

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

A New “Hope Spot”—The New York New Jersey Harbor Estuary

by Judith S. Weis, Rutgers University



A 2016 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers map showing New York–New Jersey Harbor Estuary’s drainage divide and drainage basin. The New York–New Jersey Harbor Estuary, also known as the Hudson–Raritan Estuary, is in the ...states of New Jersey and New York. The system of waterways of the Port of New York and New Jersey forms one of the most intricate natural harbors in the world and one of the busiest ports of the United States. The harbor opens onto the New York Bight in the Atlantic Ocean to the southeast and Long Island Sound to the northeast. Credit Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Protection. These agencies are watched by dozens of environmental organizations that are watchdogs for pollution in their own local

areas, such as the Riverkeeper, Hackensack Riverkeeper, NY-NJ Baykeeper, Gowanus Canal Conservancy, Newtown Creek Alliance, and many more.

While sewage treatment plants keep sewage out of the water most of the time, rainstorms can overwhelm them and untreated sewage can be released. This is being reduced by constructing rain gardens, bioswales, green roofs, etc. to absorb rainwater. “By all rights, this region could have been considered an ecological write-off, instead, because of community concern, the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary is an incredible environmental comeback story that epitomizes a ‘Hope Spot’” said Greg Remaud, NY-NJ Baykeeper. Dissolved oxygen, critical for fish, is increasing. Contaminants in sediments are being reduced as cleaner sediments cover more contaminated ones. The most contaminated areas, which are “Superfund sites,” will be dredged to remove the worst contamination. “Mission Blue’s designation of the New York–New Jersey Harbor & Estuary as a “Hope Spot” is an important and shining affirmation of positive improvements made in the harbor complex,” said EPA Region 2 Water Director Javier Laureano, PhD. “It also gives us further resolve to affect more critical improvements to the estuary and water quality, which benefits people and the ecosystem.”

There has been a great increase in the diversity of life. Fish, once dominated by small, pollution-tolerant killifish, now include sturgeon, American eels, striped bass, and herring. Horseshoe crabs crawl up on beaches to mate and lay eggs. Birds have increased greatly. “When I founded Hackensack Riverkeeper back in 1997, I used to think that maybe, someday, we’d see an Osprey or even a Bald Eagle over the river,” recalls Captain Bill Sheehan. “Well, twenty-five years later - and just in the greater Meadowlands area alone - we counted twenty-five Osprey pairs and five pairs of nesting eagles. And all of that was due to cleaner water and the return of Menhaden and many other forage fish.” Some Islands are nesting grounds for egrets, herons, and ibis. Other birds, including terns, skimmers, plovers, and oystercatchers, breed on beaches. Whales and dolphins have also returned; whale watching trips leave from New York City, which would have seemed ridiculous a few decades ago. “The images we’ve seen lately, of whales and dolphins against the backdrop of New York City, truly have the power to inspire. Here in our densely populated region, home to millions, members of the public are eager for signs of hope that the life in our waters can rebound. And we’ve seen that they are willing to step up as activists for the protection of these waters” said Tracy Brown, President of Riverkeeper.

In the late 20th century people realized the importance and benefits of coastal marshes to marine life and people. Filling them is now restricted but loss continues, largely due to development and sea level rise. Restoration of marshes is a major activity of many organizations, partially compensating for the losses. Oysters, which were once a major resource in NYC waters in the 1800s, filter and purify

Continued on next page

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water and grow together forming a reef that supports many marine animals. They were very abundant until around 1900, when over-harvesting and sewage pollution caused their populations to crash. Now there are organizations like the Billion Oyster Project that are actively restoring oysters to our waters.

