

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

SOFO Celebrates 30 Years of Environmental Education

Letter from the Executive Director, Frank Quevedo

As we enter our 30th year as a leader in environmental education and conservation, I am happy to report that our journey so far has been extremely fulfilling and successful. With the ongoing support of our dedicated Board of Directors, our Advisory Council, our staff, our partners, our members, our volunteers, and other friends throughout the world, we are bringing to life the dreams and goals of our organization's Founders—a group of South Fork naturalists concerned about the future of the area's fragile ecosystems who came together to establish the first natural history museum on the South Fork in 1988.



SOFO's Groundbreaking in 1999

During the past 30 years, SOFO has grown from a small nature clubhouse to a 6,400 square foot state-of-the-art museum highly regarded for our outstanding nature exhibits, our beautiful setting adjacent to the Vineyard Field Preserve, and our over 270 annual on- and off-site educational programs focusing on environmental stewardship, climate change, sustainable energy, marine science, community outreach, and more.

With the help of your ongoing involvement and commitment to our cause, SOFO has launched numerous new projects and initiatives, including our new SOFO Shark Research & Education Program, designed to enhance stewardship of Long Island's shark community through scientific research, data sharing with marine resource managers, and educating the public about the sharks' important ecological roles. An exciting component is SOFO's new interactive exhibit, which brings visitors virtually face-to-face with these important marine predators. Incorporating scientific data directly from our team of collaborating scientists, the exhibit includes a Virtual Shark Tagging Experience, satellite tracking maps, photos from the field, and all kinds of biological facts about our local sharks.



Shark Exhibit 2018

Additionally, we have expanded our community outreach, with programs focusing on green architecture, STEAM-related programs, health and wellness forums discussing conditions caused by climate change effects, and our new, free year-long drop-off "Protecting our Long Island Environment Program", offered free of charge at the museum in three six-week sessions in the winter, spring, and fall of 2019, made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor. Designed for young naturalists, the activities correlate with elementary school science content and Next Generation Science standards, and are taught by local, certified elementary school teachers with bilingual support for English language learners.



Connecting with Nature

We hope that you will join us to celebrate our 30-year milestone at events that include our April Earth Day Open House; our 30th Anniversary Summer Gala Benefit on July 13, which raises funds for SOFO's educational and environmental programming; our 5th Annual Climate Change Discussion in September; our Members-Only Family Days; and our Thanksgiving Open House.

We thank you for your involvement and hope you will continue your support as we strive to raise environmental awareness by providing the inspiration and tools for all of us to become caring and responsible stewards of our planet.

Sincerely,

Frank C. Quevedo
Executive Director

“The Eagle Has Landed!”

by Frank Quevedo, SOFO Executive Director



Juvenile Bald Eagle – Photo: Ken Thomas / USFWS

My first sighting of a bald eagle on Long Island was during the fall of 2005 in Napeague Harbor, Amagansett. The bird was a juvenile as indicated by its dark plumage and white underwing feathers. It was soaring from the vicinity of Hither Hills State Park in Montauk toward the Promised Land in East Hampton. With its nearly seven-foot wing span, the bird effortlessly glided over and landed on the remnants of a chimney stack from a once-active fish factory on Hicks Island in Napeague Bay. My colleagues and I were provided with a quick glimpse of the majestic raptor before it took flight and disappeared toward Gardiners Island in East Hampton. I would soon learn that it was a significant sighting.



Bald Eagle Pair – Photo: Tom Koerner / USFWS

In December 2006, during the annual Montauk Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Gardiners Island, Mary Laura and Eric Lamont encountered a large tree nest with a pair of adult eagles nearby. In the years after the initial sighting, and after surveying the same territory for the CBC, they observed the same nest being utilized by bald eagles. This observation provided sufficient evidence to confirm that this location was the first bald eagle nest on Long Island in 76 years.

