

The Broadwing



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Montclair, NJ
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Message from the President January 2025

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the January issue of the Broadwing. On behalf of the Executive Board, I'd like to wish each and every one of you a happy and healthy new year, and hope the skies above bring plenty of exciting things for all of us in 2025.

On a personal level, this past year ended on a bit of an exciting note. As a birder, the stretch of late November through February can get pretty dull—at least here in New Jersey. The last couple of weeks of November, If we're lucky we might get a look at a Golden Eagle at the [Montclair Hawk Lookout](#) (which we did), or if we're REALLY lucky, perhaps a Northern Goshawk (which we did not). But on November 30th at about 12:45 am I saw something in the skies over Montclair that I had never seen before. Something I had so much trouble identifying, I ended up calling the FBI.

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**Next club meeting: Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Virtual Bird Walk: Thursday, January 16, 2025**

Continued from the “Little Box” on page 1

I guess I should explain myself a bit. While driving home from work late that Friday night, I was crossing the border between Clifton and Montclair, when just above the horizon I spotted what appeared to be the full moon. The only problem—the full moon was on the 15th—two weeks earlier. And it was moving fast! As I continued driving south towards my house, I assumed it had to be an airplane—except for the fact that it was way too low over the trees. Suddenly it stopped moving and was now hovering about 150 feet in the sky over the [Bonsal Wildlife Preserve](#) in Upper Montclair—which just happened to be the destination of many Montclair Bird Club field trips over the years. I pulled my car over and jumped out and to my utter amazement, I found myself staring at an enormous air vessel the size of a school bus. It was shaped sort of like a drone, only I’d never seen a drone bigger than a two-car garage!

My immediate instinct was to flag down the first car I saw. This experience had to be shared. Not only did I want someone who could corroborate what I was seeing, but I was also a bit spooked. Unfortunately, there was not another car in sight. I then realized I should probably get a picture of this thing—and fast. I jumped back in the car and grabbed my iPhone, which was sitting on the passenger seat. And then, just as I was getting out, the thing started flying away. Almost like it was camera shy and didn’t want to be photographed. I was able to snap just a single photo (the one you see here) before I lost sight of it. And just like that, it was gone.

Now I’m sure you might be wondering: what in the world does this have to do with birds? Well, as a lifelong birder, I’ve spent countless hours looking up at the sky. It’s something I instinctively do whenever I step outside. It’s second nature to me, as well as I’m sure all of you. And as a birder, there’s nothing more exciting than spotting something I can’t identify. When I saw that giant drone, the first thing I did was incorporate the strategy MBC Executive Board Member Rick Wright helped home in his terrific “Build-a-Bird” program presented to us several times over the past few years. I made mental notes of every possible characteristic—not just the overall look but specific features—from the specific color of each light to the exact shape of its four tails. The only problem in this case, and this was a big one—there was no *Sibley’s Guide to UFOs* that I could use as a reference.

As it turned out, there was also another problem—I was the only one to see this object in the sky. When I got home, I immediately went online to see if there were any others who’d spotted a ginormous drone flying over the skies of North Jersey. There was but a single news account of some small drones seen near the Picatinny Arsenal in Morris County earlier in the month. At this point, drones were not in the news. The next morning, I called the FBI, and then the FAA. The news of what I saw

quickly spread from our local Montclair paper to the evening news, and before you know it, I was being [interviewed on national television](#), and drones have suddenly become the top story in the news cycle. People—and not just birders or astronomers—were suddenly starting to pay attention to what was up in the sky.

Hundreds if not thousands of reports were now coming in about strange objects flying overhead. People were now finally starting to get a taste of what us birders have been experiencing all



along—that thrill of exploring the outdoors and seeing something unexpected for the very first time.