Garbage dumps in the NJ Meadowlands, Staten Island and Brooklyn have been closed and some turned into parks. The Fresh Kills Landfill in Staten Island was the largest in the world before it closed in 2001. The land was engineered with layers of soil and infrastructure, and the area has become a park, with coastal meadows, wetlands, and woodlands that attract birds and other wildlife and provide recreation for people. Public access has improved as the environment has cleaned up. Of NYC's 520 miles of shoreline, hundreds of miles are now publicly accessible, including beaches, boardwalks, piers, trails, lawns, and ballfields, offering biking, fishing, walking along the shoreline, swimming, paddling a boat, community events, and educational programs. Parks and walkways have been built along NJ waterfronts as well. "It wasn't too long ago that no one wanted to go to the edge of the Hackensack and Passaic rivers, Newark and Raritan bays, or any of the waterways of New York City," recalls Hugh Carola of Hackensack Riverkeeper. "Nowadays people can't seem to get enough - and they come back and again." But many people who live here are unaware of it. "The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary "Hope Spot" is a beacon of hope for the millions of people that live, work, travel and recreate in the region. Many of these people don't even realize the biological wealth that exists in their own backyard" said Terry Doss of NJSEA.

Challenges remain. There are still areas where access to a waterfront is limited. They tend to be less wealthy, communities of color. There is a need to remedy this. Liberty State Park in NJ includes Caven Point, a natural area with sandy beach, coastal marsh, tide pools, mud flats and upland maritime forest – critical habitat for many species. A developer wants to turn it into part of a golf course. Plastic pollution remains a problem. The Army Corps of Engineers is planning to build a series of tide gates to protect against severe hurricanes – what will that do to the ecology? Climate change is the greatest threat. "The estuary has faced countless threats over time, including industrialization, pollution, and biodiversity loss, and now faces its greatest challenge – climate change," said Cortney Koenig Worrall, President & CEO of the Waterfront Alliance. We still have a lot of work to do but are delighted and proud that the work we have accomplished has been recognized and rewarded by our designation as a "Hope Spot".

About Dr. Judith S. Weis

Dr. Judith S. Weis is Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, Newark. Her research is on estuarine ecology and ecotoxicology. She has published over 200 refereed scientific papers, as well as books for the general public on salt marshes, fish, crabs, and marine pollution, and technical books on marine pollution and on biological invasions and animal behavior. She is interested in stresses in estuaries and their effects on organisms, populations and communities. She is on the editorial board for BioScience, is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and was a Fulbright Fellow in Indonesia. She served on advisory committees for EPA, NOAA and NAS, serves on the Waterfront Management Advisory Board, and chairs the Science Advisory Board of NJ DEP. She chaired the Biology Section of AAAS and was president of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS). She received the Merit Award from the Society of Wetland Scientists.



Whale in New York Harbor, Credit: Howard Rosenbaum, Wildlife Conservation Society



*Ecotour in New Jersey Meadowlands
Credit: Tyler Tierney, Hackensack Riverkeeper*

Don't Miss this Free, Important, and Hopeful Program

Sunday, October 22, 2023 10:30AM

Attend by Zoom, or In Person at the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO)

Reservations required, call SOFO at (631) 537-9735 or email info@sofo.org

Why & How the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Became a "Hope Spot", Followed by a Q&A with Dr. Judith S. Weis, Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, Newark.

Then!

During much of the 20th century, our urban estuary was severely degraded by industry, unregulated discharge of garbage, sewage, and other pollutants, and filling of marshes for development. Heavy industry and garbage dumps lined the waterfront. While there was little public access, few people would have been interested in access to polluted, smelly waters.

Now!

Our urban estuary is making a remarkable recovery – clearly a reason for hope!

"It wasn't too long ago that no one wanted to go to the edge of the Hackensack and Passaic rivers, Newark and Raritan bays, or any of the waterways of New York City," recalls Hugh Carola of Hackensack Riverkeeper. "Nowadays people can't seem to get enough - and they come back and again." But many people who live here are unaware of it. "The NY-NJ Harbor Estuary "Hope Spot" is a beacon of hope for the millions of people that live, work, travel and recreate in the region. Many of these people don't even realize the biological wealth that exists in their own backyard" said Terry Doss of NJSEA.

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Bridgehampton, NY 11932-0455

www.sofa.org • email: info@sofo.org.

Find us on Facebook  Instagram 



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

www.sofa.org/calendar

October, November, & December

For SOFO members: programs are free, unless otherwise stated.

Level of membership indicates the number of people entitled to a free program.

For SOFO non-members: there is a fee.

Please contact us at: info@sofo.org for fee information or refer to the SOFO website at: www.sofa.org.

If you are not already a member we invite you to join the museum.