The bird’s absence on Long Island for all those years was mainly due to the spraying of the pesticide dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT). When DDT enters the ecosystem, it accumulates in the fatty tissues of many organisms. The concentration of DDT increases as you move up the food chain through predator/prey interactions. As an apex predator, bald eagles absorbed high amounts of this chemical, inhibiting their ability to produce thick eggshells and leading to crushed eggs during the incubation process.

In 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a ban on DDT spraying based on its harmful effects on the environment and risk to human health. Since the discovery of the Gardiner’s Island nest, there have been several other confirmed bald eagle nesting sites on Long Island. In 2013, an active nest was spotted along the Carmen’s River at the Wertheim Wildlife Refuge in Shirley. In 2014, Derek Rogers of the Nature Conservancy found a nest with an incubating female at the Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island, another at the Bayard Cutting Arboretum in Great River, Connetquot River State Park Preserve in Oakdale, and most recently in 2017 at Centerport’s Mill Pond. These recent sightings, along with other nests not yet seen or confirmed, is an indication that these eagles have landed and are calling Long Island home once again.



Bald Eagle alighting on nest – Photo: Luke Ormand & @JrookPhotos

Important *Potential Distressed-Bird Note* *Regarding Purple Martins*

Purple martins have accepted SOFO’s multifamily housing and return each year to nest. When, and if, conditions present themselves—when temperatures are too low to provide the martins with the flying insect food they need and this situation continues for a few days—the birds will need your help! If this should occur, directed by SOFO’s Purple Martin Steward, John Shemilt, we will post dates and times for you to visit SOFO and help feed the birds. This information will be posted on our Facebook page and on our website.



South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) Calendar At A Glance Spring 2019

377 Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike

P.O. Box 455

Bridgehampton, NY 11932-0455

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

Find us on Facebook  Twitter  Instagram 



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

www.sofo.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 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 sofo@hamptons.com.

Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meetings at the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO)

*SOFO is hosting the Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meetings of the Empire State Lyme Disease Association
on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm throughout the year.*

These group gatherings will provide the following—support, education, resources, hope, referrals, advocacy, and science. The meeting is intended for those suffering from Tick-Borne Diseases, their families, and their friends as well as those who are simply interested in finding out more about Tick-Borne Diseases. Interested participants should check the schedule at www.tickwise.org prior to each meeting for changes or cancellations.

Spring meeting dates are

Wednesdays – April 10 and 24

Wednesdays – May 8 and 22

Wednesdays – June 12 and 26

A full description of each program is listed on the
SOFO website: www.sofo.org/calendar

Calendar At A Glance

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

* Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math (STEAM) programming

A full description of each program is listed on the SOFO website at www.sofo.org/calendar.

Advance reservations are required for all programs.

April

- | | | |
|----|---|---------|
| 6 | • Six-Mile Nature Hike at Mashomack Preserve with SOFO: A/T • | 10am |
| 6 | • *Hiding in Plain Sight—Camouflage & Craft: C3-5 • | 10:30am |
| 7 | • *A Frog's Life History & Make an Origami Jumping Frog with Light-Up LED Eyes: C8+ • | 10:30am |
| 10 | • Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meeting • | 6:30pm |
| 12 | • *The Lure of the Moon and the Legacy of Apollo—Astronomy Talk & Moon/Star Viewing with Montauk Observatory: A/C10+ • | 7pm |
| 13 | • Southampton Beach Cleanup with SOFO Staff: AA • | 10-11am |
| 13 | • *SOFO Shark Research & Education Program—Gearing Up for the 2019 Field Season with Chief Field Coordinator Greg Metzger: AA • | 10:30am |
| 13 | • Search for the Singing Frogs—Spring Peepers: A Nighttime Montauk Exploration, Suffolk County Parks fee \$4: A/T • | 7pm |
| 19 | • One Hour Full "Pink Moon" Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA • | 8pm |
| 20 | • Birding with Joe Giunta—Early Spring Migration at Promised Land: A • | 8am |
| 20 | • *Young Birders Club—Purple Martins, with John Shemilt, SOFO's Purple Martin Steward: C/T Ages 8 - 18 • | 10am |
| 24 | • Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meeting • | 6:30pm |