What made my particular experience so fulfilling, and ultimately so frustrating, was the fact that I had nobody to share this moment with—at least at first. Sort of like when you see an extremely rare bird for the first time and you’re all by yourself. When I saw that Golden Eagle at the Montclair Hawk Lookout back in November, I was the only one up at the platform. I hooped and hollered and as soon as the bird was out of sight, I texted our two other counters, Andre Golumbeski and Alex Bernzweig, to share the good news. But I was left with a bit of a hole in my heart that there was nobody with me to share in the experience. I’ve found that the vast majority of birders are sharers. And what I love so much about our birding community is how excited people are to share what they’ve seen. It’s sort of like that old saying, “if a tree falls...” Birding is a communal experience. It is why the Montclair Bird Club was founded 105 years ago. This past year alone, members of our bird club have chased after New Jersey vagrants ranging from a Painted Bunting that was visiting a bird feeder outside someone’s fire escape in Jersey City, to a [newsworthy Roseate Spoonbill](#) that spent the last few weeks of summer in Union Beach, in Monmouth County. These birds were seen by many thanks to the generous spirit of someone willing to take the time to reach out and help spread the news. I guess this is why I was so willing to share my news of the drone back in November. I knew I would probably end up becoming the [subject of some ridicule](#) – which I certainly had coming to me, especially considering I made a career of this sort of thing when I was a producer at the *Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. But I did not regret my decision to go public for even a moment. I like to think that in some strange way, going public helped pave the way towards more people now opening up their eyes to the many wonders that await in the skies above. Now, if only the FBI and FAA return my calls.



Bird nests made with a toxic fungus seem to fend off attacking ants

Ants who encounter horsehair fungus nests develop odd behaviors indicative of toxicity



Some birds, such as this yellow-olive flatbill, *Tolmomyias sulphureus*, use fungal fibers in their nests that appear to repel aggressive ants, a new study shows. Salvador Poot Villanueva/iNaturalist Mexico

For a bird nest in ant territory, the best defense may be an offensive fungus. Swollen-thorn acacia trees are aggressively defended by multiple species of ants, but several species of birds across Central America and Africa choose to nest in these trees. It seems that fungal fibers in the nests deter the ants and alter their behavior, making them apparently alarmed and intoxicated, researchers report in the October *Animal Behaviour*.

“It seemed very strange to me that the ants did not harm the chicks,” says Rhayza Cortés Romay, an ecologist at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz, Bolivia. “So, I started to think from the bird’s perspective: How does it achieve this?”

The full article in *Science News*: [Bird Nests](#)

World's oldest known wild bird lays egg



Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, Wednesday, November 27, 2024.
(Dan Rapp/USFWS via AP)

A 74-year-old Laysan albatross with as many as 30 offspring is trying for another. Dubbed “Wisdom,” she nests on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, as do nearly 70% of the world’s Laysan albatrosses. She was first banded as an adult in 1956 by the legendary ornithologist Chandler Robbins, and is now the world’s oldest known banded bird in the wild.

The full article from the [Associated Press](#)

Celebrating 105 Years



1920–2025

Huntington Beach State Park: A Birder's Review
by
Hillary Leonard



Wood Stork in flight

When I realized I'd be making a trip to Pawley's Island, I began to think about the area's habitat types and the birds I might see. Pawley's Island is located on South Carolina's Hammock Coast, between Myrtle Beach and Charleston, part of the broader Lowcountry characterized by salt marshes and coastal waterways—some of my favorite places to look for birds.

When I looked for places for good birdwatching within a reasonable driving distance, I found a number of preserved areas, but with restricted access, among them the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, a 24,000 acre preserve created by the owner of the Boston Red Socks. The center's habitats include longleaf pine forests, maritime forests, ocean beaches, marshes, and wetlands. However, you need to join a scheduled tour to gain access; these tours are free, but none coincided with my schedule. During the summer, when birds are breeding, there is no public access at all.

Not far from Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center is Hobcaw Barony, the former hunting estate of Bernard Baruch, whose daughter Belle W. Baruch ultimately donated the 16,000 acres to support scientific research and preservation. Access to these lands, too, is only by private tour, not devoted solely to wildlife and bird viewing. It's also a bit pricey, at \$30 or \$40 per person.

I also considered Brookgreen Gardens, manicured sculpture gardens where birdwatching is possible but not the main focus. The occasional specific birdwatching tours here fill up quickly, even at \$22 per person.

I was left with two real options: Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge and Huntington Beach State Park. While Waccamaw looked promising, and did not appear to charge an admission fee, it was a bit farther away, and some of the trails are accessible only by boat. The parcels of land

here are also a bit broken up, requiring some driving to get from one place to another on the refuge.