Find out about membership levels at www.sofa.org/membership.

For full information on the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO), including entrance fees and hours of operation, please refer to the website: www.sofa.org.



*Join Us in Spreading Holiday Joy
with Hamptons Community Outreach*



Hamptons Community Outreach
will be the recipient of SOFO's 2023 Holiday Toy Drive.
New and unwrapped toys, games, and gift cards
as well as gift wrap paper and ribbon will be gratefully accepted
at SOFO from
October 1, 2023 until December 1, 2023.

About Hamptons Community Outreach

Hamptons Community Outreach works to bridge the opportunity gap experienced by underserved youth, families, and others across our community. Our goal is to elevate the quality of life of local children, families, and seniors — addressing their basic physical and emotional needs, while nurturing young people creatively and academically.

We bring people of diverse backgrounds together in a spirit of service,
generosity, and kindness.



Calendar At A Glance

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

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

Advance reservations are required for all programs.

October

Sunday, October 1, 1:00-3:30PM: A Day in the Life of a SOFO Pond - Last of the Season Pop-up Exhibit: AA

Thursday, October 5, 4:30-5:30PM: Zenergy Outdoor Movement Class with Karen Meyers: A

Saturday, October 7, 10:00AM: Andy's Annual Salamander Log Rolling, with Jake: F

Saturday, October 7, 10:00AM-1:00PM: FREE, Long Pond Greenbelt 24th Annual Celebration: AA

Long Pond Greenbelt Celebration

Saturday, October 7, 10AM-1PM: FREE

10AM Migratory Bird Walk with Frank Quevado, SOFO

10:30AM Storytime with John Jermaine Library

10:45 Music with Hampton Library

11AM Meet the Animals with Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Face Painting with Fun 4 U Faces

Sunday, October 8, 10:30AM: Painting with Nature: A/T/C6+

Thursday, October 12, 4:30-5:30PM: Zenergy Outdoor Movement Class with Karen Meyers: A

Thursday-Friday, October 12-13, Time TBD: Overnight Trip Birding with Frank at Edward B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, Brigantine Division, Galloway, New Jersey: A

Saturday, October 14, 9:30AM-12:00PM: FREE, Hamptons Walk to End Alzheimers®: AA

Saturday, October 14, 1:00PM: Seining for Tropical Fish with SOFO: AA

Saturday, October 14, 2:00PM: Feeding Time at the Museum!: C3-5

Sunday, October 15, 8:00AM: Birding with Joe Giunta Fall Migration at Promised Land: A

Sunday, October 15, 9:00-11:00AM: FREE, Greenbelt Ramble through Oak-Hickory Forest and Along Coastal Plain Ponds: A/T/C10+

Sunday, October 15, 10:30AM: Owl Pellets: Explore, Dissect, and Discover! C5-7

Wednesday, October 18, 1:00PM: SOFO's East End Outdoor Nature Education with Crystal in Montauk: C3-7

Thursday, October 19, 4:30-5:30PM: Zenergy Outdoor Movement Class with Karen Meyers: A

Saturday, October 21, 10:00AM: FREE, Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18

Saturday, October 21, 10:30AM: Befriending Bugs for Halloween with entomologist Jeffry Petracca: A/T/C4+

Sunday, October 22, 10:30AM: FREE, Zoom and in person at SOFO: Why & How the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Became a "Hope Spot" with Dr. Judith S. Weis, Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, Newark: A/T

Thursday, October 26, 4:30-5:30PM: Zenergy Outdoor Movement Class with Karen Meyers: A

Saturday, October 28, 6:30PM: FREE, Full Hunter's Moon Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA

Saturday, October 28, 10:30AM: SOFO Young Environmentalists Society (YES!) Meeting: Ages 10-16

Sunday, October 29, 10:30AM: White Pine & Oak Forest Hike at Wilson's Grove Preserve: A/T/C8+

