

# 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

### *Update on the Long Island* **Mammal Survey**

by Mike Bottini Wildlife Biologist,  
Seatuck Environmental Association, May 2025

The goal of this three-year-long project, funded by the Long Island Community Foundation, is to map the distribution of mammal species on L.I., not to estimate their population size. Changes in distribution compared to Paul Connor's work in the 1960s should give us a general idea of the status and health of our mammal populations.

With one more year of data collection to go, the following is a summary of our findings thus far.

#### *The Return of the River Otter*

The River Otter (hence forward referred to as Otter distinguished from the Sea Otter that is only found in the Pacific Ocean) once resided in L.I.'s fresh and estuarine waters but was extirpated here during the Fur Trade Era (1600s through 1800s). Connor did not find any evidence of an established Otter population on L.I. in the 1960s. Its recolonization here has been natural with source populations from the mainland crossing the narrow sections of Long Island Sound at its western and eastern points.

Otters are now found in:

- most of the watersheds on the north shore east of Glen Cove.
- the Peconic River and its tributaries.
- Shelter Island.
- half of the watersheds on the South Fork.
- several watersheds on the south shore, including the Carmans River and Connetquot River.

#### *Other Semi-aquatic Mammals: Beaver and Muskrat*



*River Otter at a Huntington site exhibiting its classic "periscoping" behavior, Mike Zunno*

Although both these rodents have been heavily trapped for their fur in the past, only the Muskrat has survived on L.I. This is most likely due to a combination of factors including the Muskrat's ability to produce 2-3 litters per year, have larger litter sizes, utilize more varied riparian habitat, and its less valuable fur. This species can still be found in estuarine and freshwater marshes throughout the island.

The Beaver, a strong but slow swimmer, is known to use the Fishers-Great Gull-Plum Islands archipelago to reach eastern L.I. Two are known to have survived the journey and establish lodges here: one in 2006 at Scoy Pond, East Hampton and another in 2023 at Fresh Pond, Hither Hills State Park. Neither had a mate. The Scoy Pond resident moved to Fresh Pond in 2009 after its lodge was vandalized and apparently died of old age in 2012.

#### *A New Furbearer Arrives: The Eastern Coyote*



*Eastern Coyote at one of the Nassau County sites*

The arrival of the Eastern Coyote in northern New York one hundred years ago—and eventually to Long Island in 2009—is a fascinating story.

There are now at least five breeding pairs in northern Nassau County. There have been several coyote sightings on the East End dating back to 2012, but no breeding pairs confirmed there.



*Last known photo of a live Gray Fox on L.I., once our most common fox species, Jennifer Higbie*

*Continued on next page*

Continued from page 1

These are most likely dispersing yearlings.

Among the many misleading and erroneous statements on social media is one that claims the NYSDEC secretly introduced Eastern Coyotes to L.I. to deal with our overpopulation of White-tailed Deer. While studies have found that deer comprise a major component of coyote diets, unfortunately coyotes have not reduced our deer numbers and deer's harmful impacts on our forest ecosystem. How can that be? Deer roadkill in East Hampton Town alone numbers 400-500 per year. There's no need for coyotes to expend energy chasing down and killing a live one; we provide an all-you-can-eat roadside buffet for free!

### *Sightings Wanted – Dead or Alive: Gray Fox, American Mink, Long-tailed Weasel*

Gray Fox was once the most common fox species on L.I. The last sighting here was in 2007 by Jennifer Higbie, an ecologist at BNL. Mink was described by Connor as being a common inhabitant of the estuaries and marshes the entire length of Long Island on both the north and south shores. And Connor found Long-tailed Weasels or their sign at numerous sites on eastern L.I.

I did not expect to find many of these three species in our survey; however I expected to find some evidence of them here. With one year to go, no Gray Fox sightings have been submitted. It's possible that this species' decline, or extirpation, is the result of habitat changes. No Mink have been found with the exception of Fishers Island, yet excellent Mink habitat exists. Three sightings of Long-tailed Weasels have been reported: a roadkill in Southold, and two in the pine barrens of Westhampton-Quogue.