So that left Huntington Beach, considered by some the best birding spot in all of South Carolina. The park, on Murrells Inlet, covers approximately 2,500 acres and contains coastal, wetland, and forest habitats. The land was once owned by the industrialists Archer and Anna Hyatt Huntington, who built a home on the property and dedicated the remainder of the land to wildlife conservation. On their death, the land was leased to the state of South Carolina, which manages the area as a state park. The admission fee for out-of-state visitors is \$8 per person.



Huntington Beach State Park

The park is open from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Over the years, 353 different species of birds have been observed here. Checking eBird for recent sightings, I was struck by the fact that other birders were recording 50- and 60-species days. Needless to say, I was excited to visit!



Roseate Spoonbill

Before my trip, I was stalking the weather to select the best day for my birding excursion. With 24 hours to go, I made my choice for Sunday, November 10, which was forecasted to be cloudy. It was a great decision: the cloudy was not all that cloudy, and it never rained. I wound up with pretty good light for photography, and the cool of my 7:00 am arrival warmed into the 70s.



Aninga drying its wings

After paying the admission fee at the front gate, I made a short drive to a causeway, with Mullet Pond on the right and salt marsh on the left. The tide was almost all the way out, and many waders were present. I quickly found a parking place and grabbed my gear.

The causeway was a sight to behold, filled with wading birds. As I arrived, three roseate spoonbills landed mere feet from the walkway, providing fabulous looks for 20 minutes while

they preened and foraged. Had I not seen the recent bird in Union Beach, NJ, this would have been a life bird for me.

Wood storks (a lifer), snowy and great egrets, great blue and tricolored herons, and laughing gulls were in abundance. At Mullet Pond, I got a pied-billed grebe and an anhinga—another lifer—up in a tree warming and drying its wings in the morning sun. A female northern harrier hunted at the back of the pond. Many of these birds were close to the walkway and unconcerned by the people and cars going by.

From a boardwalk overlooking the pond, I was treated to some nice photo opportunities by a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher foraging on a desiccated cattail and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet that stopped long enough for a portrait.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher taking off

After a brief visit to the Kerrigan Nature Trail and observation boardwalk, my next stop was the Nature Center, where you can observe woodland birds in the trees and at the feeders before walking out along a boardwalk into the marsh. On the exposed mudflats, I saw dunlin, black-bellied plovers, double-crested cormorants, brown pelicans, more egrets and gulls, and one of the resident bald eagles, which landed in the tree holding its nest.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet

My next stop was Sandpiper Pond Nature Trail, which I walked to North Beach and back. It was on this trail that I had an experience I hadn't had in a long time. All of a sudden, the trees around me just filled with birds. So many different birds were vocalizing and flitting about, that it was hard for me to remain focused on just one. At least eight different species were in on the action, my highlight a brown creeper posing for a few nice photos. Just as quickly as they appeared, they were gone.

By the time I made it to the North Beach observation deck, I was running out of energy. I just didn't have it in me to trek the 1.2 miles of sand to the jetty and back, where I'm sure I could have added several more species. All in all, it was an amazing day, with 54 species positively identified and three additional fly-overs I was unable to confirm (duck spp. and likely red-winged blackbirds). I also saw three beautiful butterflies not typically found in New Jersey: Gulf fritillary, cloudless sulphur, and long-tailed skipper.



Brown Creeper

Huntington Beach is a gem of a park. Its varied habitats make a morning's birding very fulfilling, and it is small enough that you can easily see a number of trails in a morning. The park is clean and well kept and not too crowded, at least in the off-season. Bathrooms are conveniently located by the main parking areas. A word to the wise: come armed with insect repellent containing DEET. The mosquitoes are next-level bad, especially in the wooded areas. I didn't have repellent, so every time I stopped, exposed skin was fair game for these pests. I came back with some nice souvenirs on my hands, neck, and face. At least they didn't bite through my clothes!



