

THE MONTCLAIR BIRD CLUB

YOUR WEEKLY BIRD 56

September 29, 2024

by Rick Wright

Chough



A red-billed chough does some excavating in Spain. Photo Rick Wright

Many Thanksgivings ago, I was visiting friends in Connecticut when a frantic announcement reached the most distant twigs of the phone tree (remember those?): a red-billed chough had been found in Newtown. Though we knew that the bird had to be an escape from captivity or a ship-borne stowaway, we went out to look for it. No luck.

No luck. But the shock of the report, the thrill of the chase, and the good company on a beautiful November afternoon added to the anticipation of someday, somehow seeing these charming little corvids in person.



An alpine chough in the Austrian Alps. Photo Rick Wright

Since then, I've been fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of both species, the red-billed and the yellow-billed, or alpine, choughs. Both are full of personality, social birds with distinctive voices and a decided penchant for soaring playfully through the sky in small flocks. As residents of high mountaintops and rugged sea cliffs, they can be hard to get to know as intimately as birds of more forgiving habitats. But they're well worth the effort.

If you would like to see your photographs highlighted here, send one or two pictures with a short paragraph to Sandy Sorkin & Rick Wright at MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com.



Southwest Wings