While trapping may not have been a significant contributing factor in the demise of these three furbearers, based on the survey's findings of their current status and distribution, they warrant protection from hunting and trapping, and the NYSDEC regulations pertaining to these activities need to be changed.

### *The 'Nuisance Mammals': Groundhog, Southern Flying Squirrel and Skunk*

Groundhogs and Flying Squirrels, not found east of the Shinnecock Canal during the 1960s survey, are now found throughout most of the South Fork and Shelter Island. These are considered "nuisance" species: Woodchucks exhibit a great appetite for garden and vegetable plants and Flying Squirrels can make a mess overwintering in attics. It's possible that their range expansion eastward has been assisted by nuisance trappers catching them west of the canal and releasing them to the east.

Our Striped Skunk population also seems to have expanded since the 1960s, but westward. It is commonly sighted today in Queens and Brooklyn parks and cemeteries, while it appears to have become rarer in the pine barrens and Montauk.

### *The Ubiquitous Mammals: White-tailed Deer, Red Fox, Raccoon, Virginia Opossum, Eastern Cottontail and Gray Squirrel*

This group includes the most widely distributed of the large (squirrel-size and up) mammals. Our largest land mammal, the White-tailed Deer, has greatly expanded its range westward into Nassau and Queens since the 1960s. The Red Fox and Raccoon, our two dominant mesopredators with no larger carnivores here to keep their numbers in check, follow an unfortunate "boom and bust" population cycle that results in outbreaks of mange and canine distemper. This may



Our smallest and possibly the most numerous mammal on L.I., the Masked Shrew, proved difficult to survey

change with the arrival of the Eastern Coyote and its habit of patrolling and marking its significant territory. The Virginia Opossum, a southern species that expanded into New York in the late 1800s, is widespread despite early efforts to control their numbers with bounties. The Eastern Cottontail appears to have replaced our once dominant (and now endangered) New England Cottontail, possibly the result of habitat changes. This species is surprisingly common in densely developed residential areas. The diurnal Gray Squirrel, active year-round, is likely our most commonly seen mammal.

### *The Small Mammal Challenge: Voles, Moles, Shrews and Mice*

Surveying this group of nine, largely fossorial and leaf litter resident species proved to be quite a challenge. The most efficient survey technique for them is trapping, and our live traps (Sherman and pitfall traps) did not produce very good results. The Masked Shrew, our smallest and, according to Connor, possibly our most common mammal, was too light in weight to trip the Sherman mechanism and somehow avoided our carefully placed pitfall buckets. The most commonly captured small mammals were the White-footed Mouse and the Meadow Vole. The common vole of the forest—the Pine or Woodland Vole—was surprisingly rare, possibly a result of our trapping technique and not a reflection of their relative abundance.

With six months left to survey, consider helping us fill in some gaps in our distribution maps, which can be viewed here: <https://limam-malsurvey.org/distribution-maps/>

And feel free to contact me at [mbottini@seatuck.org](mailto:mbottini@seatuck.org) if you have any questions.

## SOFO news

### SOFO Welcomes New Young Birders

*Club Leader: Aidan Perkins*



I first started birding when I was 10 years old. I am now 23 and consider myself a naturalist. I graduated from SUNY Environmental Science & Forestry as a Wildlife Science major in May 2024. I have a broad educational background, understanding, and field experience in birding, marine fish, and many other forms of wildlife. I have led many bird and nature walks with my local Audubon chapter, Four Harbors Audubon in Stony Brook, NY. I work for Greentree

Foundation, performing weekly bird surveys on their 400-acre preserve and also at Cornell Cooperative in Yaphank, NY, where I am giving nature and farm-related presentations at local schools in the area. I will be working as a NYS Park Ranger at Wildwood State Park over the summer.

Continued on page 6

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Find us on Facebook  Instagram 



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

[www.sofa.org/calendar](http://www.sofa.org/calendar)

# July, August, & September

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

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

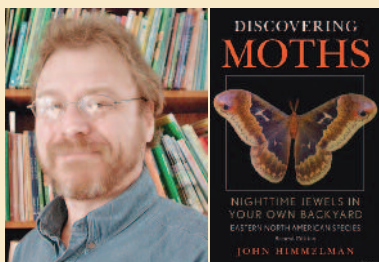
**For SOFO non-members: there is a fee.**

Please contact us at: [info@sofo.org](mailto:info@sofo.org) for fee information or refer to the SOFO website at: [www.sofa.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.sofa.org). Advanced registration is required for all programs.