Gulf fritillary



Cloudless Sulphur

Huntington Beach State Park Species List – 54 Total

Hooded merganser
Clapper rail
Black-bellied plover
Killdeer
Dunlin
Greater yellowlegs
Sanderling
Laughing gull
Pied-billed grebe
Wood stork
Anhinga
White ibis
Double-crested cormorant
Roseate spoonbill
Black-crowned night heron
Little blue heron
Tricolored heron
Snowy egret

Great egret
Great blue heron
Brown pelican
Turkey vulture
Osprey
Bald eagle
Northern harrier
Belted kingfisher
Yellow-bellied sapsucker
Red-bellied woodpecker
Downy woodpecker
Northern flicker
Eastern phoebe
Blue jay
American crow
Carolina chickadee
Tufted titmouse
Tree swallow

Ruby-crowned kinglet
Golden-crowned kinglet
Blue-gray gnatcatcher
Carolina wren
Northern house wren
Gray catbird
Northern mockingbird
Hermit thrush
White-breasted nuthatch
Brown creeper
House finch
White-throated sparrow
Eastern towhee
Red-winged blackbird
Northern cardinal
Black-and-white warbler
Yellow-rumped warbler



Long-tailed Skipper

New Members

2023

October

Jimma Byrd TX

Sulima Elemam Montclair, NJ
 Saeid Amiri Montclair, NJ
 Susan Amiri Montclair, NJ
 Becky Meister Woodcliff Lake, NJ
 Warren Harper Montclair, NJ
 Tsiona Butvinik
 Charles & Diana Martin

November

Diane Holsinger VA
 Lauri Carlotti Belleville, NJ
 Lisa Kroop Berkely Heights, NJ

December

Eva DeAngelis Franklin Lakes, NJ

October

Mike Cucka Montclair, NJ
 Michael Sheldon Langley, WA
 Ellie Sheldon Langley, WA
 Sulima Elemah Montclair, NJ
 Tom Mulligan Montclair, NJ
 Beth Wolsten Clifton, NJ

2024

February

Samuel Crespo Clifton, NJ

November

Caroline Derozier & Oguz & Ozsahin Montclair, NJ

March

Peter A. Axelrod Berkeley Heights, NJ
 Sharon Gill Bloomfield, NJ

April

Howard Spaeth Glen Rock, NJ

May

Todd Sloane Little Falls, NJ

June

Dena Ressler Teaneck, NJ

July

Molly Cody Montclair, NJ

September

Christina Gilham Montclair, NJ
 Becky Meister Woodcliff Lake
 Danica Stitz Montclair, NJ
 Tom Mulligan Montclair, NJ

This list includes new members,
 returning members, and additions
 from our Friends roster.

Field Trips

Saturday, January 11: Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge **Meet at 8:30 am at the Helen C. Fenske Visitor Center, 32 Pleasant Plains Road,** **Harding Township, NJ** **(canceled in the event of threatening weather)**

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is a 7,000-acre refuge located in suburban Morris County. Its habitats include hardwood swamp, marsh, upland deciduous woods, fields, and open water, supporting a wide diversity of birdlife year-round. We will start out birding around the visitor center, then make our way to the boardwalk. eBird lists 106 species seen in January at the Great Swamp, including American tree sparrow and rusty blackbird, alongside a variety of waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and other passerines. Last January's trip found 35 species, including field sparrow, northern harrier, red-shouldered hawk, and winter wren.

Dress warm, and bring binoculars, a snack, and something to drink. There are outhouses at the visitor center and a bathroom by the boardwalk. We plan to finish at 11:30 am. If you plan to attend, be sure to email mbcoutings@gmail.com in case of inclement weather or road closures.



Photo by Ric Cohn

Trip Reports

Cold Brook Preserve

October 19, 2024

by Deb DeSalvo

A glorious day in the country! Eleven of us met in the parking lot, made introductions, and then began our adventure. Just a few steps into the preserve, we spotted a red fox. Once it was out of sight, we walked slowly along the path through the harvested remains of the GMO cornfield toward a small pond known to have good bird activity. There were no clouds in the sky, and though there was a chill in the air, the sun soon warmed us enough that we shed layers. The moon was spectacularly large on the horizon.

Since this area of the state had had only 0.2 inches of rain in the preceding 50 days, the small pond was bone-dry, but the plants that grew in its depression were host to numerous Savannah and song sparrows. We all assumed that if there had been water, we might have seen more bird species.

Once we were past the pond, the real excitement of the trip began. Numerous raptors were hunting, perching, soaring, chasing. And those with cameras were able to snap some lovely images! Seemingly back to back, falcons, accipiters, buteos appeared. One peregrine falcon chased another peregrine falcon, presumably because the one in front had a red-bellied woodpecker in its talons.