22-26 Spring School Recess Programs +

10:30 – 11:30 am

Monday, April 22 – Friday, April 26

SOFO Outdoor Explorations

- | | |
|----|---|
| 22 | • Monday *A Fallen Log—Go exploring outside to see what animals use a fallen log for a home |
| 23 | • Tuesday *Play the Great Bird Migration Challenge Game |
| 24 | • Wednesday *Herpetology Walk—The reptiles and amphibians of Vineyard Field |
| 25 | • Thursday *Bird Walk in Vineyard Field |
| 26 | • Friday *Bugs, Beetles, & Bees of Vineyard Field |

+ SOFO members: programs and museum entrance, free; non-members: \$15 per adult, \$10 per child ages 3 to 12, ages 2 and under, free. Fee includes program and entrance to the museum.

27 • SOFO Free Earth Day Open House†

10am – 4pm

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| • Nature Walk in Vineyard Field with Frank • | 10:30-11:15am |
| • *Making Things: The Art of Recycled Materials with artist Virva Hinnemo • | 10am-Noon |
| • *Secrets of the Pond with Miles • | 10am-Noon |
| • Get to Know SOFO, Museum Visits with SOFO Educators • | Noon-1pm |
| • *Making Things: The Art of Recycled Material with artist / illustrator Michele Mott and writer Dell Cullum, author of <i>Scurry the Squirrel</i> • | 1-3pm |
| • Nature-Themed Face Painting with Fun4UFaces • | 1-3pm |
| • *Secrets of the Pond with Miles • | 1-3pm |
| • *Let's Make Giant Soap Bubbles with Melanie • | 1-3pm |
| • Jungle Bob's Live Animal Program—
Fee: Adults \$10, Children \$5 (12 and under) • | 3-4pm |

†All Day: Tick-Borne Illness Information: Southampton/Stony Brook Tick-Borne Illness Resource Center

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|----|---|-----|
| 27 | • Shellfish Diseases, Pests, Predators & Handling—East Hampton Shellfish Education & Enhancement Directive at SOFO: A/T • | 5pm |
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May

- | | | |
|----|--|------------|
| 4 | • Tenth Annual Peconic Family Fun Day—
Free Children's Carnival at CMEE • | 10am-Noon |
| 4 | • *Nature and Bird Watching Cruise with Frank: A/C10+ • | 9:45am-1pm |
| 5 | • *Making Art Move—Build a Gear Box to Make a Paper
Butterfly Move! C8+ • | 10:30am |
| 5 | • COME DRAW WITH US: A/T15+ • | 10:30am |
| 11 | • *Beach Cleanup at Shinnecock East County Park: Cosponsor,
Surfrider Foundation: AA • | 10-11am |
| 11 | • Birding with Frank—Spring Migration at
Good Ground Park, Hampton Bays: A/C8+ • | 10am |
| 11 | • How Small is Small? How to measure atoms and other things,
cosponsored with Montauk Observatory: A/C 10+ • | 10:30am |
| 11 | • *Observing the Animals of Vineyard Field—Like a Scientist! C6-8 • | 1:30pm |
| 18 | • Young Birders Club: C/T Ages 8 - 18 • | 10am |
| 18 | • One Hour Full "Flower Moon" Hike with Friends of the Long
Pond Greenbelt: AA • | 8:30pm |
| 19 | • *Hands-on—Shark Teeth, Tails, & Tales with Greg Metzger, Chief Field
Coordinator SOFO Shark Research & Education Program: AA • | 10:30am |
| 22 | • Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meeting • | 6:30pm |
| 25 | • Black Racer Snake Search with Andy Sabin: AA • | 9:30am |
| 25 | • Salamander Seining...and some frogs too, with Andy Sabin: AA • | 10am |
| 25 | • East Hampton Shellfish Nursery Tour & Raising Oysters—East Hampton
Shellfish Education & Enhancement Directive: A/T/C6+ • | 10am |
| 26 | • Two-Mile Nature Hike at the Promised Land—
History & Natural History: A/C8+ • | 10:30am |
| 26 | • East Hampton Shellfish Education & Enhancement Directive Fundraiser
For reservations contact www.eventbrite.com • | 1pm |