## Dark Skies, Saturday, July 19th

Book Signing & Lecture with John Himmelman,  
Author of *Discovering Moths: Nighttime Jewels in  
Your Own Backyard*

Co-sponsored with Dark Skies Committee of  
Southampton, Hampton Library and SOFO.  
Free, adults, teens and children 10 and up.

**1:00PM:** Join us at the Hampton Library for a book signing and Q&A with John Himmelman, author of *Discovering Moths: Nighttime Jewels in Your Own Backyard* and *Wait Till It Gets Dark: A Kid's Guide to Exploring the Night*. Books will be available for purchase. Register on Eventbrite with Hampton Library: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1358940891789?aff=oddtcreator>

**3:30-4:30PM:** Learn more about moths as John discusses moths' life cycle, their importance in nature, and how just a tiny handful of the many moth species are truly pests to humans. Hear how to attract moths with lights and bait, when and where to observe them, and how best to photograph these tiny subjects. Light refreshments provided. Register on Eventbrite with SOFO: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/east-end-environment-lecture-with-author-john-himmelman-at-sofo-tickets-1369638247869>

If you would like to experience attracting and identifying moths join SOFO at our next nothing program at the museum on July 25 at 7:30pm.

# 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](http://www.sofo.org/calendar).

*Advance reservations are required for all programs.*

July

## Yoga Tuesdays at SOFO, 3-4:00pm

Beginning June 3

Root to Rise, Outdoor Gentle Yoga with Karen Meyer,

A/T/C10+

RSVP to [MoonheartMeyer@gmail.com](mailto:MoonheartMeyer@gmail.com) for schedule

**Saturday, July 5, 11:00AM-12:30PM,** Nature Printing in the Sun! with Printmaker Andrea Cote: Families/C5+

**Saturday, July 5, 1:00-2:30PM,** Cyanotype Printing with Plant Life, with Printmaker Andrea Cote: A16+

**Saturday, July 5, 2:00PM:** Celebrate Plastic Free Day by Celebrate Plastic Free Day by Decorating Your Own Canvas Tote Bag: A/T/C8+: A/T/C8+

**Sunday, July 6, 11:00AM:** Feeding Time: C3-5

**Sunday, July 6, 1:30-4:00PM: FREE** with Museum Admission, Pop-Up Pond Life Exhibit: AA

**Thursday, July 10, 9:00-10:00PM: FREE,** Full Buck Moon Hike: AA

**Saturday, July 12, 5:30-10:00PM: SOFO's 36th Annual Summer Gala "Champions of the Wild: A New Generation"**

**Wednesday, July 16, 1:00-3:00PM:** SOFO's East End Outdoor Nature Education with Crystal at Hallack State Park, Riverhead: C 3-7 or older

**Saturday, July 19, 10:00AM: FREE,** Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18

**Saturday, July 19, 1:00PM, FREE,** Book Signing and Author Q + A at the Hampton Library with John Himmelman, naturalist and author illustrator of children's and nature books. Co-sponsored with Dark Skies Committee of Southampton, Hampton Library and SOFO: A/T/C10+ Register on Eventbrite with Hampton Library: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1358940891789?aff=oddtcreator>

**Saturday, July 19, 3:30-4:30PM, FREE,** East End Environment Lecture at SOFO, Moths with John Himmelman, Author of *Discovering Moths: Nighttime Jewels in Your Own Backyard*. Co-sponsored with Dark Skies Committee of Southampton, Hampton Library and SOFO: A/T/C10+ Register on Eventbrite with SOFO: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/east-end-environment-lecture-with-author-john-himmelman-at-sofo-tickets-1369638247869>

**Sunday, July 20, 11:00AM-12:30PM:** Seining with SOFO: AA

**Friday, July 25, 7:30-9:00PM:** What Goes Buzz in the Night- An Outdoor Mothing Workshop: A/T/C10+

**Saturday, July 26, 10:30AM: FREE,** Young Environmentalists Society (YES!) Meeting: Ages 10-16 and Junior members ages 5-9