The three hours went by too quickly. I suggested we put together our list, use the bathrooms, and maybe grab a beverage at the Oldwick General Store, just down the block from the preserve. Sadly, I was unable to stick around for long, but nine of our participants enjoyed a nice meal and additional time together. If you are up for it, I suggest we do it again soon!

Birds seen:

Canada goose	Red-bellied woodpecker (including one in the grips of a peregrine falcon)
Mourning dove	Downy woodpecker
Killdeer	Hairy woodpecker
Black vulture	Pileated woodpecker
Turkey vulture	Northern flicker
Sharp-shinned hawk	American kestrel
Cooper hawk	Merlin
Northern harrier	Peregrine falcon
Red-tailed hawk	Blue jay

American crow
Black-capped chickadee
Tufted titmouse
Carolina wren
European starling
Northern mockingbird
Eastern bluebird
American robin
American goldfinch

Chipping sparrow
Dark-eyed junco
White-throated sparrow
Savannah sparrow
Song sparrow
Palm warbler
Yellow-rumped warbler
Northern cardinal





Bee Meadow Park, Whippany
October 31, 2024
by Lee Gaitskill, with photos by Ric Cohn

Halloween started off cool and damp with mists rising from the fields and ponds...
OOOOO! As the sun rose, birds and birders shook off the chill and got down to business. We spent much of our time just 100 feet from the parking lot, where the honeysuckle and bittersweet vines were heavy with berries. Half of our bird list was recorded at this first stop! Robins were seen in the greatest number, but large groups of cedar waxwings, purple finches, blue jays, and grackles enjoyed the feast as well. As we walked to the back pond, we disturbed a feeding great blue heron; its flight brought our attention to the first of many wood ducks in their full regalia. Opposite the pond, in the powerline cut, sparrows were continually popping up and down. It was here that we spotted a number of swamp sparrows enjoying the goldenrod and sedge seeds. Some of us got a glimpse of a merlin as it sliced its way across the powerline cut. Back at the parking lot, we compared our sightings, adding one last bird to our list when a sharp-shinned hawk glided by.

Canada goose	Carolina wren
Wood duck	Golden-crowned kinglet
Mallard	Ruby-crowned kinglet
Great blue heron	American robin
Turkey vulture	Northern mockingbird
Sharp-shinned hawk	European starling
Merlin	Cedar waxwing
Mourning dove	Myrtle warbler
Belted kingfisher	Palm warbler
Red-bellied woodpecker	Song sparrow
Downy woodpecker	Swamp sparrow
Pileated woodpecker	White-throated sparrow
Eastern phoebe	Dark-eyed junco
Blue jay	Northern cardinal
American crow	Red-winged blackbird
Fish crow	Common grackle
Black-capped chickadee	Purple finch
Tufted titmouse	House finch
White-breasted nuthatch	American goldfinch





Sandy Hook
November 9, 2024
by Chris Williams

Seven people attended; photos were taken by Ric Cohn. The day started out cold and windy but warmed up nicely.

44 species seen:

Brant (<i>Branta bernicla</i>)	Turkey vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)
Canada goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)	Sharp-shinned hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus</i>)
American black duck (<i>Anas rubripes</i>)	Cooper hawk (<i>Astur cooperii</i>)
Greater scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>)	Red-tailed hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)
White-winged scoter (<i>Melanitta deglandi</i>)	Northern harrier (<i>Circus hudsonius</i>)
Bufflehead (<i>Bucephala albeola</i>)	Northern flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)
Red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)	Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)
Hooded merganser (<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>)	Blue jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)
Mourning dove (<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>)	Common raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>)
Black-bellied plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)	Black-capped chickadee (<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>)
Greater yellowlegs (<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>)	Carolina wren (<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)
Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)	Northern mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)
Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)	Hermit thrush (<i>Catharus guttatus</i>)
Laughing gull (<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>)	American robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)
Ring-billed gull (<i>Larus delawarensis</i>)	House finch (<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>)
American herring gull (<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>)	Field sparrow (<i>Spizella pusilla</i>)
Great black-backed gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)	Dark-eyed junco (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)
Royal tern (<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>)	White-throated sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)
Horned grebe (<i>Podiceps auritus</i>)	Song sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)
Red-throated loon (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)	Red-winged blackbird (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)
Common loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	Yellow-rumped warbler (<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)
Double-crested cormorant (<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>)	Northern cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)
Great egret (<i>Ardea alba</i>)	
Great blue heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)	



Grapeleaf Skeletonizer Moth





Mill Creek Marsh Photography Walk

November 16, 2024

by Sandy Sorkin *and* Ric Cohn

This Saturday was a beautiful sunny, albeit cold, morning. The walk was scheduled to begin at 8:00 am. We arrived at 7:45 am and were greeted by a flock of monk parakeets at the marsh entrance. Before the start time, a brown creeper and an American robin appeared in the nearby trees.