November **Wednesday, November 1, 10:30AM: FREE**, Tour of the Thomas & Mary Nimmo Moran Studio: AA
Saturday, November 4, 10:30AM: FREE, An introduction to metal detecting with Scott Tucker, of Relic Recovery, assisted by Layla Tucker: A/T/C8+
Saturday, November 4, 2:00PM: What's in an Owl Pellet with Rob Gelling: C8+
Sunday, November 5, 10:30AM: Fall Foliage Tie-Dye: A/T/C8+
Saturday, November 11, 9:45AM: Nature & Bird Watching Cruise Onboard the SoMAS, R.V. Peconic :A/T/C10+
Saturday, November 11, 9:30AM: Eastern Lead-backed Salamander Search: A/T/C5+
Wednesday, November 15, 1:00PM: SOFO's East End Outdoor Nature Education with Crystal in River-head: C3-7
Saturday, November 18, 10:00AM:FREE, Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18
Saturday, November 18, 10:30AM: FREE, Nature Walk at the Paul Stoutenburgh Preserve, Cosponsored with the Peconic Baykeeper: A/T/C10+
Saturday, November 18, 10:30AM: The Science & Wonder of Rocks & Minerals with "The Rock Doc" Rob Gelling: C8+
Saturday, November 18, 2:00PM: Feeding Time at the Museum!: C6-9
Sunday, November 19, 10:30AM: Upcycling Nature Through Paper Making: A/T/C8+
Friday, November 24, 10:00AM-Noon: Southampton Trails Preservation Society's Annual Walk It Off Walk: AA
Saturday, November 25, 10AM-4:00PM: Thanksgiving Open House: AA
Saturday, November 25, 10:30AM: SOFO Young Environmentalists Society (YES!) Meeting: Ages 10-16
Monday, November 27, 5:00PM: Full Frost Moon Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA
Thursday, November 30, 7:00PM: ZOOM & FREE, The Science of Astro-Meteorology and Q&A with Renowned Weatherman Joe Rao: AA

December **Friday, December 1, 7:00PM**: Owling with Joe Guinta: A.
Saturday, December 2, 10:30AM: Make a Holiday Beach Craft! With Rob "Rockfish" Gelling: C8+
Sunday, December 3, 11:00AM:Turkeys in the Snow Storytime & Craft : C3-6
Saturday, December 9, 10:30AM Seal Walk at Cupsogue Beach County Park, Westhampton: A/T/C6+
Saturday, December 9, 10:30AM: In person: "Whale Watching with Fish Guy Photos": AA
Sunday, December 10, 10:30AM: From Scraps to Soil: Your Guide to Starting a Home Compost: A/T/C
Saturday, December 16, 10:00AM: FREE, Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18
Saturday, December 16, 10:30AM: Feeding Time at the Museum! C10+
Saturday, December 16, 7:00-9:00PM: Family Nature Trivia Night: F
Sunday, December 17, 10:30AM: Pinecone Creatures: A/T/C6+
Wednesday, December 20, 1:00PM: SOFO's East End Outdoor Nature Education with Crystal in Sagaponack: C3-7
Saturday, December 23, 2023, 9:00-11:00AM: Visit the Heart of the Amazing Long Pond Greenbelt with Dai Dayton: A/T/C10+
Tuesday, December 26, 5:00PM: Full Cold Moon Hike with Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt: AA

2023 Winter School Break

**One Hour Outdoor Nature Adventures for Children of all Ages
 In Vineyard Field, the field behind the museum, with the
 SOFO Environmental Educators 10-11AM**

Tuesday, December 26 – Exploring with our Five Senses

Wednesday, December 27 – Nature Scavenger Hunt

Thursday, December 28 – Pirate Treasure Hunt

Friday, December 29 – Animal Sign and Phenomena

Saturday, December 30, 10:30AM: SOFO Young Environmentalists Society (YES!) Meeting: Ages 10-16

Mycological Manifestations:

The Upbringing of Autumn Mushrooms

by Ian Robinson, SOFO Environmental Educator

The earth revolves around the sun on a tilted axis, causing uneven exposure to the sun, which creates what we know as seasons. From summer to winter, the earth revolves, tilting our northern hemisphere away from the sun. With less sunlight exposure, days grow shorter in the northern hemisphere. No longer exposed to sufficient sunlight, chlorophyll breaks down within green foliage, becoming shades of yellow, red, and brown. Before winter, trees reduce the production of auxin—a plant hormone regulating growth and development. Without this, the leaves lose their grasp on branches and fall, soon to nourish the earth. In the darkened skies, cool autumn rains collect and fall, moistening the soil and providing the final requirement for our mushrooms to grow. Underground networks of mycelium—a mass of branching fungal threads—make quick work of the colorful assortment of litter. Patches of their wispy bodies can cling to the undersides of logs, decomposing what was once their sturdy bodies. The decomposition of such organic matter supplements the world with nutrients harvested from the sun. To further nourish itself, mycelium colonizes the roots of trees, forming a symbiotic relationship. By attaching to the roots of trees, mycelium extends the tree's capability for collecting moisture and nutrients from the soil. In exchange, mycelium extracts the tree's photosynthetically produced sugars to nourish its fruiting body. By connecting individual plants, mushrooms form a mycorrhizal network, allowing for the passage of nutrients and minerals between plants. Once nourished, mushrooms sprout from the earth to reproduce. Mushrooms are diverse oddities that may form in bundles of mystical phenomena called fairy rings—circular growths of sprouted mushrooms. The fruiting body serves for reproduction but also allows us to identify the species. The most well-known native mushroom is the



sulfur-yellow capped mushrooms

reside to be dispersed by wind or the animals that consume them. In the sight of autumn, turkey tail mushrooms fan from trunks also inhabited by delicate clusters of honey mushrooms. Nourishing not only the earth, they provide food for our squirrels, slugs, and beetles. Despite their mysterious appearance, mushrooms support our world, maintaining its balance. Outside the natural world, fungi have limitless applications already integrated into many aspects of society, from baking to medical applications. In the bread we eat and the antibiotics we may take in need, fungi support our lives. It is only fair to give them the respect they deserve.



Turkey Tail Mushroom (Trametes versicolor), credit Ken Kneidel

“Chicken of the Woods”, a mushroom with a meat-like texture, said to taste like chicken—but if everything tastes like chicken, what is chicken? Inside these sulfur-yellow capped mushrooms, spores



SOFO Welcomes New Environmental Educator Erin Hwong

Hi! My name is Erin Hwong and I started working at SOFO as a full-time Environmental Educator in August. I was a part-time educator during my last semester at Stony Brook University, where I graduated from this past May with a Bachelor's degree in Marine Vertebrate Biology and Environmental Studies with a concentration in Environmental Law, Waste Management, and Public Policy.

During my time at Stony Brook University, I worked as a Lab Research Assistant in the Peterson Marine Community Ecology Lab, where I gained valuable hands-on experience assisting in various research projects, including seagrass bed restorations and scallop surveys. Using my prior experience in both outdoor education and childhood education, along with my lifelong passion for the natural world, I hope to spread knowledge and appreciation for our local organisms and their environments.



SOFO received a grant from the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians,

Wild Animal Health Fund to study the current health status of shark and ray populations in the MidAtlantic and investigate possible impacts that regional development (wind energy) and environmental change may have on the health of these populations. This work is part of the larger environmental impact work ongoing with the Peterson Laboratory at Stony Brook University. With this funding SOFO's Shark Research and Education Program will be able to evaluate blood samples from 225 sharks over a three-year period for common health and nutritional biomarkers and monitor if there are changes during this period of development in the region. We are grateful to Dr. Alisa (Harley) Newton, Consultant Veterinary Pathologist, ZooQuatic Laboratory for securing the grant.



SOFO Receives Grant from Suffolk County

In 2023 the South Fork Natural History Museum received a grant of \$5,000 from Suffolk County, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. These county awarded funds provide support for museums, historical societies, historic residences, and historic birthplaces. SOFO has been fortunate to have received this county grant for several years and has been able to make significant improvements to our outdoor education and public presentation equipment.

SOFO used the funding provided to purchase nest cameras for live stream nature programs and 24/7 viewing of the museum's animals, public presentation equipment such as a speaker and microphone system and a speaker podium, binoculars and a spotting scope tripod for our young birder's club and public birding programming, and a digital microscope with a video screen for larger group viewing of planktonic organisms. We would like to thank Bridget Fleming, Suffolk County Legislator, for supporting SOFO through this grant award.

