

A Good Year for the Long Island Sound

By Al Caccese

FROM STEWARDSHIP to nitrogen reduction, the Long Island Sound has enjoyed a most memorable year. Over the past three years, Audubon, in partnership with the Regional Plan Association (RPA) and Save the Sound, Inc., has been spearheading the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative. Working with the Environmental Protection Agency's Long Island Sound office and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as other state and local agencies, a comprehensive assessment of the recreational, open space and ecologically significant resources around the Sound has been undertaken. A protection strategy was developed and was vetted, not only with professionals and experts in the field, but also with the public in a series of eight meetings, which were held in February and March 2004 in which more than 250 citizens participated. The Strategy was approved by the Long Island Sound Management Committee on October

19th, 2004. The plan now is to prioritize and facilitate funding for the protection of the sites; link together sites that are important for the long-term ecological health and public enjoyment of the Sound; and to foster voluntary partnerships to improve land conservation and enhance recreational opportunities.

While all of this activity was taking place, Audubon, with its conservation partners, RPA and Save the Sound, Inc. successfully advocated for the introduction of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act of 2004. The bill was

introduced on July 20th, 2004 and enjoyed bi-state, bi-cameral and bi-partisan support. Audubon New York and Audubon Connecticut were the only conservation organizations to speak at the press conference, which was held on the steps of the Cannon House Office Building. The bill will authorize \$40 million annually for each of the fiscal years 2006 to 2013 and provides for a three to one federal to local share to be used to protect and enhance important sites identified in the Long Island Sound Initiative. Incredibly, the bill passed the Senate,

although at the \$25 million level, in October by unanimous consent. As expected, we were not so fortunate in the House of Representatives, but intend to treat its passage as our top legislative priority in the next Congress.

As if this wasn't enough activity, great progress was also made between New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation and New York City's Department of Environmental Protection regarding firm commitments to the previously agreed upon nitrogen reduction goals that were identified in the 1994 Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan and subsequent agreements among the States of New York and Connecticut and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Audubon New York was featured in a *New York Times* editorial last November on the issue and our hope that a federal agreement will be signed in 2005.

All in all, this year will be critical to the protection and restoration of the Sound.



AL CACCESI
KeySpan property on Long Island Sound

2nd ANNUAL AUDUBON NATURE FESTIVAL

at Knox Farm State Park
East Aurora, New York

Saturday, May 21, 2005
7:00 am to 4:00 pm

Mark the date! And, come join us for a day of fun and activities for the whole family.

Check the website for updated information at <http://ny.audubon.org/knox.htm>.

Scheduled activities include: Nature Bike Rides, Bird Banding Demonstrations, Birds of Prey, Wildflower Identification, Bluebird Programs, Amphibians and Reptiles, Kid's Activities, Nature Songs and much more.



The Audubon Nature Festival is a partnership between Audubon New York, the Buffalo Audubon Society, and the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.



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Senator Hillary Clinton to receive 2005 Sound Guardian Award

By Aaron Virgin

AUDUBON NEW YORK and the Construction Industry Council of Westchester of Hudson Valley Inc. will honor Senator Hillary Clinton with the Sound Guardian Award for her commitment to preserving the environmental quality of Long Island Sound. Senator Clinton helped introduce the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act of 2004, which will protect lands on the shore of the Sound by providing funds for acquisition and stewardship. The Act will also re-authorize the Long Island Sound Restoration Act which provides funds for reducing pollution in the Sound.

This will be the eighth annual event, with past recipients including Governor George E. Pataki, Senator Charles E. Schumer, Congressman Sherwood L. Boehlert, and Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano.

The award presentation will be made during a cocktail reception from 5-7pm at the American Yacht Club on April 1st 2005, in Rye, NY. Please email me at avirgin@audubon.org for an invitation to this benefit for Audubon New York's Long Island Sound Program.



Senator Hillary Clinton speaks at the New York League of Conservation Voters Capital District Chapter Eco-Breakfast in Albany on December 15th 2004