Initially, three of us started the walk. An additional three birders arrived closer to 9:00 and caught up with us on the trail toward the end of the morning.

Canada goose	35	Marsh wren	2
Mallard	25	European starling	40
American black duck	1	Northern mockingbird	2
Green-winged teal	100	Hermit thrush	2
Rock pigeon (feral pigeon)	4	American robin	30
Mourning dove	2	Cedar waxwing	15
Ring-billed gull	150	House sparrow	2
American herring gull	3	House finch	3
Double-crested cormorant	4	American goldfinch	12
Northern harrier	2	White-throated sparrow	35
Red-tailed hawk (<i>borealis</i>)	1	Song sparrow	25
Yellow-bellied sapsucker	2	Swamp sparrow	5
Downy woodpecker (Eastern)	3	Red-winged blackbird	15
Peregrine falcon	1	Common grackle	2
Monk Parakeet (Monk)	10	Yellow-rumped warbler (myrtle)	3
Black-capped Chickadee	12	new world warbler sp.	1
Brown Creeper	1	Northern cardinal	3

Lacking tide tables for Mill Creek Marsh makes it difficult to ascertain the best times for walks. On this trip, we had a high tide coinciding with a full moon, resulting in water levels higher than we had ever seen before.





Sandy Hook
December 4, 2024
with Rick Wright

The forecast was dire, the reality delightful. We'd been led to fear bitter cold and ferocious winds, but the four of us found instead a beautiful early winter's day on the shore, the temperatures chilly but not uncomfortable and breezes light. Our short day on the beaches and marshes and dunes of Sandy Hook was a thoroughly enjoyable preview of one of my favorite birding seasons at one of my favorite New Jersey birding sites.

Birding all of the Hook, at any time of year, can take more hours than there are in a day. We rationed our time together such that most of it was on the southern beaches, with a lagniappe of a stroll past the hawk watch tower and the apparently now-defunct pond below it. Among the highlights of our beachwatch were a few northern gannets, good numbers of ghostly pale sanderling with a few swarthy dunlin mixed in, and impressive flocks of snow buntings swirling and flitting above the dune grass. Winter ducks were still arriving, but a few hundred scoters, of all three species, were loafing and feeding close in; one flock included a few common eider, females, a young male, and gloriously pink-breasted adult males. Not that long ago, eiders were very rare in New Jersey, but their presence all along the coast is no longer much of a surprise—but still, always, a pleasure.

Across the road, the compact salt marsh at the very southern end of the Hook gave us stunningly close views of brant (with good numbers of juvenile birds, a sign of a productive summer behind them), red-breasted mergansers, and bufflehead. A splendid surprise was a clapper rail that flew in from behind us to disappear into the spartina. We found no “sharp-tailed” sparrows, but other passerines feeding on the goldenrod and poison ivy included a couple of American tree sparrows, a true sign of the season.

More sparrows lined the drive to the northernmost parking lot (once K, now M). Juncos abounded, almost all of them, as expected, slate-colored, but with the usual few smudgy and ultimately unconvincing Cassiar-type and Oregon candidates scattered among them. We also found song, white-throated, swamp, and red fox sparrows, all busily double-scratching on the roadsides.

Our walk to the dunes was surprisingly unproductive. Until the very end, that is, when we paused to watch white-throated sparrows eating sumac fruits. A rustle in the undergrowth turned into a red fox, breathtaking in its fluffy winter pelage against the somber winter vegetation. A fine way to end a fine trip to Sandy Hook—surely not the last one we'll be making over the next few months.