**Saturday, July 26, 10:30AM-12:00PM: FREE,** Join Us for a Whale of a Time at the East Hampton Town Marine Museum. Co-sponsored by SOFO and East Hampton Historical Society: A/T/C8+

**Sunday, July 27, 10:30AM AND 1:30PM: FREE** with Museum Admission, Storytime: Squiggly Salamanders: AA

August

**Friday, August 1, 6:00PM: FREE,** SOFO Shark Research and Education Program Update and Panel Discussion: A/T/C8+

**Saturday, August 2, 10:00AM-1:00PM:** Marine Biology and Bird Watching Cruise: A/T/C8+

**Saturday, August 2, 11:00AM-12:30PM:** Make a Fish Print T-shirt: AA

**Sunday, August 3, 11:00AM:** Feeding Time: C6-9

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*August*

- Sunday, August 3, 1:30-4:00PM: FREE**, Pop-Up Pond Life Exhibit: AA
- Saturday, August 9, 11:00AM-12:30PM:** Freshwater Seining with SOFO: AA
- Saturday, August 9, 9:00-10:00PM: FREE**, Full Sturgeon Moon Hike: AA
- Sunday, August 10, 11:00AM:** Learning to Press Marine Algae to Make a Print: A/T/C10+
- Thursday, August 14, 11:00AM-12:00PM: FREE**, Guided Tour of the Amagansett Life Saving Station. Co-sponsored by SOFO and East Hampton Historical Society: A
- Saturday, August 16, 9:30-11:00AM:** Bass Creek Kayak and Sandflat Exploration, Mashomack Preserve, Shelter Island. Co-sponsored with the Nature Conservancy at Mashomack Preserve: A/T/C10+
- Saturday, August 16, 10:00AM: FREE**, Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18
- Saturday, August 16, 11:00AM-12:00PM: FREE**, Guided Tour of the Moran Studio and Garden. Co-sponsored by SOFO and East Hampton Historical Society: A
- Monday, August 18 to Friday, August 22, 9:00AM-12:00PM**, Puppet Camp with Goat on a Boat Puppet Theatre at SOFO: C4-7. Contact Goat on a Boat to register: [goatonaboat@gmail.com](mailto:goatonaboat@gmail.com)
- Wednesday, August 20, 1:00-3:00PM:** SOFO's East End Outdoor Nature Education with Crystal at the Elizabeth Morton Wildlife Refuge, Southampton: C3-7 or older
- Saturday, August 23, 10:00AM-1:00PM:** En Plein Air Painting Class at SOFO with the Bridgehampton Museum, register with The Bridgehampton Museum at <https://www.bridgehamptonmuseum.org/art>: A/T13+
- Saturday, August 23, 5:00PM:** Come and See What the Tide Brought In - Ocean Beach Walk: A/T/C5+
- Thursday, August 28, 11:00AM-1:00PM: FREE**, Oyster Farming on the Water: Boat Tour & Oyster Seeding. Co-sponsored by Concerned Citizens of Montauk (CCOM), East Hampton Shellfish Education and Enhancement Directive (EHSEED), and SOFO: A/T/C6+
- Saturday, August 30, 10:00AM:** Snapping Turtles — Andy Sabin's Prehistoric Monster Search: AA
- Saturday, August 30, 10:30AM: FREE**, Young Environmentalists Society (YES!) Meeting: Ages 10-16 and Junior members ages 5-9
- Sunday, August 31, 10:30AM AND 1:30PM: FREE** with Museum Admission, Storytime: Food Chains & Feeding Time: C3-7
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*September*