SOFO's Bluebird Nest Box

Trail Update

Joe Giunta, SOFO's bluebird steward and, since 2005, head of our bluebird nest box trails project, stated that the 2023 bluebird season was a record year with the highest number of bluebird fledglings at 152. Since 2005, a grand total of 1628 bluebirds have fledged, marking the success of the project and the result of the care that Joe has put in monitoring the health of these trails.



SOFO's bluebird steward, Joe Giunta, monitoring bluebird boxes in Vineyard Field

SOFO's Purple Martin

Colony Update

John Shemilt, SOFO's purple martin steward, sent us the following information regarding this year's colony: 2023 was a record year for the purple martin colony. There were 32 nests in our gourds in Vineyard Field. A total of 177 eggs were laid, producing 147 hatchlings of which 141 birds fledged. In June of 2022, Christopher Gangemi interviewed John for an article in the East Hampton Star. In the article, SOFO's Executive Director Frank Quevedo stated, "We're very fortunate that John volunteers his time to monitor the colony; he came to us 10 years ago when the colony was first starting and said he'd love to help ensure its success. Because of his stewardship, the colony has thrived." John reports all of his data to the Purple Martin Conservation Association."



SOFO's Purple Martin colony

Congratulations to Kevin Byrnes

of Boy Scout Troop 55 from Garden City, New York.

Kevin achieved his Eagle Scout rank by completing his Eagle Scout project for the South Fork Natural History Museum. Kevin built 30 bluebird boxes for SOFO's bluebird box nesting program and raised all the money for the materials and supplies for his project. We are so thankful for his support and extremely proud of Kevin for achieving the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America program.



Eagle Scout Kevin Byrnes installing a bluebird nest box

In Memoriam *Jean Held*

SOFO is saddened to inform you of the death of Jean Held, one of the seven founders of the South Fork Natural History Society, the parent organization of the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO). Jean was an intrinsic part of the SOFO family. A talented and experienced graphic designer, Jean designed the SOFO logo. An ardent researcher, she compiled, wrote articles and designed illustrations for SOFO's first publication, the SOFO Biota, of which she was the creator and editor. Jean believed in the fact that everything in the natural world is interrelated. She will be missed as a woman of integrity, wise-mindedness, clear thinking and as a steadfast friend.

SOFO's 34th Annual Gala Benefit on July 29, 2023

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported our 34th Annual Summer Gala Benefit The Nurturing Power of Nature which was held at SOFO on July 29. The festive evening with over 450 guests raised funds that surpassed our goal for SOFO's educational and environmental programs and initiatives.

This year the gala was co-hosted by actor, director, screenwriter, narrator and producer **Liev Schreiber** and SOFO Founder **Andy Sabin**. The evening's host committee included **Sissi Bohlen, Carole Crist, Anke & Jürgen Friedrich, Kimberly Goff, Julia Haart, Chef Alex Guarnaschelli, Kim & Greg Lippmann, Susan & David Rockefeller, Ada Samuelsson, and Sammi & Scott Seltzer.**

Yvon Chouinard was honored for his extraordinary environmental efforts including the move to transfer ownership of Patagonia to two new entities: Patagonia Purpose Trust and the Holdfast Collective with every dollar that is not reinvested into Patagonia being used to protect the planet. Other individuals honored that night included **Dan & Rae Emmett**, nature enthusiasts who led Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Green Building Initiative and established one of the leading environmental law programs in the country; and **Basil Seggos**, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Co-Chair of the State's Climate Action Council, who oversees programs that promote a clean, healthy, and accessible environment, including protecting and restoring New York's air, lands and waters; combatting climate change; and enforcing State environmental laws and regulations.

Annette Sabin, the Matriarch of the Sabin Family, received the Posthumous Animal Advocate Extraordinaire Award for her love of nature and wildlife, which was a constant inspiration to her son Andy. We were very happy to rename our Butterfly Garden to the Annette Sabin Pollinator Garden.

During the VIP cocktail reception, guests were able to tour the museum and grounds, while admiring some magnificent birds of prey and enjoying a tasting menu created and donated by acclaimed chefs from **Almond Restaurant & Bar, Peter Ambrose, Bamboo Restaurant and Sushi Bar, Bell & Anchor, The Beacon, Centro, East Hampton Grill, Hen of the Woods, Page at 63 Main, Saaz, 1760 Homestead Farm, Shellworks, and Tapovana Lunch Box.** Music was provided by **Alfredo Merat.** Everyone enjoyed the wildlife visitors from the Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center.

