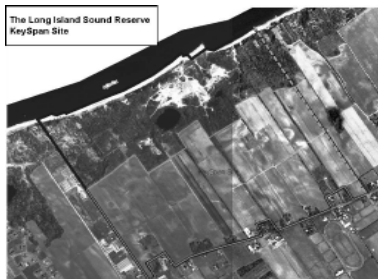


## UPDATE:

### Long Island Sound Reserve System Working Group Formed

By Carole Nemore

THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED Long Island Sound Reserve System Working Group met last December to discuss a management structure and program plan for creating a network of protected open spaces around the Sound. Audubon New York serves as the facilitator for the working group which is comprised of representatives from city, county, and state governments of Connecticut and New York, federal Environmental Protection Agency



An aerial view of the Keyspan property.

and U.S. Fish & Wildlife, academia, scientists, Sea Grant, and non-profit land trusts. These people, dedicated to restoring and protecting the Sound, represent a wealth of experience and

expertise in land use issues surrounding the Sound.

The Reserve System is built on the premise that to save the Sound, remaining land surrounding the Sound must be protected and properly managed. Uplands must be guarded because they serve many vital functions related to the Sound. Primarily land serves as a filter for pollution thereby blocking water contamination. Lands along the shoreline also provide areas for significant ecological habitats, sites for public recreational access and contribute to the aesthetic and scenic quality of our experience of the Sound.

The working group will build on the foundation laid by Audubon's publication *Listen to the Sound 2000: A Citizens' Agenda for the Long Island Sound Reserve*. The publication was based on testimony from over 200 citizens at hearings around the Sound. The book documented the need to adopt permanent protection strategies for the Sound in a comprehensive conservation plan and program. Citizens identified hundreds of sites that they felt were valuable in order to protect

the Sound and to provide public opportunities to appreciate this wonderful resource. These projects large and small are important additions to the state's open space program in New York. Dozens of citizen groups testified that the Keyspan parcel in Jamesport, New York should be a top acquisition priority of this program and the state of New York.

The Keyspan parcel is the largest remaining expanse of open space left on Long Island Sound. The 520-acre parcel includes more than one mile of scenic shoreline as well as dramatic dunes, a freshwater pond, wetlands, and active farmland. The parcel supports a diversity of shore birds and other wildlife and it has great potential for public access and recreational opportunities. It is truly one of the most magnificent open space projects in recent history, with Audubon leaders calling it the "Whitney" or the "Sterling Forest" of the Sound. The owners have indicated a strong willingness to sell the parcel, and it is the ideal candidate as a model Long Island Sound Reserve project. The state has indicated it is a high priority for acquisition, for it offers both habitat protection and public access opportunities for the Sound.

Millions of people live in proximity to the Sound but it is currently the least accessible body of water on the east coast of the United States. As noted in the Keyspan example, a reserve system will not only link communities but also will also attract

"The Keyspan parcel in Jamesport, Long Island is Audubon's number one open space acquisition priority for 2002. It would make an ideal state park, with swimming, hiking, camping and nature appreciation opportunities as well as a way to maintain historic farming."

CAROLE NEMORE, AUDUBON NEW YORK

more visitors and promote economic activity that is environmentally compatible with the Sound.

There are many other regional compacts in the nation that can serve as models for the Sound Reserve Plan, including Natural Heritage Areas, the Hudson River Greenway, the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Maine, the Peconic Estuary, and the South Shore Estuary Reserve. At their next meeting scheduled for February 2002, the working group will review these and other models for their applicability to Long Island Sound. For more information on Audubon's Long Island Sound Reserve program, please contact Carole Nemore at (518) 869-9731.

## Birdathon Madness

By Shirley Hartman

IT MAY BE WHITE and wintry outside, but some of us are already planning for the return of our migratory birds! And what better way to welcome home the flocks than to sponsor a Birdathon for Audubon New York.

Each year, individuals, organizations and chapters raise over \$150,000 for the programs of Audubon New York by hosting a Birdathon. Just what does that mean?

First, dig out your holiday list, your address book or your access database. Harass your friends and family into sponsoring you either with a per-species pledge or a flat amount. This is the opportune time to retaliate for all those cookie, candy and wrapping paper sales you willingly participated in! Then pick your Birdathon day.

Awaken to the sunrise on Central Park or the Hudson River or Montezuma or even your backyard. Enjoy a steaming cup of coffee and let the count begin. For the fanatics, Birdathon actually spans 24 hours. For

8 the rest of us, about ten hours will do. Using scopes, binocu-

lars, field guides, and expert birders (my personal favorite.) count every species you either see or hear!

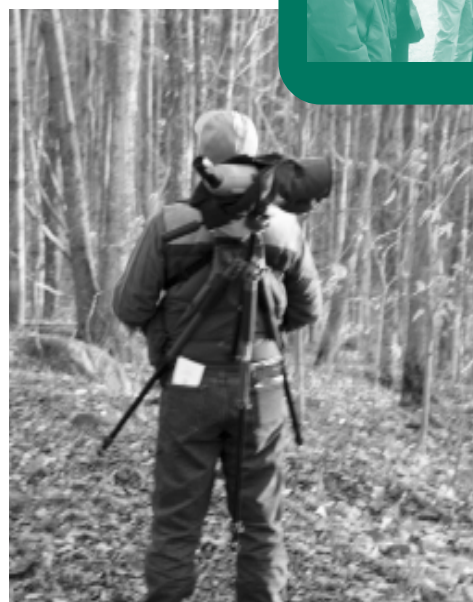
Next, secure those pledges. Prepare a report to your sponsors — generally a letter about the day with a listing of the birds you found will suffice. Include a return envelope and let the check writing begin.

And remember, the staff at Audubon New York, Constitution Marsh, Theodore Roosevelt and Prospect Park Audubon Centers are available to help you. As an authorized program of National Audubon Society we have a bounty (ok, actually just a box full) of supplies and goodies. Need pledge cards, report suggestions, field lists, someone who knows the difference between a House Finch and a Purple Finch? We can help.

For more information, call (518) 869-9731, and remember, all contributions to Birdathon are tax-deductible and can be designated to Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center, Constitution Marsh Audubon Center or Audubon New York — including Rheinstrom Hill, Buttercup Farm, Ram's Horn and the Prospect Park Audubon Center.



KATHERINE L. RAY



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