- Saturday, September 6, 10:30AM:** Butterflies in the Garden: A/T/C8+
- Saturday, September 6, 1:00-3:00PM:** Seining for Tropicals with SOFO: AA
- Sunday, September 7, 2-5:00PM:** Environment Appreciation Day with Food, Family Fun, and Beach Seining with SOFO at Clearwater Beach Association, a Community Event Co-sponsored by Accabonac Protection Committee (APC), Organización Latino Americana (OLA) and South Fork Natural History Museum and Nature Center (SOFO): AA
- Sunday, September 7, 7:30-8:30PM, FREE**, Full Harvest Moon Hike: AA
- Sunday, September 14, 1:30-4:00PM: FREE** with Museum Admission. Pop-Up Pond Life Exhibit: AA
- Wednesday, September 17, 1-3:00PM:** SOFO's East End Outdoor Nature Education with Crystal at Old Ponquogue Bridge, Hampton Bays: C3-7 or older
- Saturday, September 20, 10:00AM: FREE**, Young Birders Club Meeting: Ages 8-18
- Sunday, September 21, 11:00AM:** Printing with the Sun! A/T/C5+
- Saturday, September 27, 11:00AM:** Join Us for a Beach Clean Up to Celebrate World Clean & Green Week: A/T/C5+
- Saturday, September 27, 10:30AM: FREE**, Young Environmentalists Society (YES!) Meeting: Ages 10-16 and Junior members ages 5-9
- Sunday, September 28, 10:30AM AND 1:30PM: FREE** with Museum Admission, Storytime: Remarkable Reptiles: C3-7

I am an avid outdoorsman and have spent countless hours birding, fishing, and searching for all forms of wildlife across Long Island and New York State. I enjoy sharing my love and knowledge of nature with others. I am very excited to be working with the young birders at SOFO. I am always happy to help with any nature-related questions or identifications.

## SOFO's *Expanding Impact*

The SOFO Sharks Research and Education Program's January 2025 invited visit to Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) was a remarkable success, showcasing the power of science outreach and education in action. Over the course of the week, the team engaged more than 300 local high school students and over 100 ENMU undergraduates in dynamic sessions centered on shark research, marine conservation, and sustainability. Their ability to captivate diverse audiences was evident in the extended Q&A sessions, which often matched the length of the presentations themselves. The visit also included a televised interview on KENW's You Should Know, broadening the program's reach and visibility throughout the region.

The week culminated in a live-streamed community presentation at ENMU's Golden Student Success Center, drawing more than 150 attendees. Beyond the presentations, the visit sparked important conversations about future research opportunities and collaborative projects between SOFO and ENMU faculty. The SOFO team's energy, professionalism, and commitment to education left a lasting impression, and we are excited about the potential for ongoing partnerships that will continue to inspire the next generation of scientists and educators.

## YES! Presents Film Screening



On Saturday, April 26th, SOFO's *Young Environmentalists Society* (YES!) presented a free film screening of the documentary *Ivo-hiboro: The Lost Forest*

at the Sag Harbor Cinema. The presentation was co-sponsored by SOFO, Stony Brook University's Institute for the Conservation of *Tropical Environments* (ICTE), and Sag Harbor Cinema. This film documents threatened species and depicts environmental changes affecting the forests and wildlife of Madagascar. The film traces the history of forest habitat loss in Madagascar and highlights the efforts of scientists to document forest wildlife in the face of new threats from wildfire. It also captures the local communities' efforts to save the forest when it was threatened by wildfire. The event was attended by scientists, students, and young environmentalists from across Eastern Long Island. The film was followed by a Q&A with Dr. Patricia Wright and two of her young researchers, Alexa Lightbourn and Dr. Mai Fahmy who shared their experiences about the expedition and their research.



## SOFO Receives Grant Award

SOFO is pleased to announce a \$20,000 award from the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning. This 2025 Omnibus award will provide for the design and installation of cabinets on our recently expanded marine exhibit tank and on our original touch tank. The newly expanded marine exhibit tank was unveiled at our Grand Opening in April and provides a larger coastal bay exhibit area for crabs, snails, sea stars, and fish while allowing visitors of all ages to interact with these local marine animals. The exhibit also includes an area specifically designed for wheelchair access. We thank Suffolk County and Legislator Ann Welker for supporting SOFO through this grant award.

## The Eastern Bluebird

by Joe Giunta

"It has the color of the sky on its back." That statement has been said many times by first time observers of the Eastern Bluebird. The Eastern Bluebird, a member of the thrush family, is the state bird of New York. Many people think that they have seen Bluebirds but in reality they have only seen birds that are blue. From a distance, Blue Jays, Tree Swallows, and to a degree, Titmice are sometimes mistaken for Bluebirds. Once you have seen an Eastern Bluebird you will never forget it.



