force—Salt Water Testing Workshop: AA •	10am
	9	• Bay Seining with Al Daniels: F •	10am
	9	• Trees of Green & Things that Fly: F/C6+ •	2pm
	15	• Tie-Dye with a Twist—Nature Walk & T-Shirt Printing: F •	10am
	15	• Come Draw with Us! A/T •	10:30am
	15	• Update in Conservation—Status of the Piping Plover & Least Tern in Southampton Town: A/T •	2pm
	15	• Family Beach Exploration at Ponquogue: F •	6:15pm
	16	• Secrets of Skulls: A/C8+ •	10:30am
	22	• Climate Change Conversation with Notable Environmental Experts: A/C8+ •	5-7pm
	23	• Birding with Frank: Fall Migration: A/C8+ •	9am
	23	• Come Draw with Us! A/T •	10:30am
	24	• Full Harvest Moon Hike: AA •	8-9pm
	29	• Come Draw with Us! A/T •	10:30am
	29	• Shark Tagging & Tracking for Girls—Gills Club: Girls 8+ •	10:30am
	29	• Atlantic White Shark Conservancy—Shark Awareness Inspires Conservation: A/T •	2pm
	30	• Nature Walk—SoFo to Mashashimuet Park: A/T	10am



Animals you might see and/or learn about at a SoFo summer program.

*Snapping Turtle, Ruddy Turnstone, Piping Plover: credit John Papajohn, Northern Line Seahorse: credit Miles Todaro
 Dragonfly: credit Xylia Serafy, Monarch Butterfly, Summer Flounder: credit Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, Bay Scallop*

tinue to list the dates for beach cleanups in our quarterly *Calendar At A Glance*, printed with the *SoFo Newsletter*, and in greater detail on the Calendar page of our website: www.sofo.org/calendar/.



“Eli the Turtle”—*The Surfrider Foundation’s turtle made completely out of trash (mostly straws) collected from our local beaches. Photo credit: Colleen Henn, Surfrider Foundation*

Surfrider Foundation’s *Strawless Summer*:

Surfrider Foundation’s Eastern Long Island Chapter has just launched a program called *Strawless Summer*, with the goal to reduce the number of plastic straws that are being used on the East End of Long Island. Restaurants are being asked to pledge to do one of these three things:

1. Go completely strawless.
2. Provide biodegradable alternatives (paper, bamboo) ONLY upon request.
3. Provide reusable alternatives (stainless steel, glass).

There is a worldwide movement to make plastic straws an item of the past, and those restaurants who pledge to participate in *Strawless Summer* will be highlighted and celebrated for doing the right thing. The easiest thing you can do to help is to remind your server, “no straw, please!” For more info go to easternli.surfrider.org.

SoFo news



Andy Sabin, Scott & Sammi Seltzer, Debra Halpert & Kathie Qian

SoFo’s Advisory Council Reception at Pierre’s May 19, 2018

Sponsored by Hamptons Magazine

by Diana Aceti, Director of Development

We would like to send a very special thank you to our Board of Directors and our Advisory Council members who helped make our May 19 Advisory Council reception, sponsored by our friends at Hamptons Magazine, such an enjoyable event. Guests enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and spirits at Pierre’s Upstairs Lounge as they celebrated our Advisory Council Ambassadors: Nejma & Peter Beard, Peter Boyd, Amy Butte, Michael Cinque, Leslie Clarke,



Kim & Greg Lippmann, George Held and Kimberly Goff

Nick Combemale, Gerry Curatola, Stanley Glinka, April Gornik, Alex Guarnaschelli, Debra Halpert, Kerry Heffernan, Jane Held, Greg Lippmann, Nick Martin, Steve McKenna, Ada Samuelsson, Samriti Seltzer, and Irene Tully. Guests kicked off SoFo’s 29th Annual Summer Gala Benefit, which will take place at the museum on Saturday, July 14 honoring Courtney Ross, Don Church and Russ Mittermeier, chaired by Sammi & Scott Seltzer and Patsy & Jeff Tarr. Our hosts are Leslie Clarke, Alex Guarnaschelli and Debra Halpert. We send a special thank you to our dedicated Ambassadors of the museum, all of whom are leaders in their fields. We are very grateful for their commitment and involvement.

Save the Date for SOFO’s 29th Annual Summer Gala Benefit Saturday, July 14, 2018 6–10 pm

at the South Fork Natural History Museum

Save the Date for SOFO’s 4th Annual Climate Change Conversation Saturday, September 22, 2018 5–7 pm

at the South Fork Natural History Museum

Please join us for a panel discussion and reception with Notable Environmental Experts.

*the
Nature
clubhouse*

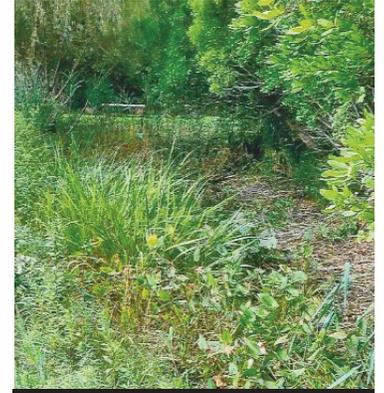
SoFo’s Frog Pond

A huge thank you to Michael Finalborgo who, in 2016, as a prospective Eagle Scout and a Southampton High School student, took on as his Eagle Scout Service Project the renovation of SoFo’s teaching pond, helping to turn it into what has now become a prime example of a healthy vernal pond. Michael achieved his Eagle Scout status in 2017 and is now a sophomore at the University of New Hampshire, Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics.

It has taken from November 2016 to the spring of 2018 for the educational pond to take on a mature, natural profile – now officially named *Frog Pond*—a beautiful example of the vernal pond Michael and SoFo envisioned.
Photos on back page



Michael and his team installing the new clay and sodium bentonite pond liner



The flourishing Frog Pond

South Fork
Natural
History
Museum
(SoFo)
Board of
Directors

Andrew Sabin,
President
James T. Ash,
Vice President
William G. Miller,
Secretary
Jonathan Sabin,
Treasurer

Newsletter and Calendar:
Carol Crasson
Eleni Nikolopoulos

Barbara Blaisdell
Steve Englebright
Kimberly Goff
George Held
Jeffrey Keil
Carl Safina
Daniel Shedrick
Peddrick Weis
Wayne Whitmore

advisory council
Nejma Beard
Peter Beard
Peter Boyd
Amy Butte
Michael Cinque
Nick Combemale
Gerry Curatola
Stanley Glinka
April Gornik
Alex Guarnaschelli
Debra Halpert
Kerry Heffernan
Jane Held

Greg Lippmann
Nick Martin
Steven McKenna
Ada Samuelsson
Samriti Seltzer
Irene Tully
staff
Executive Director
Frank Quevedo
*Director of
Development*
Diana Aceti

*Director of Education/
Communications*
Carol Crasson
*Membership &
Development Associate*
Crystal Oakes
Environmental Educators
Melanie Meade
Xylia Serafy
Eleni Nikolopoulos
Taylor Ruhle



South Fork
Natural History
Museum (SoFo)

P.O. Box 455, Bridgehampton, NY 11932-0455
(631) 537-9735
email: sofo@hamptons.com
www.sofo.org

The SoFo *Naturalist* is published
quarterly as a benefit of membership

Address Service Requested

Dated Material



Printed on Recycled Paper with Soy Ink

BULK RATE
Non-Profit
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #5
Bridgehampton,
NY 11932