June

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 1 | • *Secret Life of the Pond—Hands-on Activity: C9+ • | 10:30am |
| 1 | • Birds of the Meadow & Woods with Frank—
SOFO/ELIAS Eric Salzman Memorial Bird Walk: A/T/C8+ • | 8am |
| 2 | • *Looking for Nano Structures in Nature & Activity—
Example: Butterfly Wing Iridescence: C5+ • | 10:30am |
| 5 | • Bird Walk with Joe Giunta at Hither Hills—Breeding Warblers: A • | 8am |
| 8 | • Tick Wise for Children "Train Your Eyes to be Tick Wise": F
Back by popular demand...and much needed! • | 10:30am |
| 9 | • *Beach Cleanup at Kirk Park, Montauk, Cosponsored with CCOM • | 10-11am |
| 9 | • *Marine Invertebrate Zoologist Dr. Keith Serafy Leads a
Beach Walk in Noyac: AA • | 11am |
| 12 | • Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meeting • | 6:30pm |
| 15 | • Young Birders Club: C/T Ages 8-18 • | 10am |
| 15 | • Birds of Prey from the Quogue Wildlife Refuge at SOFO: AA • | 10:30am |
| 16 | • In Honor of World Sea Turtle Day! Special SOFO Tour of the
Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research & Preservation: A/C5+
Fees: \$10 Adults, \$5 Children 12 and under • | 11am |
| 17 | • One Hour Full "Strawberry Moon" Hike with Friends of the
Long Pond Greenbelt: AA • | 9pm |
| 22 | • *Secret Life of the Pond—Hands-on Activity: C6-8 • | 10:30am |
| 22 | • Northwest Landing Beach Walk—Learn About our Bay Wildlife: AA • | 10:30am |
| 22 | • *"Plastics ...What's all this fuss about plastics?"Talk & Q&A with
Dr. Judith S. Weis, Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences: A/T • | 7-9pm |
| 23 | • *Being in the Moment, Flowing with the Seasons—
How to Write a Haiku Poem: C8+ • | 11am |
| 26 | • Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Support & Advocacy Meeting • | 6:30pm |
| 29 | • *Meet the Martins—Purple Martin Life Cycle & Chicks
with John Shemilt, SOFO Purple Martin Steward: AA • | 10:30am |
| 30 | • *"BioBlitz" —Surveying the Life of Vineyard Field: A/C 8+ • | 10:30am |



SOFO's *Young Birders Club* is for you!

Join now, if you are ages 8 – 18 and interested in birds and in meeting other young birders.

Birding is a great way to make new friends, learn about the environment, and get outside...so join our Young Birders Club!

The Club meets from 10 am – noon on the third Saturday of every month (see monthly dates listed inside this calendar) and is open to anyone ages 8 – 18 who is interested in learning about birds. We focus on birding in local areas, since Long Island has many great habitats that are home to a wide variety of species. The Club's leader is SOFO Environmental Educator Miles Todaro. The two Club advisors, both avid birders, are Frank Quevedo, the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) Executive Director, and Barbara Blaisdell, educator and experienced birder.

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.