Birds

* seen before the entire group gathered

Atlantic brant
Canada goose
American black duck
Green-winged teal
Redhead*
Dresser eider
Surf scoter
White-winged scoter
Black scoter
Long-tailed duck
Bufflehead
Hooded merganser
Red-breasted merganser
Sanderling
Dunlin
Ring-billed gull
American herring gull
Great black-backed gull
Red-throated loon
Common loon
Clapper rail
Northern gannet
Great cormorant*
Double-crested cormorant
Great blue heron

Black vulture
Turkey vulture
Sharp-shinned hawk
Northern harrier
Bald eagle
Downy woodpecker
Peregrine falcon*
Common raven
Black-capped chickadee
European starling
Northern mockingbird
American robin
House finch
American goldfinch
Lapland longspur
Snow bunting
American tree sparrow
Red fox sparrow
Slate-colored junco
White-throated sparrow
Song sparrow
Swamp sparrow
Red-winged blackbird
Myrtle warbler







Virtual Bird Walks

2020

July	1	Local Birding
August	2	Backyards and a Marsh
September	3	Backyards and Trips
October	4	Member Birding
November	5	Member Birding
December	6	Member Birding

2021

January	7	International Birding and New York City
February	8	International Birding
March	9	Member Birding
April	10	Shore Birds
May	11	Local Birding
June	12	Member Birding
July	13	Birding Costa Rica
August	14	Identify a Bird by Its Eyes
September	15	Birds and Water
October	16	Birds with Masks
November	17	Winter Birds

2022

January	18	Personal Choice
February	19	Color
March	20	Signs of Spring
April	21	Birds Eating or Black & White Birds
May	22	Local Birds
September	23	My Summer
November	24	Bird Pairs
December	25	A Trip

2023

January	26	Winter
February	27	A Month in a Birder's Life
March	28	Egrets, Herons, and Wading Birds
April	29	Woodpeckers
May	30	Small Birds
June		Members Meeting, no Virtual Bird Walk
September	31	What I Did on My Summer Vacation
October	32	Black & Orange

2024

January	33	Cold
February	34	Water
March	35	Beyond the Bird
May	36	Pick-a-Place
September	37	Summer Birding
October	38	Fall Color

Upcoming VENT Tours

ventbird.com

France	Brittany in Fall	October 4–12, 2025
Texas	South Texas in Style	January 5–18, 2026
Texas	VENT 50 th Anniversary Celebration	April 19–24, 2026
Italy	Birds and Art in Apulia and Matera	April 28–May 8, 2026
France	Birds and Art in Provence	May 9–17, 2026
Scotland	Scotland in Style	May 28–June 7, 2026
Nebraska	The Sandhills and Pine Ridge	June 11–21, 2026
Spain	Birds and the Solar Eclipse in Asturias	August 8–17, 2026
Germany	Birds and Art in Berlin	September 19–28, 2026
France	Brittany in Fall	October 1–9, 2026

**VICTOR
EMANUEL
NATURE
TOURS**

Montclair Bird Club Meeting History

2020

May	An Online Quiz, with Rick Wright.
June	A Walk on Pipeline Road, by Sandy Sorkin.
July	The Real James Bond, by Jim Wright.
August	An Online Quiz, with Rick Wright.
September	Manakins and Microbes, by Jennifer Houtz.
October	Bizarre Breeding Behaviors of Tropical Cuckoos, by Christine Riehl.
November	Dispersal in Young Peregrine Falcons, by Elise Morton.
December	An MBC Story Slam, by Pamela Olsen.

2021

January	Modern-Day Exploration in the Tropics, by Dan Lane.
February	Winter Raptors, by Giselle Smisko.
March	Damselflies and Dragonflies: The Other White Meat, by George Nixon.
April	Wolf Natural History and Tourism in Yellowstone, by Paul Brown.
May	Sandhills and Saw-whets, by Matthew Schuler.
June	Magnificent Namibia, by Linda Woodbury.
September	Raptors, by Wayne Quinto.
October	Watershed, by Hazel England.
November	Build-a-Bird, with Rick Wright.

2022

January	A Tale of Many Penguins, by Ardith Bondi.
February	Oh! Canada, by Chris Sturm.
March	Tracking the Migration of New Jersey Birds Using the Motus Network, by Cailin O'Connor.
April	Spotlighting Voices in Bird Conservation, by Mardi Dickinson.
May	101 Great Birds from Around the World, by Mark Garland.
June	Members Meeting.
September	Exploring the Big Bend in Southwest Texas, by Donna Traylor.
October	Build-a-Bird II, with Rick Wright.
November	On Safari: Botswana and South Africa, by Ric Cohn.