The reception dinner was presented by **Elegant Affairs Catering** with flowers by **Designs by Mark Mason**, coffee drinks by **Hampton Coffee Company** and music by **DJ Epic.** Beverages were provided by **Amagansett Wines & Spirits, Channing Daughters Winery, Michael Cinque, HSE Rhum, J.A. Baczewski Monopolowa Gin & Vodka, Kidd Squid Brewing Co., Lalo Tequila, Soirée Mocktails, Springs Brewery, Talkhouse Encore** and **Top Hops Craft Beer.** Our Media sponsors include **Dan's Papers, The Express News Group, James Lane Post, Social Life Magazine** and **Southforker.**

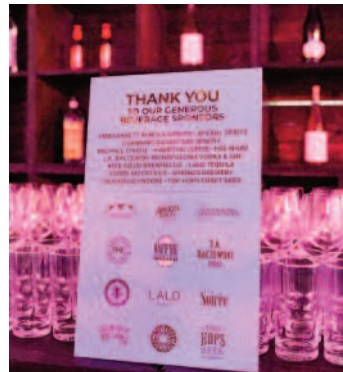
We are excited to announce our **2024 Gala** will take place on **Saturday, July 20.** Stay tuned for upcoming announcements!



Paul King, Frank Quevedo, Andy Sabin, Diana Aceti, Basil Seggos and Liev Schreiber



Tommy Demaio, Ada Samuelsson, Andy Sabin, James Perrone



Thank you to our beverage sponsors



Annette Sabin Pollinator Garden



Peter Kohl, Franz Muster, Jürgen Friedrich, Anke Friedrich, Felicitas Kohl, Margot Poetter, Holger Hahn



CONNECTING OUR CHILDREN WITH THE NATURAL WORLD TO SAVE OUR PLANET

SUPPORT SOFO'S 2023 ANNUAL APPEAL

5 WAYS SOFO MAKES AN IMPACT

The South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) has been a beacon of environmental education and awareness on the East End of Long Island for 34 years, delivering on-site, at-school, and outreach programs to every corner of our community. Last year, your contributions allowed SOFO to reach even more people through over 350 programs at libraries, non-profits, senior homes, and government agencies across Long Island and Manhattan.

- 1 A New STEAM Enrichment After School Program Created for Bridgehampton Child Care & Recreational Center (BHCCRC)
- 2 Expansion of our Support our Community Programs for Underserved Families
- 3 Expansion of SOFO's Shark Education and Research Program
- 4 Expansion of private and large group Nature Explorations
- 5 Expansion of programs at the Eleanor Whitmore Early Childhood Center, Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, Friends of Long Pond Greenbelt, I-Camp, Quogue Wildlife Refuge, Southampton Arts Center, South Fork Sea Farmers, Nature Conservancy, and The Retreat

YOUR GIFT IS CRITICAL TO OUR MISSION

As a privately-funded non-profit, your generous support helps maintain our standard of excellence and expands our mission of inspiring all ages to become responsible stewards of nature. We urge our members and friends to contribute as generously as possible to help us reach our goal of \$350,000.

Every gift, regardless of size, helps to bring our mission to life. Here are some ways you can contribute:

\$500 (\$900 for 2): Honor your family or a special friend by naming a brick on our outdoor Legacy Trail Walkway.

\$1,000: Sustain our on-site live animals with three months of husbandry expenses.

\$5,000: Support two quarterly publications of SOFO's popular Newsletter-calendar, with acknowledgment on our website.

\$10,000: Enhance the vitality of our interactive exhibits and 300 annual special programs.

\$25,000: Underwrite and name one of our annual programs or beautiful native gardens.

MAKE YOUR DONATION ONLINE AT [SOFO.ORG/DONATE-NOW](https://sofo.org/donate-now)

SOFO Mission

The mission of the South Fork Natural History Museum (SOFO) is to stimulate interest in, advance knowledge of, and foster appreciation for the natural world with special emphasis on the unique natural environment of Long Island's South Fork.

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