*Adult Male Bluebird, Joe Giunta*

The bird is a migrant and to a lesser degree a year-round resident in this state including here on the East End of Long Island. In mid-March, Eastern Bluebirds returning from wintering in the

"warmer" climate of Virginia and the Carolinas, start seeking out suitable habitat for feeding and nesting. Their preferred habitat is old farm field, a declining habitat here on the East End and throughout the Northeast. They hunt and feed on insects found on the ground. This hunting is done from an exposed perch. Many times they hunt from utility wires. The grassy fields over which they feed are usually never more than a few inches high. The lower the grass the easier it is to see and find insects.

The Eastern Bluebird is a secondary cavity nesting bird. It nests in a cavity created by a woodpecker or most likely a nesting box made by a person. The cavity is selected by the male but must be approved by the female. A somewhat elaborate sequence of wing signals, and wing flashes accompany the selection process. The nest is completely made of grass. Usually sometime in mid-April five all blue eggs are laid, one each day for five days. Incubation, done completely by the female, takes about 2 weeks. When the eggs hatch the young then become nestlings. They are fed by both parents, with the female seemingly doing more of this work than the male. The nestlings grow very rapidly and after about 20 days are the same size as the parents and are ready to fledge, that is leave the nest.

The day of fledging is somewhat chaotic. It's the young birds' first day out of the nest and each fledgling seems to go in a different direction. The parents round them up, take them to the top of a nearby tree and look after them and continue to feed them for another two weeks. The young birds quickly acquire flying and feeding skills. The parent birds will start the nesting cycle all over again; that is, they will attempt to nest for a second time. The young from the first brood will sometimes assist in the feeding of the second brood. The birds stay together as a small family group until late October when most migrate south only to repeat the process next year.

We, the Bluebird Trail Monitors of SOFO, assist the Bluebirds. Most important, we place and maintain the nesting boxes that are so important in their life cycle. We place predator guards on the boxes. We clean out the boxes after the first nesting cycles. We keep track of the success and failure of over 150 boxes on ten different trails. Tree Swallows and House Wrens also use these boxes, but as of this writing, late May, we have six pairs of Bluebirds nesting in our boxes with some young ready to fledge.

Joe Giunta, a longtime SOFO member, is a member and registered Bluebird Presenter for NABS (North American Bluebird Society.) Joe is a birding instructor at the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens and leads bird walks for SOFO and NYC Audubon. He travels widely to see birds and is a "birding explorer" in Panama, Ecuador and Venezuela.

This article was originally published in the SOFO Naturalist newsletter, Summer, 2005. Over the last 20 years, the Bluebird Trail Monitors of SOFO have assisted over 1,628 young bluebirds on their life journey.

## News From SOFO's Young Environmentalists Society (YES!)

### Watching *Our Garden Grow*

*by Mare Dianora, YES! Director*

In 2020, as the world was shutting down, our YES! Garden was just beginning to bloom. Over the next few years, we enjoyed welcomed members of all ages participating in the planning, planting and harvesting of our little garden next to the museum. In Spring 2024, the YES! and Junior YES! Members planted luffa gourd seeds and through the summer we watched them grow and take over our garden—even using our sunflowers as an additional trellis. As summer came to a close and we slipped into autumn, we kept a close eye on the gourds to give them their maximum growing time before our first frost. In October, the gourds were picked and left to dry and eventually the skins were removed. The spongy inside was soaked, cleaned, and the seeds were removed—we saved and dried those for next year's garden.

We left everything to dry for many weeks and, in December, both the young Junior YES! Members and the older YES! Members used the luffas in a soap-making project. We heated up a glycerin soap base and poured it into molds and added a slice of dried luffa into each soap.

The kids each had the chance to decide on the size and shape of their soaps. We left everything to harden and removed the luffa soaps from their molds and members each took home their soaps to enjoy! It was such a fun project and now the kids each have seeds to grow their own luffa gourds in their garden this summer!



*Soap Making Materials*



*Cleaned and Dried Luffa Sponge*



*Natural luffa sponge soap*

## 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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