

# THE MONTCLAIR BIRD CLUB

## YOUR WEEKLY BIRD 41

June 16, 2024

by Hillary Leonard

### American Oystercatcher

Birdwatchers are a very accepting crowd. We know there are unusual-looking birds out there, and when we come across one, we take it as a matter of course. But for the uninitiated, seeing an American Oystercatcher can provoke a lot of commentary. For example, last summer on the Spring Lake beach, I overheard a family discussing three oystercatchers that had landed a few feet away. Oystercatchers are larger shorebirds that can, depending on the circumstances, be observed without binoculars. These oystercatchers were easy to see. The family was engaged in a debate, trying to figure out exactly what they were looking at. Eventually someone settled on “a cross between a duck and a seagull.” It was settled. I was amused, but didn’t chime in.

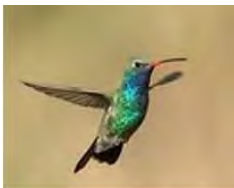


For the past several years in July, small groups of oystercatchers, usually two or three individuals together, have frequented the Spring Lake beach. The loud, repetitive calls are often heard well before these flying squeak toys are seen. Once the birds land, they rest on the dry sand or forage at the shoreline, sometimes exhibiting a slight rocking motion that makes them almost comical in combination with the distinctive voice, yellow eyes, bright red-orange bill, and pink feet. I stop to watch them every single time, and they put a smile on my face.

Last July, when the oystercatchers were around, I hadn't figured out how to use my camera, so I don't have any photos of the Spring Lake birds. The photos I do have were taken this past March at Stone Harbor Point, where a group of American Oystercatchers overwinters.



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](mailto:MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com).



Southwest Wings