*American Oystercatcher - Peter Massas, Eastern Bluebird,
Greater Yellowlegs - Dick Daniels, Indigo Bunting - Dawn Scranton
Purple Martin - Bill Thomson, Yellow Warbler - Geoff Clarke*

Save the Date
CELEBRATE THE WONDERS
OF THE WILD
AT SOFO's 30th ANNIVERSARY
GALA BENEFIT

*30 Years of Nature Conservation,
Education & Exploration
Empowering Families to become Responsible
Stewards of our Planet*

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2019
6PM-11PM

Honoring:

DR. DEMIAN CHAPMAN,
TRAMMELL S. CROW,
GREG MANOCHERIAN

Chaired by:

CAROLE CRIST,
GEORGIA & DR. GERRY CURATOLA,
ERIC GOODE,
SUSAN & DAVID ROCKEFELLER
—Special Performance by Livingston Taylor—



***New Free After-School Science Enrichment
Program at SOFO***

by Melanie Meade, SOFO Education & Outreach Coordinator

Thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, SOFO's on-going free bilingual programs have expanded this year to include environmental science enrichment classes at the museum taught by local, certified elementary school teachers with bilingual support for English language learners.

SOFO's Protecting Our Long Island Environment science enrichment program is designed to engage children in a journey of discovery as they experience local environmental issues and concerns for critical habitats through hands-on activities with the museum's live animals, outdoor explorations, and in the classroom. Offered throughout the school year in six-week sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 5:30 pm, this no-fee program is open to children in grades 3, 4, and 5.

The next session, September to October, examines the diversity of fresh water ecosystems by comparing animal and plant species, water chemistry, and energy flow through communities.

So, if you know a budding young mind with an interest in local wildlife or a junior explorer who just wants to know how living things depend on one another for survival, give us a call at (631) 537-9735, and ask for Melanie, to register for this free and unique after-school science enrichment program.

SAVE THE BATS!!

My Eagle Scout Project

by Spencer Maginsky

Eighteen-year-old Spencer Maginsky, soon to be awarded the rank of Eagle Scout, completed his bat box project for SOFO in December of last year.

It all started about a couple of years ago, I was reading the newspaper and saw that a case of West Nile virus had just been reported. I thought to myself, mosquitoes carry West Nile virus so I started to research what eats a lot of mosquitos and eventually found that bats eat an extreme amount of mosquitos a day. At this point I was well into looking for the right Eagle Scout project and I knew now that bats had to be a part of the project.

I did more research and found that people are making bat houses on big properties so the bats don't go into their house. I thought that making bat houses was a great idea—we could keep the bats in one location for a period of time and they would eat the mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus. This was a great project, and I knew that it was going to be my Eagle project.

But sadly, life caught me off guard and days became weeks, and weeks became a year and change. One day, after school and work let go of me and I had more time off, I knew that this was the perfect time to jump on this project. During the intermission with school and work we were collecting many news articles about West Nile and what Methoprene is doing to the environment. In this article it said that Methoprene is killing the Atlantic lobsters. I talked to my dad and said let's start the Eagle project, and as usual he was all for it.

We knew that SOFO was the place to go for the project—they had many other Eagle projects there. We reached out to SOFO and they said that we could have the project there; all we have to do it get it approved by the Town of Southampton. We went to Martin E. Shea, Chief Environmental Analyst for the Town of Southampton, and he said he was all for it. Next, we just had to talk to the head of the Parks and Recreation Department.

After getting everything approved, we set places for the bat houses to go, we marked them with flags and also on a GPS. Everything was a go, and I started to have workshops. This was the hardest part of the project because the younger Scouts had a hard time following the directions, but everything got done.

We had all of the bat houses made and ready to be placed on poles in the ground. We scheduled the days to put them into the ground before the ground froze. This went according to plan and, after years of work, the project was finally completed. We are happy that we helped save the bats.



Putting one of the 6 bat boxes together



Sinking a bat box pole



Hoisting a bat box



One of the 6 bat boxes installed

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History
Museum
(SOFO)
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**South Fork
Natural History
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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

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Printed on Recycled Paper with Soy Ink

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