2023

January	America's Iconic Birdman: Frank Chapman, by James Huffstodt.
February	A Bird Club in San Diego, by Rick Wright.
March	The Peregrine Project, by Wayne Quinto.
April	Piping Plovers on the Rockaway Peninsula, by Chris Allieri.
May	Basic Ornithology, by Phil Echo.
June	Members Meeting.
September	Build-a-Bird III, with Rick Wright.
October	Finding W. H. Hudson, The Writer Who Came to Britain to Save the Birds, by Conor Mark Jameson
November	Attracting Screech Owls, by Jim Wright
November	Birding and Conservation in Italy, by Marcos Valtriani

2024

January	Panama, by Rick Wright
February	The Spectacular Staging of the Whimbrel on the Texas Coast, by Sam Wolfe – YouTube
March	Looking for the Goshawk: The Lost Raptor, by Conor Jameson
April	The Life of the Whooping Crane, by Paityn Bower
May	Birds of Colombia, by Deborah Bifulco
June	Members Meeting
September	History of Woodcocks, by Peter Axelrod
October	Birding While Indian, by Thomas Gannon
November	Through the Looking Glass: Reflections of a Grateful Birder, by Kevin Karlson

Birds In This Issue

- Page 1: Scarlet macaw, by Sandy Sorkin (SS)
- Page 15: Song sparrow and field sparrow, by Ric Cohn (RC)
- Page 17: Peregrine falcon (RC)
- Page 18: Northern harrier (RC)
- Page 20: Purple finch, swamp sparrow (RC)
- Page 21: Belted kingfisher, wood duck (RC)
- Page 23: Dunlin, sanderling, black-bellied plover
- Page 24: Black-capped chickadee, black-bellied plover
- Page 26: Yellow-bellied sapsucker, monk parakeet (SS)
- Page 27: Northern harrier, green-winged teal (SS)
- Page 29: White-winged scoter (SS)
- Page 30: Northern harrier, yellow-rumped warbler (myrtle) (SS)
- Page 31: Sanderling, hooded merganser



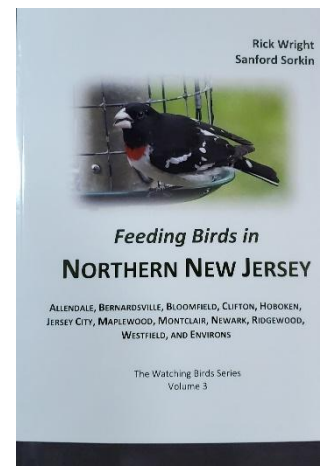
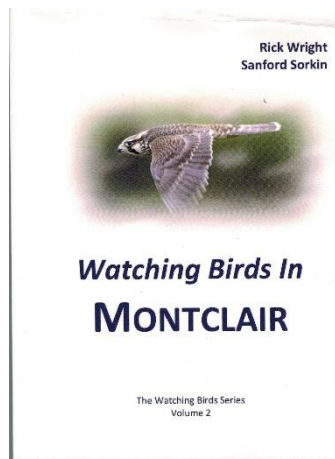
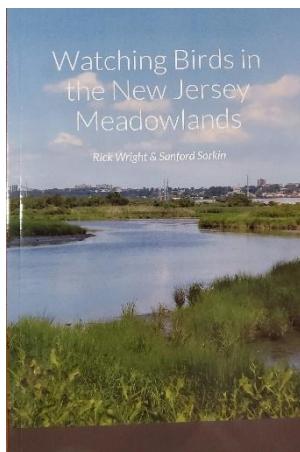
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The MBC Bulletin Bird

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Vice PresidentDeb DeSalvo
TreasurerRic Cohn
Recording SecretaryDonna Traylor

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ProgramsDonna Traylor
PublicityWayne Quinto
Refreshments.....Difficult with Zoom

**The Broadwing Editor
and Photographer**Sandy Sorkin

THE BROADWING

The *Broadwing* is published nine or ten times a year. We usually vacation during July and August, and stay home in December.

Send photos, field notes, or articles to Sandy at MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com.

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